# KITES OVER THE MANGO TREE

## Restoring Harmony between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat

Janet M. Powers

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*Foreword by Fr. Cedric Prakash, S.J.*

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*To the courageous men, women,*
*and youth of Gujarat*
*who share the worthy vision*
*of a peaceful tomorrow*
*and persist in working*
*toward that reality*
*despite birds*
*of prey*

*. . . None hurting, truthful,*
*from anger free,*
*renouncing all, at peace,*
*averse to calumny*
*compassionate to all existent beings,*
*free from nagging greed,*
*gentle, modest, never fickle,*
*ardent, patient, enduring, pure*
*not treacherous nor arrogant—*
*such is the man who's born to inherit*
*a godly destiny.*

*Bhagavad Gita XVI: 2–3*

# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

The Gujarat Carnage of 2002 will certainly rank among the most horrendous of civil conflicts in post-independence India. The manner in which more than 2,000 Muslims were killed, women were raped, houses and commercial establishments looted and set ablaze, will certainly nauseate anyone who cherishes the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Many in civil society did feel bad about what happened; but few dared to act because of the involvement of the government of Gujarat and other powerful and vested interests.

Today, more than six years after this terrible blot on Indian civilization, those responsible for the carnage still roam the streets with impunity and, having been elected to high positions, also enjoy the arrogance of immunity. There are instances in which the Judiciary and apex bodies such as the National Human Rights Commission have played their respective roles with objectivity and dignity; but the stark reality is that most of the victims are still denied justice. The Muslims in Gujarat today are confined to a marginalized existence in ghettos. All this is packaged in a lie called "Vibrant Gujarat."

The Gujarat Carnage of 2002 was not something spontaneous (which it was made out to be), nor something that is easily forgotten. Its roots are embedded in the deep history of the Indian subcontinent, beginning with colonial occupation and the emergence of right-wing Hindu nationalism.

Janet Powers provides the reader all this and more, in her analysis of Indian history and very specially of the significant period between 1992 and 2002, which saw the gradual and ultimately final polarization of Hindus and Muslims, in several parts of Gujarat State.

But Powers' book does not stop at that. Through painstaking research and interactions with several stakeholders across the board, she very effectively

helps readers look into the embers of hope that can still be salvaged from the fires that engulfed the State. While providing this glimpse of hope, she sets forth challenges based on the values propagated by Mahatma Gandhi, namely Satyagraha (force of truth) and Ahimsa (nonviolence). This twin doctrine would hopefully restore the lost balance of a people who have supposedly inherited the Mahatma's rich legacy.

Uttarayan (January 14) is a day when Gujarat wakes up to pay homage to the "Sun God" by flying kites. Also known as Makar Sankranti, it marks the end of winter with the return of the Sun to the Northern Hemisphere. On that day, the clear blue sky seems to beckon everyone and people surrender themselves to the joy of kite-flying. From early morning to late evening, the skies of the major cities of Gujarat remain dotted with vivid splashes of color as kites with a variety of hues, shapes, and color dart across the sky. As night falls, one can see several lighted paper lanterns tied to the strings of kites, dotting the already starry skies.

The irony is that the kites and the string meant to fly the kites are generally made by Muslims who temporarily come into Gujarat from Uttar Pradesh and other parts of Northern India. It is they who actually provide the possibility of "festival."

It is also the time when the mango trees all over the State are laden with their first flowers. It is still a good four months before they actually bear fruit that can be plucked. But a mango tree full of flowers is a sign of hope that, in the sweltering summer days of May and June, one can take comfort in the joys of a delicious mango fruit.

Janet Powers, in her timely book, *Kites over the Mango Tree: Restoring Harmony between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat,* sets about doing exactly this: she provides the possibility of Hope and ultimately of Festival for a State that has embroiled itself to the depths of despair and division.

Her book will surely provide the sensitive reader not only with significant lessons from Gujarat but also with a much needed motivation to move toward Hope and Festival!

*Fr. Cedric Prakash, S.J.*
*Director*
*"PRASHANT"*
*(A Centre for Human Rights, Justice and Peace)*
*Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India*
*April 2008*

# PREFACE

Although unspoken, uppermost in the minds of many in Gujarat is the Carnage of 2002, when as many as 2,000 Muslims were killed (the exact number will never be known as so many were burned), hundreds of small and large businesses destroyed, and scores of women humiliated and raped. Although communal riots are nothing new in India or in Gujarat, the 2002 genocide was different. Virtually everyone agrees that it amounted to a watershed of sorts regarding communal violence in India. For one thing, the 2002 Carnage was deliberately targeted at a single community and was marked by elaborate planning and detailed information. For another, it was carried out under the direction of the state government, with the connivance of police and government officials.

Third, the Carnage was allowed to go on for three weeks before any government intervention was made, so that when the army was finally called in by the federal government, the worst of the damage had occurred. Fourth, and certainly not least important, the 2002 Carnage was marked by unprecedented violence against Muslim women and demonstrated a twisted obsession with their fertility. Finally, the Carnage was conducted largely through the mobilization of *dalits* (untouchables) and *adivasis* (tribal people), who were promised Hindu respectability if they collaborated in an attack on their traditional minority allies.

All of these horrors were the product of Hindu nationalism, a strain of thinking that has been present throughout the twentieth-century process of nation-building in India but has recently resurged. Although Chapter 1 will go into more detail about the Gujarat Carnage, depiction of violence is not the purpose of this book—just the opposite, in fact. Coming to the subject as a peace-builder, a mediator, a feminist, and a human rights activist, I

am profoundly disturbed by what happened in Gujarat in 2002. My bias is against violence, no matter who the perpetrator. My focus, moreover, is on postviolence healing.

How can a society put the pieces back together? What can nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations do to bridge the divide of violence and encourage individuals on both sides to treat each other with respect? What are the future prospects for a society that is reaping the benefits of globalization yet funding violence at home through the contributions of nonresident Indians (NRIs), who make good incomes running motels, gas stations, and convenience stores in the United States or the United Kingdom, or working as software engineers? To answer these questions, we must examine the context of the 2002 Carnage in more detail and take a look as well at the historical background of Gujarat. In Part I, we will review Gandhi's attempt to encourage Hindu–Muslim unity by bringing the All-India Congress to the Khilafat Movement in the 1920s.

Part II will allow us a deeper understanding of the hydra-headed Sangh Parivar (Saffron Organization), with its many well-organized branches aimed at cultivating hatred and distrust, not only of Muslims but also toward Christians and Marxists. We will also examine the various reform movements and strands of Muslim thinking that have dominated India's Islamic community during the past several centuries. In addition, we will try to understand why Indians in the United States support the Hindu nationalism of the Sangh Parivar, even though the activities of the Saffron Organization are in direct contravention of the Indian Constitution.

The third and largest section of the book will focus on Gujarati NGOs, charitable trusts, and human rights organizations that sought to heal the breach in the wake of the Gujarat Carnage. Ten of these organizations were part of a model project organized by CARE India: the Gujarat Harmony Project. Their interventions and healing strategies were creative and effective, if in the end only a few drops in a large bucket. As with all NGO projects, moreover, we must raise the issue of what happens when the funding runs out, as it inevitably does. Some of the Gujarat Harmony players continued their projects; others did not. But with almost every project, a philosophy was infused and an attitude of respect encouraged in a way that would have a long-term impact—although it is one that is difficult to measure.

In the final chapter, we will hear the voices of both activists and displaced people, some pessimistic, some hopeful, about the future of their respective communities and long-term prospects for peaceful coexistence. Their efforts may lead the way for others, elsewhere in India or other troubled parts of the world, to mend their respective societies in the broken places and work toward tolerance and harmony.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, let me thank the courageous men and women of the Gujarat Harmony Project who took the time to speak with me about their work and who continue to believe in the possibility of healing despite great obstacles. I extend my deepest appreciation to Ila Pathak of the Ahmedabad Women's Action Group; Binoy Acharya of UNNATI; Gazala Paul of Samerth; Afzal Memon of the Gujarat Sarvajanik Trust; Father Cedric Prakash S.J., formerly of St. Xavier Social Service Society, now of Prashant; Father Paul D'souza S.J. of St. Xavier Social Service Society; H.P. Misra of Kamdar Swasthy-Sharaksha Mandal; Rafi Malik of the Centre for Development; Rajendra Joshi and Chinmayi Desai of SAATH; Dr. Viren Doshi of the Tribhavandas Foundation; Pratihari Subhendu and Veena Padia of CARE Ahmedabad; and my dear sisters of Olakh, especially Nimisha Desai, Mamta Baxi, Runki Mukherjee, and Ranjan Patel.

Peace-builders from other organizations sharing the goal of communal harmony also gave their time to educate me and I am truly grateful to them: Gagan Seth of Jan Vikas; Nafisa Barot and Meera Velayudhan of UTTHAN; Sheba George of Sahr Waru; Sophia Khan of SAFAR; Jahnvi Andharia of ANANDI; and Avinash Kumar of Oxfam. Spending four days with the women of SEWA, including Rima Nanavati, and Jyoti Macwan, and many Hand Holders and Shanta Bens, fulfilled a long-time goal and allowed me to observe Hindu–Muslim unity in action.

I am happy to find a friend in Esther David, whose novels and short stories, as well as lively conversation, reflect the gradual loss of inclusive community in Ahmedabad. I also want to thank Sara Ahmed, who helped at the outset by introducing me to several participants in the Gujarat Harmony Project.

For courageous work and a shared map, I am obliged to Teesta Setalvad of *Communalism Combat*.

For numerous suggestions and corrections, I am thoroughly indebted to my partner, John Wesley Kulp, who read the manuscript in its entirety; and to Sadida Scott, who read the chapter on Islamic Reformers. I am grateful to Jean Potuchek for her unfailing help with data from my questionnaire and to Kim Breighner and Carrie Szarko for assistance with other technical issues. Finally, let me express appreciation to my former editor, Hilary Claggett, who believed in the worth of this book.


**Widespread Violence in 2002**

- 153 out of 182 Assembly Constituencies were affected in widespread violence that occurred in
- 993 villages and 151 town covering
- 284 police stations

***(State SIB Report to the Election Commission)***

**Statistics on Relief Camps**

Number of people officially declared taking shelter until March 2002
**103 Relief Camps: Number of Persons – 1,13,697.**
*(These were figures given to the then Gujarat Governor, Sundersingh Bhandari)* by the governor-headed All-Party Committee on Relief Camps. **District-wise break-up:**
**Ahmedabad – 66,292 in 44 camps, Vadodara – 12,753, Sabarkantha – 8,547, Panchmahal – 8,271, Anand – 5,200, Dahod – 4,536, in Mehsana – 2,637, Kheda – 1,267**

**Displaced Persons 2007**

Five years later as many 8,700 persons live as Internally Displaced persons within Gujarat.
They do not have legal claims to the housing they now reside in
They do not have ration cards
They do not have BPL cards and other documents basic to a citizen's right
They are refugees in their own state

**Relief and Rehabilitation Figures**

Official number of deaths –1037 (including Godhra 822) – State of Gujarat's response to the NHRC
Unofficial estimates of deaths – 2,500
Official figures of missing persons – 413
Women & children killed – 225
***(Report of the Women's Parliamentary Committee)***
Numbers of missing persons not yet found - 228
Attacks on women - 185 (100 in Ahmedabad City)
Attacks on children - 57 (33 in Ahmedabad City)
Rape Cases - 11. 3 in Dahod, 1 in Anand, 4 in Panch Mahal and 3 in Ahmedabad

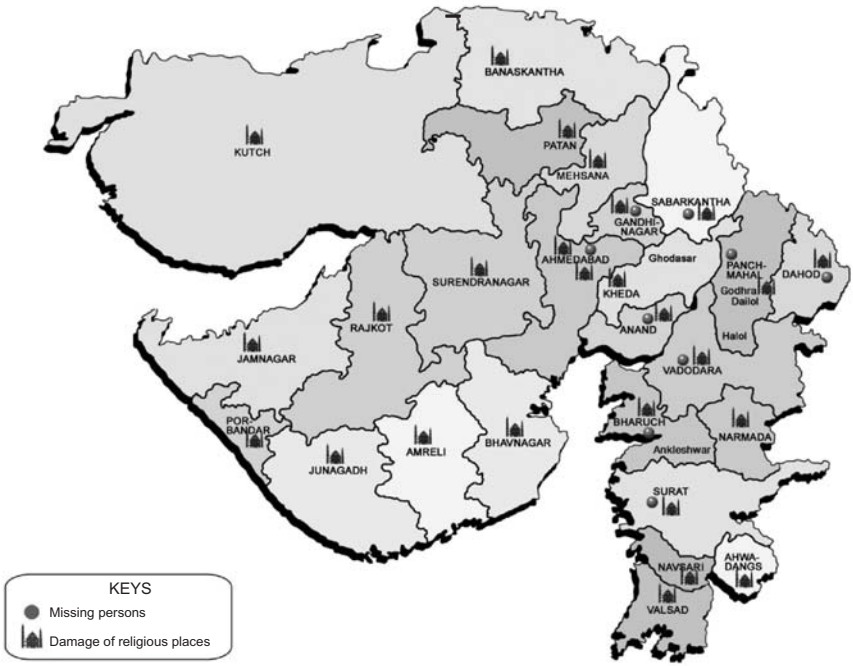
**Nos of Displaced Persons 2002-132,532**

**Homes fully destroyed – 4,954**
**Homes seriously damaged – 18,924**
(11,199 urban and 7095 Rural)
**Shops burnt – 10,429**
**Shops ransacked – 1,278**
(Few if any have recd. compensation)
***Larri-galas* lost due to arson – 2,623**
Rs 10,000 paid to start livelihood – 1,022
***(Report of the Women's Parliamentary Committee)***

Discrepancy in state's claims to NHRC
Residential homes of 18,037 homes of urban families (as against 13,222 till June 2002) & 11,204 families in rural areas had been destroyed or damaged
***(Report of the State of Gujarat to NHRC)***

Map of Gujarat showing districts and main cities. © Communalism Combat and Citizens for Justice and Peace.

# Gujarat Violence 2002–2007




**Details of missing persons in connection with Godhra Carnage in 2002**

| Sr. No. | City/District | No. of missing persons after Godhra Carnage | No. of missing persons yet not found |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | Ahmedabad City | 200 | 99 |
| 2 | Vadodara City | 5 | 5 |
| 3 | Surat City | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | Anand | 29 | 2 |
| 5 | Dahod | 19 | 17 |
| 6 | Ahmedabad Rural | 9 | 9 |
| 7 | Panch Mahal | 112 | 76 |
| 8 | Sabarkantha | 16 | 9 |
| 9 | Bharuch | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | W. Rly. Vadodara | 21 | 9 |
| | Total | 413 | 228 |

**Estimate of Total Losses**

Rs 600 crores (Mid 2002) Rs 687 crores (Sept 2002)
Additional DG report dated 24th Feb 2002 and August 2002
Unofficial and business estimates
Losses @ Rs 3,000 crores

**Funds Spent on Compensation**

State of Gujarat Rs 55 crores
Central government Rs. 150 crores

**Compensation for Lives Lost**

Rs. 1.5 lakh/victim
Total spent - 17.90 crores

**Rations to 1,13,697 Inmates of Relief Camps**
**Total spent 119 crores**

**Compensation for Homes Damaged/Destroyed**

18,924 houses (partially damaged)
(11,199 urban & 7095 rural) Rs. 15.55 crores paid
(Note: average: only Rs. 870 per house !!
Women's Parliamentary Committee had said they had seen checks for payments made out as little as Rs 40 to Rs 200 per home!)

**Details of damage to religious places during communal riots after Godhra carnage**

| | | Damaged religious places | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sr. No. | District | Dargah | Masjid | Temple | Church | Total | Madresa | Repaired / Reconstructed | Not Repaired / Not Reconstructed |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 13 |
| 1 | A'bad City | 38 | 40 | 8 | - | 86 | 1 | 53 | 34 |
| 2 | Vadora City | 8 | 13 | 1 | - | 22 | - | 21 | 1 |
| 3 | Surat City | 3 | 9 | 1 | - | 13 | 1 | 11 | 2 |
| 4 | Rajkot City | 6 | 1 | - | - | 7 | - | 6 | 1 |
| 5 | Anand | 25 | 45 | 4 | - | 74 | 4 | 47 | 28 |
| 6 | Godhra | 14 | 30 | - | - | 44 | 4 | 19 | 26 |
| 7 | Sabarkantha | 51 | 17 | - | - | 68 | 14 | 58 | 23 |
| 8 | Kheda | 43 | 20 | 1 | - | 64 | 2 | 53 | 11 |
| 9 | Mehsana | 19 | 10 | - | - | 29 | 1 | 17 | 13 |
| 10 | Banaskantha | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | Bharuch | 2 | 5 | - | - | 7 | - | 7 | - |
| 12 | Gandhinagar | 19 | 4 | 2 | - | 25 | - | 18 | 7 |
| 13 | Amreli | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14 | Junagadh | 11 | 2 | - | - | 13 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| 15 | A'bad Rural | 14 | 10 | 1 | - | 25 | 1 | 24 | 1 |
| 16 | Dahod | 6 | 13 | - | 3 | 22 | 1 | 22 | 1 |
| 17 | Narmada | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| 18 | Patan | 8 | 4 | - | - | 12 | - | 12 | - |
| 19 | Vadodara Rural | 8 | 7 | - | - | 15 | 4 | 18 | 1 |
| 20 | Ahwa-Dang | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21 | Jamnagar | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 22 | Navsari | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 23 | Porbandar | 4 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 4 | - |
| 24 | Surat Rural | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 25 | Valsad | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| 26 | Surendranagar | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| 27 | Bhavnagar | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | 6 | - |
| 28 | Rajkot Rural | 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | 3 |
| 29 | Kutch-Bhuj | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 6 | - | 5 | - |
| 30 | Westpol Vadodara | - | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| | Total | 285 | 240 | 21 | 3 | 649 | 36 | 413 | 167 |

# PROLOGUE

On my first trip to Gujarat in January 2006, I was taken by a Hindu friend to the rooftop of her affluent family's home in Vadodara to observe the celebration of Uttarayan. Although it was relatively late in the day and many exhausted kite-flyers were resting after a celebratory meal, several were still at it, manipulating their glass-coated strings, calling out "*kapu chay*," as their kites dipped, soared, and cut the strings of other kites. Later in the day, we observed a traditional *tukkal* or illuminated box kite as it incinerated in the early evening sky.

The Hindu festival of Uttarayan, which marks the annual entry of the sun god into the Northern Hemisphere, is celebrated in a big way in Gujarat. It is a light-hearted moment identified with the first warming of weather and the passing of winter's chill. Celebrated on January 14, Uttarayan also marks the biannual change in wind direction so important to the traders who have sailed the coasts of Gujarat since the days of the Indus Valley Civilization (2600–2150 BCE). Known elsewhere as the Hindu festival of Makar Sankranti because it distinguishes the passing of the sun into the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makara), it is celebrated in Tamilnadu as Pongal and at Prayag with immersion in the Ganges. Merit may be earned by giving gifts to Brahmins (cows, money, flowers) and cows (grass) on this particularly auspicious day.

In Gujarat, however, the traditional Muslim sport of kite-flying has become blended with a Hindu festival marking a solar event, and the result is a celebration to which both religious groups contribute. For that reason, kites have become the central metaphor for this book, and yet that metaphor is necessarily both multiple and nuanced. In reality, it is mostly Hindus who fly the kites on Uttarayan, although Muslims are the traditional kite-makers.

Indeed, it was Muslim artisans from Lucknow and Delhi who introduced the royal hobby of flying kites to the court at Ahmedabad in the seventeenth century. Uttarayan kites thus represent a cultural symbiosis, as the Hindu and Muslim communities depend on each other for the production of kites and their festive use. Moreover, the idea of a festival to celebrate the end of winter would seem attractive to those from all religious communities.

Other dimensions of the kite metaphor, including the *manja* or cutting aspect of kite-dueling, suggest a darker interpretation. Although enacted in the spirit of play, *manja* is itself a metaphor for the Hindu–Muslim divide in Gujarat. One wonders when kite-flying became identified with Hindus rather than Muslims. Was there a time under a Muslim ruler when everyone flew kites? Hindu nationalists have declared Makar Sankranti an official holiday. Can we say that Hindus appropriated a Muslim sport? Have Muslims been discouraged from flying kites on a Hindu holiday? Christians and Parsis have been known to join in the sport. *The Times of India* (Ahmedabad 1/14/08), insists that people from all communities enjoy the kites of Uttarayan, but as I rode about Ahmedabad on Uttarayan, I was not so sure.

Engaging an auto rickshaw in a Muslim area of the old walled city, I noted that no one there was flying or selling kites. But because it was a holiday and I had free time, I set off to visit an extraordinary *baoli*, or step-well, constructed in 1499 by a woman of Sultan Begara's harem. Such step-wells are unique to Gujarat, perhaps because of the dry climate combined with ample ground water. Despite its Muslim origin, that particular step-well is today located in a predominantly Hindu area. It was surrounded by young boys manipulating their kite-strings as they clambered all over the entrance to the baoli. I sensed my youthful driver's anxiety as we stopped occasionally to ask directions to the well or waited patiently for a cow to amble by. He exhibited none of the usual bravado exhibited by auto rickshaw drivers who toot their horns constantly and vie for first-out-of-the-gate status at intersections. This driver was being exceptionally polite and cautious. I wondered whether I was putting him in danger by asking him to come to a Hindu neighborhood on an "unsafe" holiday.

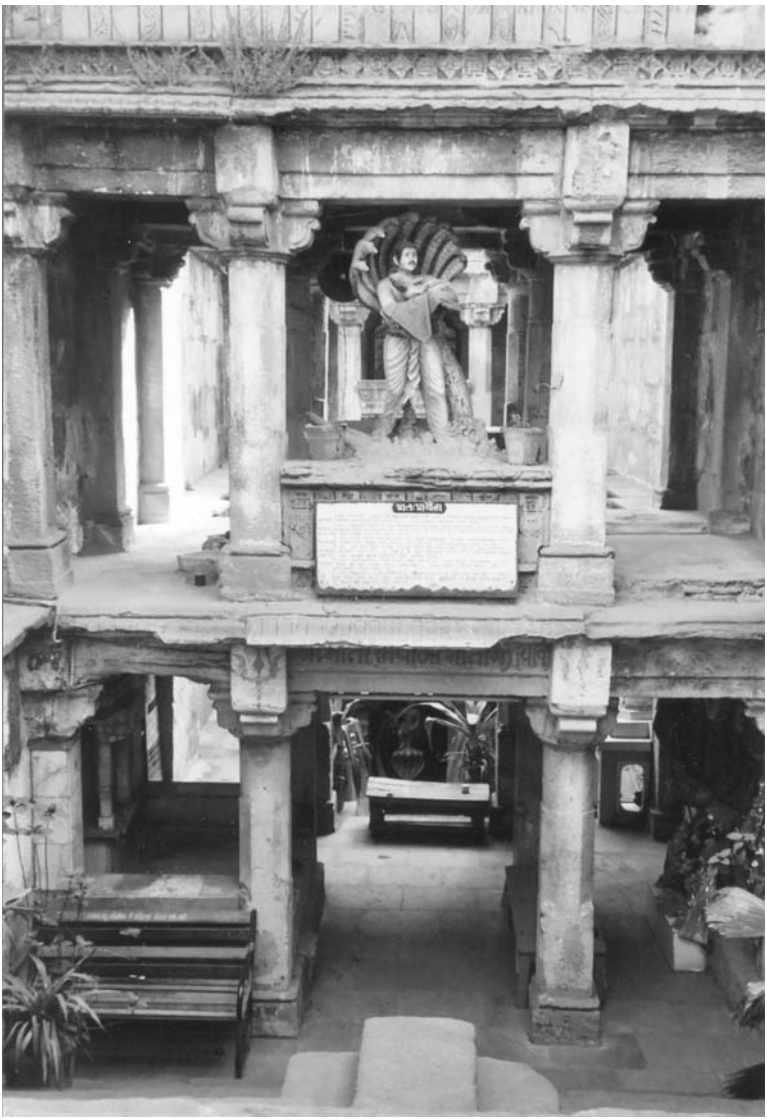
Having gone all the way to the bottom of the steps to thoroughly explore the astonishing four-storey depths of Dada Hari Wav, I asked the driver to move on so that I could look at another: Mata Bhavani Wav. Worse yet for my driver, this baoli had been turned into a temple to the Hindu mother goddess in her fiercest aspect, Bhairavi. Again, I asked the driver to wait while I descended the steps into the depths of the baoli and found myself face-to-face with the glaring eyes of the goddess. It was *darshan* (seeing the goddess and being seen in turn) in every sense of the word. I did not stay long, however, as there was no priest in evidence at that hour, so I stopped only to pick up a bit of sacred ash from an adjacent Shiva shrine.

My driver seemed relieved when I emerged and told him that we could return safely to the Muslim lanes surrounding Lal Darwaza. His bravado

returned as we passed the railway station and made our way into the old city. We saw a number of policemen on our excursion, most of them clustered at border areas between Hindu and Muslim neighborhoods. It seems that I was not the only one with misgivings on this festival day, when few are working and time hangs heavy on the hands of young men. Uttarayan is not one of the "safe" holidays with no potential for provoking violence. I was told later that fights sometimes break out over the possession of fallen kites chased down by several different individuals. Even the smallest incident can be a catalyst for something larger and more violent. Because of the Gujarat Carnage of 2002, what should be a festive occasion takes on an air of ambivalence.

The resurgence of Hindu nationalism has taken a particularly virulent form in Gujarat under the guidance of a state government dominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Most troubling, Sangh Parivar leaders have indicated that Gujarat is meant to be a laboratory for ethnic cleansing in other parts of India. Islamic militants have also been active in Gujarat and elsewhere in the country. To both of these groups belongs another aspect of the kite metaphor, this time a pun. Many varieties of kites, deadly birds of prey, soar in the skies above India. Fending them off is the work of numerous local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which strive through innovative projects to strengthen civil society and rebuild damaged relations between members of various religious groups.

At this point, we may invoke the final dimension of the kite metaphor, the winds of change. Because Uttarayan occurs in the middle of January, it not only marks the passage of the sun into a new hemisphere and zodiac band but also coincides with the shifting of the trade winds, which blow from east to west during fall and winter and from west to east during spring and summer. It may be possible to find in the Gujarat Carnage of 2002 the impetus for a wind shift, a positive one that will enable that state to leave behind the depths of perversion to which some perpetrators sank and to sail instead in the direction of communal harmony.



Mata Bhavani Wav is Hindu in origin and contains an underground Hindu temple to Bhairavi, terrifying consort of Siva Bhairava.

# PART I

# Where Cultures Cross

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# CHAPTER 1

# 1992 and 2002

> Curfew, riots, blood shed. A river of tears separates us from one another. All that remains of the walls of the old city is a crumbling mound of bricks. I think of it as Ahmedabad's Wailing Wall; it watches over the tears of its people.
>
> —Esther David, *The Wall*

As the BJP (Bharata Janatiya Party) gained prominence in the 1980s, scholarly discourse centered around the idea of "imagined communities," a term coined by Benedict Anderson in a work by the same name. The concept of a pure Indian *rashtra* (nation-state), as constructed by Hindu nationalists, was one such imagined community.[1] Although Hindu nationalism was far from being a new phenomenon, its adoption by millions of middle- and upper-class Indians was.

The rise of the movement was aided by new fears engendered by extension of reservations (in universities and government jobs) to fully 40 percent of the population, as well as a celebrated legal case favoring Muslim personal law.[2] In this favorable context, Hindu nationalism was ripe to flourish, even without a concerted effort on the part of the Saffron organizations. However, those groups engaged in relentless efforts to spread their ideas by every means imaginable. Borrowing organizational ideas from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and coupling those with modern technology, proponents of *hindutva* brilliantly instilled their ideas in the minds of higher-caste Indians who had previously thought their social status secure. Hindu nationalists also cleverly won the hearts and minds of the rising middle class, who aspired to raising their status within the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy by Sanskritization.

Capitalizing on the threat that high-caste Indians felt as a result of the Mandel Commission, which extended privileges and reservations to Other Backward Castes (OBCs), Hindu nationalists, mostly Brahmins, successfully painted the victimizers as victims. Those who stood just below them in the caste hierarchy also felt the rising tide of the masses as their children found it increasingly difficult to obtain jobs, secure government positions, and gain entry into prestigious educational institutions such as ITT (Indian Institute of Technology). Indeed, one feature of the Indian social scene at this time was carefully engineered riots that broke out in strategic cities, fomented by inflammatory pamphlets, street speakers, and newspaper articles planted by VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and BJP functionaries. One such riot occurred in Ahmedabad in 1985, and another occurred in Vadodara (formerly Baroda) in 1981–82.

Making use of mass media and India's evolving romance with television and the Internet, *hindutva* leaders devised several campaigns designed to win votes for the BJP and implant core ideas in the minds of Hindus bewildered by the rush to globalization and the caste threat from below. Sensing, however, that it could not afford to alienate lower-caste voters, the BJP began to court Dalits (untouchables) and OBCs by organizing seven major *yatras* (campaigns) around the theme of Hindu unity between 1983 and 1990. Using every conceivable means of communication—myths, aphorisms, *bhajans*, rituals, and films—the BJP emphasized such slogans as "We are Hindus—say it with pride!" and "Muslims are children of Babur." They also asked people to prove their Hindu affiliation by contributing a small amount toward the cost of bricks for a spectacular new temple at Ayodhya. The most destructive campaign was a *rath* (chariot) *yatra* (procession)[3] initiated by L. K. Advani from Somnath on September 25, 1990: communal violence broke out in 26 places in Gujarat, killing 99 people. The chief organizer of the *yatra* was none other than Narendra Modi, then general secretary of the Gujarat BJP, later to become Chief Minister.

## AYODHYA

Sunil Khilnani describes the collection of 167,000 bricks piled up in Ayodhya toward the end of 1989 in preparation for a new temple to be erected on the site of a sixteenth-century mosque built by Babur, the first Mughal emperor:

> These were not ordinary bricks. They were Ram *shilas*, "Ram's bricks", collected from places across the country and outside India. Each was inscribed with its place of origin, and among the most proudly displayed were those dispatched by emigrant communities in the United States, Canada, South Africa and the Caribbean.[4]

These bricks, collected as part of the sixth *yatra,* the Ramshila Poojan, were clearly intended for the construction of a new Hindu temple to mark the supposed birthplace of Rama, one of Vishnu's avatars and hero of the Ramayana. This glorious new temple was to replace the soon-to-be destroyed mosque, said to have been built on the site of an earlier Hindu temple. By thus focusing Hindu attention on the Babri Masjid, the Sangh Parivar managed to condense into one overriding narrative the birth of Rama, the conquest of north India by Muslims in 1526, and the rise of the BJP—a political party that would restore Hinduism's former glory.

BJP leaders called for a Dharma Yudh (Holy War), which would culminate in the destruction of the mosque on December 6, 1992. Despite orders from the central government, RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) cadres built a platform at the site and pilgrims continued to flock there. On the appointed day, at least 100,000 people turned up, and while they were listening to speeches, *kar sevaks* (Hindu militants armed with iron rods and shovels) swarmed all over the mosque and hacked at it until all three domes caved in. As Martha Nussbaum notes, the events "showed that the undisciplined forces of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal played a role in the political mix: the BJP was revealed as relying on activists whom it could not control."[5] Not surprisingly, widespread riots occurred across India, particularly in Mumbai and Delhi, many of them instigated by Hindu activists.

In Gujarat, Surat experienced the most severe violence: more than 200 people were killed over several months. Other cities in Gujarat—Ahmedabad, Vadodara, and Godhra—experienced Hindu–Muslim conflict to a lesser extent. With all eyes of Hindu India on it, the BJP did well at the polls in the next national election, coming into power at the national level in May 1996. Advani, moreover, was appointed home minister and deputy prime minister. Fired up by their saffron victory, VHP and Bajrang Dal branches of the Sangh Parivar became increasingly militant, extending their animosity to Christians among the *adivasis* (tribal people) in South Gujarat. The maximum number of incidents occurred in Gujarat and Maharashtra where the BJP and the Shiv Sena, respectively, were in power at the state level.

In 1996, seven cases of anti-Christian violence were registered; in 1997, 24 cases were noted. On Christmas Day 1998, 10 churches and prayer halls in Dangs district were burned or severely damaged.[6] Bibles were burned, Indian missionaries intimidated, and in that year 120 acts of anti-Christian violence occurred. In 1999, Father Graham Stewart Staines, who had spent years caring for leprosy patients, was burned to death, along with his two sons, while sleeping outside in a jeep. Other incidents have included the storming of the Catholic Hospital Association camp by the RSS, VHP, and ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad); disruption of the Jesus Festival in Vadodara, and the hacking to death of Sister Rani Maria at Indore in nearby Maharashtra.[7]

Meanwhile, the VHP was quick to justify destruction of the Babri Masjid by reporting on its Web site a discovery, on June 18, 1992, of pre-Babri Hindu temple remains at the same location:

> When the ground near the Ramajanma Bhumi was being leveled, a most startling archaeological discovery was made at Ayodhya. At a depth of about 12 feet from the ground level near the Ramajanma Bhumi temple, towards the south and beyond the fencing, a big hoard of beautifully carved buff sandstone pieces was located in a large pit, dug down below the old top level. A careful study by a group of eight eminent archaeologists and historians found that all these objects are architectural members of a Hindu-temple complex of the 11th century A.D.[8]

Subsequently, e-mails began to circulate, listing a large number of Muslim monuments supposedly constructed on the sites of previous Hindu temples. Even the Taj Mahal was not exempt from the list! Some doubted the find at Ayodhya, said to be the remains of a *shikhara* (tower) and *amalaka* (crown piece) typical of North Indian temples built between 900 and 1200 CE. However, neutral archaeologists have not examined the site, which seems to contain pillar bases from several different dates.[9]

Archaeologists and historians are aware of the fact that colonizing cultures frequently build new places of worship on sites already sacred to an indigenous population in order to capitalize on deeply ingrained religious customs and graft onto them new ways of thinking and worshiping. In some cases, earlier places of worship are razed before new ones are built and old stones are used in new structures. Thor Heyerdahl points to multiple religious layers at sites in the Maldives, with Hindu sun temples, Buddhist temples, and Islamic mosques constructed on top of the other.[10] Similarly, an enormous Buddhist stupa rises from the ruins of Mohenjo Daro, suggesting that an earlier Indus Valley worship site was supplanted by a Buddhist structure. Richard Eaton, moreover, reports that temple desecration also served a perceived political need to sweep away prior authority in newly conquered and annexed territories. South Asian temples have been sites for contested kingly authority since the sixth century, for their sacred icons represented "the shared sovereignty of king and deity."[11] This religiopolitical concept was exported from India to Southeast Asia during the Gupta period (second to seventh centuries CE), and Muslim colonizers who came after, there and in India, simply continued a well-established pattern.[12]

On the basis of epigraphic and literary evidence over five centuries (1192–1729), Eaton is able to document 80 instances of temple desecration, 12 of them in Gujarat, including sacking of the famous temple at Somnath in 1299 by Ulugh Khan. In order to decouple the Hindu ruler from the image of the state, Khan sent the largest Somnath image, presumably the state deity,

to the court of Sultan 'Ala al-Din Khalaji in Delhi. Other ways of making that point included simply destroying temples essential to enemy authority or converting them into mosques, "which visibly conflated disestablishment of former sovereignty with establishment of a new one."[13] After conquered lands were annexed, however, temples lying in those areas were left untouched and new temples could be built by anyone who paid the Muslim poll tax. From the time of Akbar, Mughal rulers treated Hindu temples as protected state property and paid for repairs.[14] It was under the rule of Aurangzeb, however, that temple desecration again began as a punishment for disloyal Hindu officers in Mughal service. Muslim officers, by contrast, were punished by demotion or execution but not by attacking apolitical mosques or Sufi shrines with which they were associated.[15]

Gujarat, often the exception, saw a rare early instance of Hindu destruction of mosques in 1680 as a response to Aurangzeb's invasion of Rajasthan. Bhim Singh, a Rajput chief seeking to avenge the emperor's destruction of temples in Udaipur and elsewhere, raided Gujarat, a neighboring Muslim kingdom, and destroyed one large mosque and 30 smaller ones in Vadnagar, Vishalnagar, and Ahmedabad. Thus, a Hindu ruler, thinking in traditional terms of a place of worship as representing the state, destroyed mosques that had no political relevance.[16] In fact, the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992 was a similar application of traditional Hindu thinking to an historical structure that had little political significance outside of that constructed by Hindu nationalists.

By conflating the notion of the Ramjanbhumi temple with the site of the Babri Masjid, and the idea of Hindu unity with the notion of Muslims as "outsiders," the Sangh Parivar succeeded in evoking a sense of outrage at the sixteenth-century desecration of a temple sacred to Rama, whose kingship is celebrated in the epic *Ramayana*. Hindu nationalists thus reinscribed the site at Ayodhya with traditional Indian notions regarding the political significance of the "state deity." The appeal to nonresident Indians, moreover, further combined the ideal of the modern Indian state with Rama and the reconstruction of the Ramjanbhumi temple. One could argue, moreover, that Mahatma Gandhi had, perhaps mistakenly, made the same point before 1941 by referring to the goal of independence from Britain as "Ram Raj," or the rule of Rama, a usage that made most Muslims distinctly uncomfortable. Why would an emigrant Indian in 1989 *not* want to demonstrate loyalty to his/her nation of birth by contributing money and bricks to the Ramshila Poojan Yatra?

Although the Ramjanbhumi/Babri Masjid issue came to the attention of the larger world only with the *yatras* (processions) organized by the Sangh Parivar, Hindu nationalists had long been working to gain a toehold in Ayodhya. As early as 1850, Hindu ascetics had attacked the mosque, resulting in a compromise allowing Hindus to perform rituals on a platform outside the structure, which soon became a place of pilgrimage. British officials

turned down an 1883 request for a temple to be built adjacent to the mosque. In 1949, however, Hindus entered the temple illegally and placed images of the baby Ram inside, to the consternation of Nehru, who arranged for the arrest of leading Hindu nationalists and the removal of the disputed idols. The Ayodhya issue came up again in 1984 with the VHP demand for "liberation" of Ram's birthplace as a major theme in the seven *yatras* aimed at coalescing Hindus from divergent sects and practices into a united whole. On October 30, 1990, VHP supporters on a mass pilgrimage to Ayodhya forced open the gate of the mosque and planted a saffron flag on one dome. Although the police restored order with tear gas and clubs, the VHP called its supporters "victims of police violence."

In the intervening years following the destruction of the mosque, plans were drawn up for construction of the Ramjanbhumi temple on the mosque site. A Ram Naam Jap campaign was organized, encouraging supporters to recite "Shri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram" nonstop for 65 days, beginning in November 2001. That qualified them to participate in a *yagna* (sacrifice) beginning in January in Ayodha and continuing until March. Indeed, the *kar sevaks* (VHP volunteers), whose deaths in a train fire were the catalyst for the Gujarat riots of 2002, were on their way back from the rally in Ayodhya to celebrate laying the temple foundation. More than 2,000 such volunteers left Gujarat for Ayodhya in three groups on February 22, 24, and 26, most armed with *trishuls* (trident spears) of varying lengths. Police vigilance on the way out was noteworthy; Muslim vendors closed their stalls and bearded Muslims were told to stay away from stations at night. As a result of a communication failure, intended or otherwise, the return trip was much more problematical.

## GODHRA

The first batch of VHP activists started back on the evening of the 25th, after participating in the *yagna*. The police, perhaps not expecting anyone to return so soon, because other groups were just leaving on the 26th, were totally unprepared for the violence that erupted. Rail authorities, including railway police, moreover, failed to inform stations farther along the line that the train had been delayed because of the conduct of VHP passengers. Thus, the Sabarmati Express drew into Godhra four hours late at a platform where Muslim vendors maintained stalls and many Muslim commuters were waiting for their regular trains to nearby stations. Trouble began as soon as VHP passengers, carrying sticks, got down and began to assault a tea vendor. Eyewitnesses say that some Muslims complied with VHP demands to say "Jai Shri Ram," but others refused. Some of the *kar sevaks* (volunteer workers) tried unsuccessfully to molest two Muslim girls on the platform. Three lathi-carrying policemen made no efforts to intervene.[17]

The train stopped for only three minutes at Godhra. As it pulled out, Muslims, who compose 40 percent of the population in that city, began stoning the cars. But the train stopped barely a minute after leaving the platform—the chain had been pulled in four bogies to enable VHP passengers left behind to get on board. When the train stopped for a second time, near Signal Falia, Muslims came from behind the train and began stoning it. Assistant Stationmaster Rajendraprasad Meena reported to the Nanavati Commission[18] that "he had not seen climbing into or alighting from the train and that he did not think it possible to throw an article inside the train because the windows of the coach were higher (7 feet) than the heads of those standing near the tracks."[19] Stone pelting continued even as black smoke began billowing out of the S-6 coach. An experiment conducted by the Forensic Science Laboratory showed that had flammable liquid been poured from outside, the coach would not have caught fire as it did, from the floor.[20] The fire started near seat 72, concluded the FSL report: about 60 liters of flammable liquid spilled from inside and a fire erupted immediately.

Survivors of the S-5 and S-6 tragedy, however, tell a different story, claiming that the Muslim mob broke the windows and poured flammable liquid inside, followed by rags and balls of burning cotton. Some remember the smoke having a strange smell; many were suffocated by it and passed out. Some who died may have been asphyxiated before the fire actually reached them. Another theory, proposed by an RPF (Railway Police Force) constable, suggests that the mob may have set fire to the rubber buffers between the coaches and poured diesel into the open toilet windows. Most of the fire brigade men who reached the train minutes later could not enter the coaches because of the intensity of the fire, but the RPF constable used blankets to bring passengers to safety. VHP passengers in other coaches, meanwhile, urged police to tackle the Muslim mob rather than trying to help surviving passengers.[21]

Following the Godhra tragedy, the VHP made much of the incident, immediately blaming Muslims for setting the train on fire and requesting that the bodies be sent to Ahmedabad to be celebrated as martyrs. An immediate response was the killing and burning spree now known as the Gujarat Carnage. Nine Muslims were arrested for the Godhra incident under POTA, antiterrorist legislation enacted in 2002, and 240 more after the Carnage. None of the Hindu perpetrators, however, have been charged for their barbaric acts of carnage.

In the wake of the violence, moreover, several other rationales emerged for the burning of the train. Congress party members accused the VHP of stage-managing the Godhra train tragedy in order to instigate communal violence all over Gujarat. The VHP, in turn, suggested that Muslims had deliberately traveled on the Sabarmati Express in order to burn it. The accounts of eyewitnesses, however, do not point to a deliberately planned conspiracy by either side but, rather, to a tragic accident. Quite possibly,

*kar sevaks* or other passengers were carrying kerosene in order to cook food en route or simply transport it to another venue.[22] Many believe that the Godhra train incident was an excuse for a premeditated attack on Gujarat's Muslim minority. Surely leaders intent on diminishing communal violence would have done everything possible to stop the carnage that followed, with the help of police and army. Leaders who had the best interests of their people at heart would not have abetted the rioters, supplied them with minority voter lists, or instructed the police not to intervene. But Gujarat is Sangh Parivar territory. Its Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, was all too clearly an architect of a preplanned genocide against Muslims: "The cry of some attackers—'sabot mat chodo' (don't leave any evidence, don't leave a trace)—is important here, suggesting the acknowledgement of an existing juridical context, either as constraint or as norm, that made violence furtive, aware of its illegality."[23]

## ETHNIC CLEANSING

Much has been written about the three months of violence that ensued following the Godhra train burning. Without repeating all of the details, we should focus on the main events, the most devastating cases, and the consequences of this watershed in communal violence. And we also should look at some of the events leading up to the Carnage. For instance, a Hindu daily reported that young Hindu activists coming from the direction of Lucknow attacked Muslims on the Sabarmati Express with trishuls and iron rods on February 24, a day before the Godhra train caught fire: "Even women and innocent children were not spared. Burqas were pulled off, women were beaten with iron rods and dragged, people waiting at the platform were also similarly targeted."[24] Two weeks before the Godhra incident, at a VHP meeting held in Pandhavada, a local leader used a loudspeaker to threaten removal of Muslims; he stated that he would "break their necks," while all the while police and district officials sat sipping tea and laughing.[25]

Saffron organizations had been preparing for such attacks for months by holding trishul distribution ceremonies in rural areas and making hate speeches against Muslims. Methods typically used to spread propaganda against Muslims include religious lectures, songs, pamphlets, and rumors. "They are labeled 'traitors,' 'jehadis,' and 'antisocial.' Muslim areas are called 'mini-Pakistans,' 'breeding grounds for criminals.'"[26] Stereotypes abound: all butchers are Muslims; Muslims reproduce faster than Hindus; Muslim males have prodigious appetites for blood and sex. Such ideas, deliberately intended to rouse the testosterone of Hindu men, support the *hindutva* construction of "a united, homogeneous Hindu nation embodying martial prowess and invincible strength."[27]

On the evening of February 27, two days after the train burned, Modi held a secret meeting at his bungalow with the Commissioner of Police,

Ahmedabad; the Home Secretary; Secretary to the Home Department; police officers; and other officers from the Chief Minister's office. Modi informed the group that

> there would be justice the next day for Godhra, during a VHP-called bandh. He ordered that the police should not come in the way of "the Hindu backlash." . . . it was a typical Modi meeting: more orders than discussion. By the end of it, the CM ensured that his top officials—especially the police—would stay out of the way of the Sangh Parivar men. The word was passed on to the mob.[28]

Large-scale violence erupted in Ahmedabad on the morning of February 28. Huge mobs attacked Muslim homes in mixed neighborhoods: Naroda Patiya, Naroda Gam, Naroda fruit market, Chamanpura, Odhav, Gomtipur, Amranwadi, Paldi, and Vatva. Simultaneous attacks were launched in the surrounding countryside, as well as in the city of Vadodara, its rural districts of Sabarkanta, Panch Mahal, and some other areas. Fictitious articles in pro-BJP newspapers fanned the flames by publishing photographs of the Godhra victims and fictitious stories about rape and abduction of Hindu women. Television stations featured inflammatory speeches by BJP/VHP leaders.

Widescale violence against moderate Muslims ensued: 2,000 men, women, and children were raped, killed, or burned alive, and more than 200,000 people were made homeless or their businesses destroyed.[29] According to an official estimate, 151 towns and 993 villages, including 154 out of 182 assembly constituencies in the state, were affected by the violence.[30] In the wake of this violence, Hindus and Muslims withdrew from mixed communities in which they had been living. Trust between religious communities disappeared, and families on both sides suffered severely from posttraumatic stress. Refugee camps were set up and NGOs struggled to bring relief to victims, many of them Muslim widows whose small children, their men, and family businesses were specifically targeted in the riots.

The violence fell into three distinct phases. Most of the killing took place between February 28 and March 2; by March 7, 16 of Gujarat's 24 districts were consumed in violence. Police combing operations, ostensibly to search for weapons but in actuality to round up Muslim men, continued between March 15 and April 30. The third phase consisted of sporadic outbursts that periodically erupted until elections in December 2002, including terror attacks on minority high school students taking final exams. The army was deployed only on March 1, and even then it did not receive proper logistical support from the state government. This also was the case with fire brigades, which were prevented by Hindu activists from reaching burning structures.

Harsh Mander has written of the organized violence during the first phase as "a systematic planned massacre, a pogrom":

> Everyone spoke of the pillage and plunder being organized like a military operation against an external armed enemy. An initial truck would arrive broadcasting inflammatory slogans, soon followed by more trucks which disgorged young men, mostly in khaki shorts and saffron sashes. They were armed with sophisticated explosive materials, country weapons, daggers and trishuls. They also carried water bottles to sustain them in their exertions. The leaders were seen communicating on mobile telephones from the venues of mass violence, receiving instructions from and reporting back to a co-ordinating centre. Some were seen with documents and computer sheets listing Muslim families and their properties. They had detailed precise knowledge about buildings and businesses held by members of the minority community, such as who were partners say in a restaurant business, or which Muslim homes had Hindu spouses who should be spared in the violence. This was not a spontaneous upsurge of mass anger. It was a meticulously planned genocide.[31]

Mander goes on to tell of the same trucks carrying gas cylinders, a shortage of which inexplicably had developed in Gujarat in the weeks leading up to the Godhra incident. "Rich Muslim homes and business establishments were first systematically looted, stripped of all their valuables, then cooking gas was released from cylinders into the buildings for several minutes. A trained member of the group then lit the flame that efficiently engulfed the building."[32] One such home in the heart of Ahmedabad city was that of former Congress MP Ahsan Jafri, who attempted to negotiate with the mob but was pulled out of his house, stripped, paraded naked, and asked to say, "Jai Shri Ram." When he refused, his fingers were cut off, followed by his hands and feet, and he was dragged down the road with a trishul at his throat before being thrown into a fire. In Naroda Patiya on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, the Noorani Masjid was attacked, its minarets first broken and prayer rugs set on fire, followed by a gas explosion that leveled the mosque. A principal of Sunflower School described how attackers poured petrol into the mouth of six-year-old Imran, followed by a matchstick: "he just blasted apart."[33]

Women's testimonies and personal accounts reveal a pervasive attack on the reproductive capacity of Muslims:

> In the first phase of violence between 28 February and 8 March for instance, women recalled their pain and terror as they left their homes and saw them being looted and burnt. Many women were separated

> from their husbands and expressed their anxieties about their husbands' whereabouts. In the second phase following 15 March what stood out more was their suffering at the hands of the police. In fact, after the first phase, most testimonies centered around police atrocities on women during the combing operations.[34]

Some of the worst atrocities happened in Naroda Patiya, where 96 bodies were recovered. Khairunnisa was gang-raped by 11 men, who then burned her and each member of her family in turn; her mother's head was cut off. Kausar Bano was nine months pregnant. Her stomach was slashed, the fetus removed, and both mother and fetus burned. Four women were burned to death just outside the police station with the subinspector present.[35]

Vadodara became infamous for the incident at the Best Bakery where 24 people had taken shelter; 11 were killed and burned, including small children who were hacked to death along with three Hindu workers. The total loss (buildings, bakery raw materials, household goods, and vehicles) exceeded 3 lakh (300,000) rupees.[36] Rural areas were similarly terrorized, sometimes by outsiders and sometimes by *advivasis*, co-opted into attacking Muslim shops and homes. In Sanjeli village, Jhalod taluka, looting went on for five to six days and a total of 600 shops and homes were burned. A Christian church in Sanjeli was also burned and the pastor beaten when he tried to stop mobs from attacking Muslims. In Pandarwada village, Khanpur taluka, Hindus leaders organized Bhils to loot, steal Muslim livestock, and burn alive in one house 29 Muslims who had been offered "shelter." Some survivors fled the massacre, including women and small children who hid out in the hills and forest for as long as four days without food and water. Today there are no Muslims in Pandarwada, a village where Muslims had previously farmed fertile land on both sides of a canal.[37]

Many more harrowing stories have been collected from newspaper accounts and survivor testimony. But rather than dwell on these, we should instead turn our attention to the consequences of the Carnage. In the immediate aftermath of the first phase, refugee camps began to spring up and relief efforts were mounted not by the state government but by NGOs, which had gained experience with such work during the Gujarat earthquake in 2001. Many of the camps had no roofs, no coverings for the floor, and no sanitation facilities. At least one camp was in a Muslim cemetery, with refugees sleeping between the graves. Having refused to create the camps, the BJP government did its best to dismantle them early, sending people back to locations where they could not possibly be secure. Some camps were attacked in late April by Sangh activists.[38] At least 50 camps were in existence between March and June 2002, when the state government insisted that they be closed down. In every camp, children were so severely traumatized that they could not sleep or woke up screaming with fear in the middle of the night. Some became mute, others wept incessantly, and

still others reenacted attacks and murders in their play. A few camps housed Hindus, noticeably poor, who had left their homes out of fear or necessity when neighboring Muslim homes were burned. Children in the majority camps showed no signs of the trauma afflicting their minority counterparts, despite the fact that in some areas poorly armed Muslims had retaliated with violence.[39]

## CONSEQUENCES

According to a report issued by Jan Vikas (Center for Social Justice), Ahmedabad, more than two million people were forced to leave their houses and live in relief camps at the height of the violence. The camps were run by Muslim Relief Committees across six districts of Gujarat, as well as in the cities of Ahmedabad and Vadodara, where the state government provided some food and water, and some were organized by other NGOs. Many families had no hope of resettlement or rehabilitation; thousands were homeless and could not go home again because of the loss of houses and continuous threats from neighbors. Some alternative semipermanent shelters were created by NGOs and local relief committees, but as late as 2005, some families were still living in tents in rural Sabarkantha and Panch Mahal districts. The state government took no initiative in resettling these internally displaced persons either to their original places of residence or to new permanent structures in safer areas. Furthermore, the total damage to property during the Carnage amounted to at least Rs. 687 crores (6,870,000,000 rupees),[40] with financial assistance from the state government amounting to Rs. 121.85 crores, about 17.7 percent of total property loss. However, if loans are excluded, total state government assistance amounted to Rs. 46 crores, merely seven percent of total loss. This disgraceful gap attracted the attention of the National Human Rights Commission.[41]

Perhaps the worst consequence of the 2002 Carnage was increased poverty in all of the affected areas. Because most Muslims in Gujarat are not affluent, a poor minority has been further impoverished by the riots of 2002. Despite Hindutva allegations of government favoritism toward Muslims, the fact of the matter is that Muslims have not prospered in post-Partition India. Muslims are being squeezed out of villages, refused accommodation, and shut out of good jobs.[42] In Ahmedabad, where many textile workers lost their jobs beginning with the shutdown of mills in the 1980s, Muslims today are mainly in the informal sector of the economy, either as wage-workers or as petty entrepreneurs/traders.[43] Although post-Carnage replacement of rickshaws, handcarts, and sewing machines has facilitated for some a return to earlier means of earning a living, 30 percent of those affected report a change in their means of livelihood. Incomes of households disrupted by the riots have declined an average of 36 percent in the city. Indeed, more Muslims have entered the informal sector as a consequence of displacement

and loss of resources, for entrance is relatively easy and requires minimal investment.[44]

One of the most unfortunate consequences of the 2002 Carnage has been the increasing ghettoization of Ahmedabad and Vadodara, important cities in Gujarat. As in Nazi Germany, apartheid South Africa, and contemporary Israel, "the Other" is being exiled to certain parts of the city where they can be contained and easily dominated. In many cases, Muslims feel safer in such ghettos, some of which evolved in the course of the 2002 riots. Because they are located on the periphery of urban areas, there are few amenities or shops, and expensive transportation is required to get to jobs elsewhere in the city. The reality of ghettoization is that without everyday contact, prejudice increases on both sides. Young people are exposed to misconceptions, rumors, and distorted textbooks. The BJP government has changed the state syllabus so that it reflects a communal view of history and ignores significant facts: Europe's Fascist dictators are glorified, the Holocaust is ignored, and the identity of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin is erased.[45]

Writing about "the cultural boundary," Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen reiterates the importance of providing the opportunity for members of one society to appreciate and understand how others function.[46] Such opportunities become less and less frequent in the face of communalistic thinking, ghettoization, and biased syllabi. Indeed, many of the projects originating with the Gujarat Harmony Project and continuing today are efforts to bring together Hindus and Muslims in settings of mutual concerns and safety. One must question, however, how effective such work can be in a context of misguided leadership and intentional hatred. According to Khushwant Singh, "Commissions of inquiry have stated in categorical terms that in all Hindu-Muslim riots after Independence, over seventy-five per cent of the casualties—in terms of life and property—were Muslim."[47] Despite a declaration in India's constitution that minorities should be protected, just the opposite has happened. It is essential at this moment in time to ask "Why" and actively seek answers to that question.

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# CHAPTER 2

# Kingdoms and Conquests

> At the time of the first inroads of the Muhamadans, the fierce unity of Faith, that social cohesion and valorous fervour which made them as a body so irresistible, were qualities in which the Hindus proved woefully wanting.
>
> —Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

When one talks to Gujaratis today about the Carnage of 2002, responses are predictable. Members of NGOs and others who follow a Gandhian persuasion deplore what happened but note that Gujarat has a long history of communal disturbances. Those who follow the BJP line of reasoning, by contrast, demonstrate no remorse and may in fact register pleasure at the thought that they have finally taught Muslims a lesson. Why, one wonders, did Hindu nationalists feel the need for teaching such a horrific lesson? To answer that question, it makes sense to take a brief look at Gujarat's long history as a distinct culture, isolated somewhat from peninsular India by geography and by far-reaching trade ties with Africa and West Asia. Next, we will look more closely at Hindu and Muslim confrontations during the period of Muslim Conquest.

## GUJARAT IN A NUTSHELL

The state of Gujarat is named for the Gujaras, an immigrant tribe that entered India with the Hunas, a branch of the Hiung-nu of Chinese history and the Huns of European annals. Some of the Ephthalites (White Huns) settled in Rajasthan and what is today northern Gujarat. The modern state covers the regions of Kutch, Saurashta, and territories between the rivers

Banas and Damanganga. Within that area are the rivers Sabermati, Mahi Tapti, and Narmada, which keep the coastal plains green, as do the Bhadar, the Setrunji, and the Bhogavo for the peninsular plains. These fertile plains have provided excellent agriculture for centuries, as rainfall is approximately 25–50 inches per year. Arid zones in the north now have the potential to be augmented by irrigation waters from the Narmada river. The southern border is covered with hills, the tails of mountains outside the state, and forests, where Gir lions can be found.[1]

Earliest evidence of a highly organized civilization in what is today Gujarat consists of sites belonging to the Indus Valley civilization (2600–2150 BCE). At Lothal, a busy port offered trade with Mesopotamia, and in the Rann of Kutch, the city of Dolavira flourished with a sophisticated water catchment system. Gujarat's location, on the Arabian Sea, offered opportunities for trade with Africa and West Asia long before European explorers arrived on the scene. We don't know precisely what happened to the Indus Valley people. Despite attempts by the Finnish scholar Asko Parpola to show that their language was Dravidian, it is highly likely that when the Indus culture collapsed, perhaps because of earthquakes and shifting water sources, that its people simply melted into the surrounding areas. Certainly maritime skills, including ship-building and navigation, continued to be important to people of the region for succeeding millennia.

## HISTORY

We do not have good historical records of Gujarat before the Common Era. Before the invasion of Alexander the Great, Sind, although probably not Gujarat, was conquered circa 520 BCE by the Achaemenid Persians. Shortly after, circa 500 BCE, Prince Vijaya of Simhapura (Sihor near modern Bhavnagar) led area colonists to Sri Lanka. In ensuing centuries, merchants from Alexandria crossed the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Barbaricon on the Indus, from where they sailed to Barygaza (modern Broach) and other ports.[2] Although Alexander the Great never reached Gujarat, his invasion resulted in a political vacuum immediately filled by the Mauryan empire (321–181 BCE), under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya with his capital at Pataliputra in eastern India. A large dam, which later suffered severe flood damage, was constructed by Chandragupta's governor to provide irrigation for the Junagadh area in Gujarat.

Chandragupta's son Ashoka, who converted to Buddhism following a bloody battle at Kalinga, brought his new religion to Junagadh, as recorded in a rock inscription there.[3] From that city, in the Saurashtran peninsula, a Hindu Vaishya, Pushgagupta, also ruled in the last years of the third century BC. A Greek invasion of the area by Demetrius is known by the discovery of Greek and Roman coins. From the first to the fifth centuries CE, Gujarat was ruled by the Western Satraps or Kshatrapas, foreign invaders of Shaka

origin, beginning in 78 CE. The name of one king, Rudradaman (150 AD), is recorded in classical Sanskrit on the Junagadh rock inscription, which states that he ruled over Avanti, Kutch, Sindhu-Sauvira, Maru (desert country), and the northern part of the Konkan.[4] Moreover, he restored the damaged irrigation system out of his own treasury "without oppressing the people of the town or the province by exacting taxes, forced labour, donations or the like."[5]

The Kshatrapas were eventually replaced by the Guptas, when the territory was conquered by the famous king Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) who issued a silver coin. His successor, Skandagupta, also left an inscription (452 CE) on the same Junagadh rock. When Gupta power declined in the middle of the fifth century, Senapati Bhattarka, Maitreka General of the Guptas, established himself in Saurashtra with a new capital at Vallabhipura, home to a Buddhist university that rivaled Nalanda. Although they later returned, the Maitrakas were forced to flee their kingdom when Harsha-Vardhana (590–647 CE) invaded from his capital at Kanauj.[6] From 750 to 900, the Gurjara-Pratiharas maintained sway over the area of Gujarat, forming a bulwark against Arabs who invaded Sind by sea in the eighth century and made incursions into Gujarat and Rajasthan. The origin of the Gurjaras is debated, but it is assumed that they were Rajputs, with varied religious ties to Vishnu, Shiva, Bhagavata, or the Sun God.[7]

The greatest of the imperial Gurjaras was Mihira Bhoja the Great (835–880), a devotee of Bhagvata. He consolidated his kingdom, reasserting control over outlying areas, and conquered Malwa. His territorial ambitions also included bringing Nepal and the region bordering the Himalayas under control, annexing the Western Punjab and defeating Deepapala in Bengal.[8] His subjects considered him a *chakravartin*,[9] as he maintained a stable empire and four standing armies. Cavadas (880–942) ruled North Gujarat but became independent when Vallabhi fell. With the fall of the Vallabhi kingdom, Buddhist viharas also disappeared. Eight different rulers succeeded Cavadas, including Vanaraja, who founded a Hindu capital at Anahilpura Patan. The Solankis or Chalukhyas acquired the throne through the adoption of a Maharaja by the last Cavada ruler. The Maharaja offered generous grants to learned Brahmins from the north of India and settled them in Gujarat.[10] Brahmin settlers brought with them Sanatana Hinduism and a new religious vocabulary.

Although the Chalukhyas completed their hold over Saurashtra and Kutch, Muslim invaders sacked the Somnath temple at Prabhasa twice, and each time it was reconstructed (the current temple was rebuilt on the old site between 1950 and 1962). As the Solankis declined, the Vaghelas, who were Rajputs (1222–98), founded a powerful dynasty. During the reigns of eight Vaghela rulers, temples were constructed at Abu, Kumbhara, Girnar, and Satrunjaya; the fort and temple of Vaidhyanatha were constructed at Dabhoi; and Vishalnagar was founded. Hindus, however, lost their kingdom

to conquest by Sultan Alauddin Khilji of Delhi in 1300 CE. As part of the Delhi Sultanate, the first Muslim empire in India, the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320 CE) preyed on wealthy, prosperous Hindu kingdoms. At the outset, they engaged in large-scale destruction of Somnatha-Patan and Cambay. Khaljis and Tughluqs ruled until 1409, when the Sultans of Gujarat established independent rule.[11]

The kingdom of Gujarat extended from Jagat in the north to the river of Bandra in the South, and from the Arabian Sea inland to Agra. Over the course of the next 166 years, fifteen Muslim sultans held the throne of Gujarat. Among the most outstanding were Sultan Ahmad Shah I (1391–1442), who founded Ahmedabad, and Mahmud I (1458–1511), whose long rule enabled recovery from earlier ravages. Portuguese conquerors entered the picture in 1537, bringing conversion and control to Diu (at the tip of Gujarat in Saurashtra). Because Portuguese ships and guns were superior to those of Arabs and Indians, Diu's incorporation into the Portuguese *Estada da India* meant that Lisbon also controlled access to Gujarat's ports of Cambay, Surat, and Broach.[12] As the Sultanate of Gujarat weakened, the Mughals (1525–1682), by then established in Delhi, were able to incorporate it formally into the Mughal empire (1573). Mughals continued to rule over the region for 185 years via Subedars and Thanedars. During that period, Gujarat was regarded as a Subah (province) of the Mughal empire, with royal princes appointed from Delhi as governors.

Shivaji, a militant Maratha leader from the Western Ghats, challenged the Mughals by ransacking the port of Surat for forty days in 1664, and again in 1670. However, Damaji Gaikwad, ancestor of the Gaikwads of Baroda, served in Gujarat with a Maratha family that supported Nizam-ul-Mulk, Mughal governor of the Deccan. Not until the Nizam was defeated in 1728 did Damaji declare his loyalty to the Peshwa. Only by 1758, however, had the Marathas grown in power sufficiently to defeat the Mughal viceroy, Momin Khan, capture Ahmedabad, and effectively end Mughal rule in Gujarat. Thus, the Maratha House of Gaikwad rose to prominence as an independent Hindu kingdom, which ruled over Baroda and much of Gujarat while continuing to recognize the authority of the Maratha Peshwa in Pune.

The British, making inroads from Bombay, eventually succeeded in detaching the House of Gaikwad from the Peshwa by defeating the Marathas at Ahmedabad in 1780. Cultural unity, established under the Solanki kings and the Gujarat sultans, was broken by the British who proceeded to divide Gujarat into native states with some areas under British rule. The House of Gaikwad remained an independent Hindu state until 1948, when most princely states acceded to the Republic of India. At that time, princely states in Saurashtra merged as the United States of Saurashtra; these in turn became part of Bombay state in 1956. Reorganization in 1960 allowed for the formation of states along linguistic lines, and Gujarat, including the United States of Saurashtra, became the fifteenth state of the Indian Republic.[13]

## GUJARAT TODAY

Modern Gujarati, born in the sixteenth century, is a mixed language, partly Prakritic in its vocabulary for simple facts and feelings, and partly Sanskritic with an elite vocabulary for more reflective, philosophical concepts. Sanskrit poets from Gujarat included Bhatti (700 CE) and Magha (800 CE), but Sanskrit was used by only a select few. Prakrits, rather, were spoken up until the tenth century. Jains employed Apabhramsha, a vernacular Gujarati accepted everywhere and used for literary purposes as early as the sixth century CE. Gujarati is one of the dialects derived from Old Western Rajasthani, influenced by the speech of the Gurjaras, and later modified by the Sauraseni Prakrit of central India.[14]

Linguistic elements from a number of outside sources are present in the modern language, including onomatopoetic words from the Dravidian and Kola languages, as well as extra-Indian elements introduced by Greeks and Romans, Muslims and Parsis, Portuguese, and the Dutch.[15] Kshatrapas, Gurjaras, and Rajputs introduced non-Sankritic languages and non-Aryan ideas to the region. Majumdar describes Gujarat as "a field of conquering and settling people, each of which brought its own language, arts, crafts, poetry, customs, religions and historical trade."[16] Thus, far from being a unitary Hindu *rashtra* (geographical and political entity), Gujarat's ancestry includes Aryans, Persians, Arabs, Africans, Kushanas, and Hunas, all of whom came from outside India. Indeed, the *Dharma Shastras* referred to the region as a *mlechha* (unclean) country and forbade visits other than pilgrimages.[17]

Over the centuries, the many foreigners who came to the region of Gujarat were assimilated by existing castes or formed new castes of their own. Gujarat literally became a land of subcastes: "in no part of India are the sub-divisions of communities so minute, either in theory or in practice."[18] A prosperous middle class arose early on, as did guilds for crafts and trades. Because acquisition of wealth was an important goal in life, adaptability and catholicity of spirit became distinct Gujarati traits. Charitable and philanthropic institutions continue to be a feature of life in the region, and every town has a *sadavrata* to feed the poor and a *punjrapole* for maimed cows.

From the thirteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, Ethiopian slaves, known as Hapshis, were brought to Gujarat in exchange for cotton. A larger influx of Ethiopian soldiers and traders probably occurred in the sixteenth century, when 5,000 Hapshis were recorded as living in Ahmadabad and 1,500 in Baroda.[19] Both Christians and Muslims, many Hapshis were employed by merchants as domestics, whereas others worked as agate miners, sailors, or *fakirs*.[20] Some rose to prominence as military leaders and agate merchants. A prominent Hapshi noble patronized the building of the Sidi Sa'id mosque in Ahmedabad, the name of which, Sidi, is used today in Gujarat for people of East African origin. The Sidi have

acquired local forms of social classification and religious practices, referring to their group as a Sidi *jamat* (caste), while at the same time retaining a social image of their community as African and functioning differently from either Muslims or Hindus. Yet persons from all religious backgrounds who suffer from mental ailments or possession visit Sidi *dargahs* (shrines) in hope of a cure.[21] Prayers, often in Swahili, may invoke African saints.

Today, four distinct culture zones exist in Gujarat: (1) Kutch, an arid zone, marked by enterprise and business; (2) Saurashtra, the central plateau with a coastal plain, ports, a long maritime history, and martial traditions; (3) coastal Gujarat, which merges to the north with Rajasthan but is a fertile agricultural river plain in the south; and (4) the highlands, tribal areas bordering Madhya Pradesh on the east and Maharashtra on the south.[22] Without exception, Gujarat is the most highly industrialized state in India. However, many residents of the state take issue with Chief Minister Modi's depiction of "Vibrant Gujarat." Despite the construction of toll roads and high-rise suburbs in Ahmedabad and Vadodara, there are not enough jobs to go around, minorities are discriminated against, and even affluent neighborhoods have become ghettoized.

Ahmedabad, Gujarat's commercial center, was once home to a flourishing textile industry, where strikes were sometimes settled by the application of *satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance), under Gandhi's leadership. The decline of the textile mills, however, has thrown thousands of workers into the city's informal economy. Ahmedabad and Vadodara have been sidelined as manufacturing and cultural centers, respectively, by Surat and Gandhinagar, a planned city that is Gujarat's capital.

## HINDU–MUSLIM ENCOUNTERS

Pre-Islamic Arab contact with India is defined by the presence of Indian words in the Arabic language and even in the Quaranic vocabulary. Indian goods, words, and ideas were part of Arab culture even before the Arab conquest of Sind early in the eighth century.[23] The sciences of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine were transmitted from India to the Arabs through texts translated from Sanskrit and Persian, as were fables and other stories. Backgammon and chess also moved from India into West Asia. Even after the conquest, Muslims allowed Buddhists and Brahmans to continue to follow their own religions without interference. Al Jahiz (776–868) wrote favorably of the superiority of the Indian culture to others, including information that "the money changers and bankers of Sind are expert in their business and are most reliable."[24] When Sind later became politically independent and beyond the control of Baghdad, cultural interaction between India and the Arab world declined.

It was to Gujarat that the first Muslims came to India by sea in 636 CE, five years after the death of the Prophet. The conquest of Sind did not occur

until 78 years later.[25] The first violent contact between the Gujara-Pratiharas and the Muslims were incursions from the Arab conqueror of Sind, who not only founded kingdoms at Mansurah and Multan along the Indus but also made frequent incursions into what later became Gujarat. Bhoja the Great, however, was successful in driving the Arabs out of Kutch, where they had obtained a toehold between 833 and 842. Thus Gurjaradesa was temporarily safe from further Muslim invasion until the eleventh century.

An Arab geographer, Ibn Khurdadbeh (820–912), mentioned the state of Juzr (Gujarat) in his *Kitab al-masalik wa al-Mamalik* [Book of Routes and Kingdoms] (846). The *Akhbar-al-Sinwa al-Hind* (851, 916), attributed to Sulaiman the Merchant (ninth century) and supplemented by Abu Zaid al-Sirafi (tenth century), systematically described Indian rulers. The king of al-Jurz, an enemy of the Arabs, was said to have a large army and incomparable cavalry.[26] Al-Masudi, an outstanding Arab scholar, sailed in the Indian Ocean and traveled in Konkan, Gujarat, and Sind for two years (915–16). Visiting India at a time when commercial relations between India and the Arab world were congenial, he wrote that the Rashtrakutas considered the Arabs as allies against the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers of the north, who were hostile to the Arabs of Sind.[27] These relationships certainly fit what we know of the *mandala* (circle of states) pattern in early Indian political theory: the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

It is probable that soldiers and sailors of the Baghdad fleets occasionally plundered the coast of Gujarat during the eighth and ninth centuries, as the Gujara-Pratihara were considered unfriendly. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Muslim traders settled in some of the chief cities, "welcomed by the Rajput kings of Anahilwad, shown great consideration, allowed to manage their own affairs, practice their religion and build mosques."[28] From the north came a different sort of Muslim. In the two centuries before the establishment of the first Indo-Muslim state (1192), Persianized Turks systematically raided and looted major urban centers in South Asia, sacking temples and stripping idols of their precious metals.

Between 1000 and 1026 CE, Mahmud of Ghazni carried out nearly 17 expeditions in India and assumed the title "idol breaker." Mahmud sacked the Gurjara-Pratihara capital of Kanauj without resistance in 1018. Intent on destroying the Somnath temple, Mahmud came to the territory of Gujarat in 1025.

> To reach this sacred site on the shore of the Saurashtra peninsula meant crossing the "empty quarter" of Rajasthan from Multan to Jaisalmer and then penetrating deep into Gujarat. It was new territory, and this was his most ambitious raid. Using only cavalry and camels, Mahmud swept across the desert, thereby taking his would-be enemies by surprise, and reached the Saurashtra coast with scarcely a victory to record.[29]

The carnage was horrendous as Mahmud's soldiers scaled the walls of the Somnath fort while Brahmins and other Hindu devotees placed their trust in the protection of Shiva in the form of the enormous temple lingam. Successive waves of defenders entered the temple only to be slaughtered. The carnage continued outside the temple until, in all, perhaps 50,000 were killed. Twenty million *dirhams*[30]-worth of gold, silver, and precious stones were looted from the temple and the lingam stripped of its gold and then destroyed. Bits of the lingam were sent back to Ghazni for incorporation into the steps of the Jama Masjid, where the Muslim faithful might step on them.[31] It was Mahmud's next-to-last foray into India, but it is the one that rankles most in the collective memory of Gujarati Hindus.

The next invader was Muhammad of Ghor who routed the restored Ismaili ruler of Multan in Sind and then in 1185 attempted to attack the Solankis of Gujarat by crossing the Thar Desert as Mahmud of Ghazni had done. The Ghorid Turuskas (Turks) were defeated in Gujarat, however, before the trans-Thar invasion could take place.[32] Another rampaging Turk, Alla-ud-din Khalji, successfully added Gujarat to the territory of the Delhi Sultanate in 1298. Once again, the Somnath temple was demolished and fragments of it sent to Delhi to be incorporated into the steps of a mosque. In addition to Gujarat's agricultural bounty, textiles, and cattle, the port of Cambay offered incredible spoils, among them a Hindu slave, Kafur, who was later appointed a Malik-naib, or senior commander. Under his command, major Hindu kingdoms of the South were subdued.[33]

When Timur, a Sunni Muslim, invaded India in 1398, he regarded it as a Jihad against Shi'a Muslims. The *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* states that "his expedition was directed mainly against the infidels and polytheists of Islam, who called themselves Musalmans but had strayed from the Mahomedan fold."[34] Such a response is predictable given the historical animosity between Sunnis and Shi'as, but the viciousness of the attacks was quite shocking, and the Delhi Sultanate was dealt a severe blow. Gujarat became independent after Timur's invasion when Zafar Khan assumed sovereignty in 1401, taking the title Nasiru'd Din Muhammad Shah.

As the Tughluq dynasty was losing ground and many more tributary rulers were declaring independence, Shah Tughluq sent a viceroy to Gujarat to help suppress a rebellion there. That viceroy, Muzaffar Khan, already an independent ruler, continued to rule and declared himself king of all Gujarat in 1407. As viceroy, he was responsible for destroying Hindu temples at Idar and Diu in1401.[35] However, his son eventually had him arrested and imprisoned and attempted to put himself on the throne. Muzaffar regained power and put his son to death.

A few years later, Ahmad, son of the deceased, avenged his father by murdering his grandfather and establishing himself as Sultan of Gujarat in 1411.[36] As Sultan, he destroyed Hindu temples at Sidhpur and Delwara in 1415 and 1433, respectively.[37] It was Ahmad Shah who founded and fortified a new capital at Ahmedabad, the magnificent remains of which can

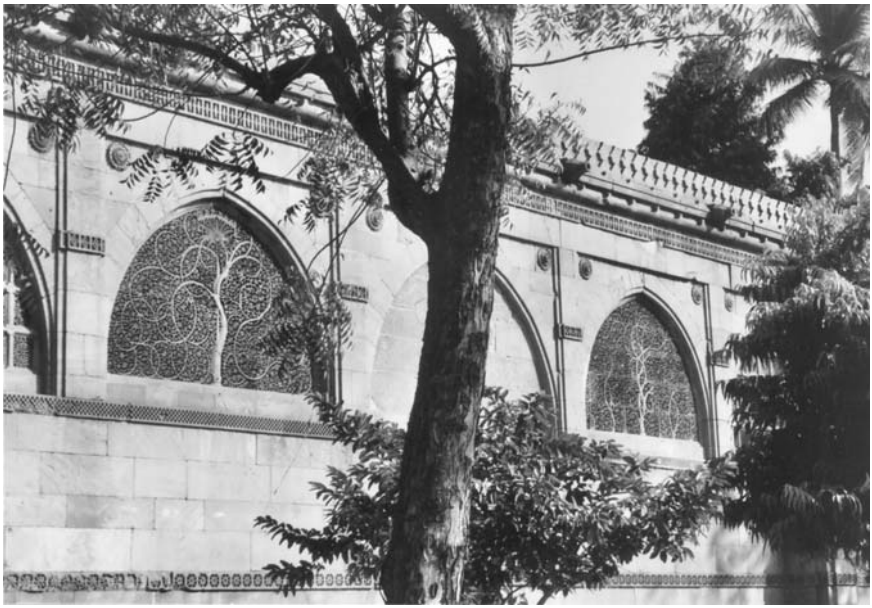

Teen Darwaja (Triple Gateway) in Ahmedabad's Old City was the entrance to the Royal Square in the time of the Gujarat Sultanate. Today, the Square is crowded with vendors and shoppers, especially on weekends.

be seen today in the walls and gates of the Old City and many ornate stone mosques and tombs.

## AMDAVADI ARCHITECTURE

Motifs from the Jain and Hindu traditions were intentionally combined with perforated screens from the later Mughal style to create a distinctive style of Amdavadi architecture.[38] Many stone structures show the particular influence of the Jain trabeate system of elaborate stone carving that came before. Moreover, the usual special features of Muslim architecture, including minarets, pentive and squinch arches, stalactites, *jalis* (perforated windows), and half-domed double portals and honeycombing, are also present.[39] The Sidi Sa'id mosque, built in 1573, and featuring stunning *jalis* in a Tree of Life motif, is said by some to be the most beautiful of the several hundred stone mosques in the city, which was known early on as "the city of a thousand stone mosques." Unfortunately, many of these mosques today are in disrepair because no money is available to aid in their preservation.

Within an area of a little over six square miles, nearly half of which is within the Old City center, occur a number of structures, mostly mosques, adorned with marble slabs bearing Arabic and Persian inscriptions in the Naskhi-Tughra style of calligraphy. The inscriptions cover a period of nearly



*Jali*s or perforated windows in the Tree of Life motif distinguish the Sidi Sa'id mosque, built in 1573 in Ahmedabad.

eight centuries, from 1035 to 1785 CE, the longest continuous period covered by inscriptions in any historical city of India.[40] Six of the stone mosques were built by ladies of the royal household, many of them Rajputs, and all of noble families. Rani Rupmati's mosque, built between 1430 and 1440, combines both Hindu and Muslim designs and features an elevated dome to let in more light. Rani Sipri's mosque, completed in 1514, also known as the "Masjid-e-Nagira" (Jewel of a Mosque) possesses unusually graceful minarets and a blend of architectural styles.

Mughals, in turn, added their own monuments to those built by Gujarati Muslim sultans, and on several occasions intervened to save monuments from impending destruction. Several inscriptions state that under the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, repairs were carried out to the Ahmedabad city wall, mosques, and buildings of the Shahi Garden and Kankaria, a reminder that architectural treasures were, and should continue to be, intentionally maintained and conserved.[41]

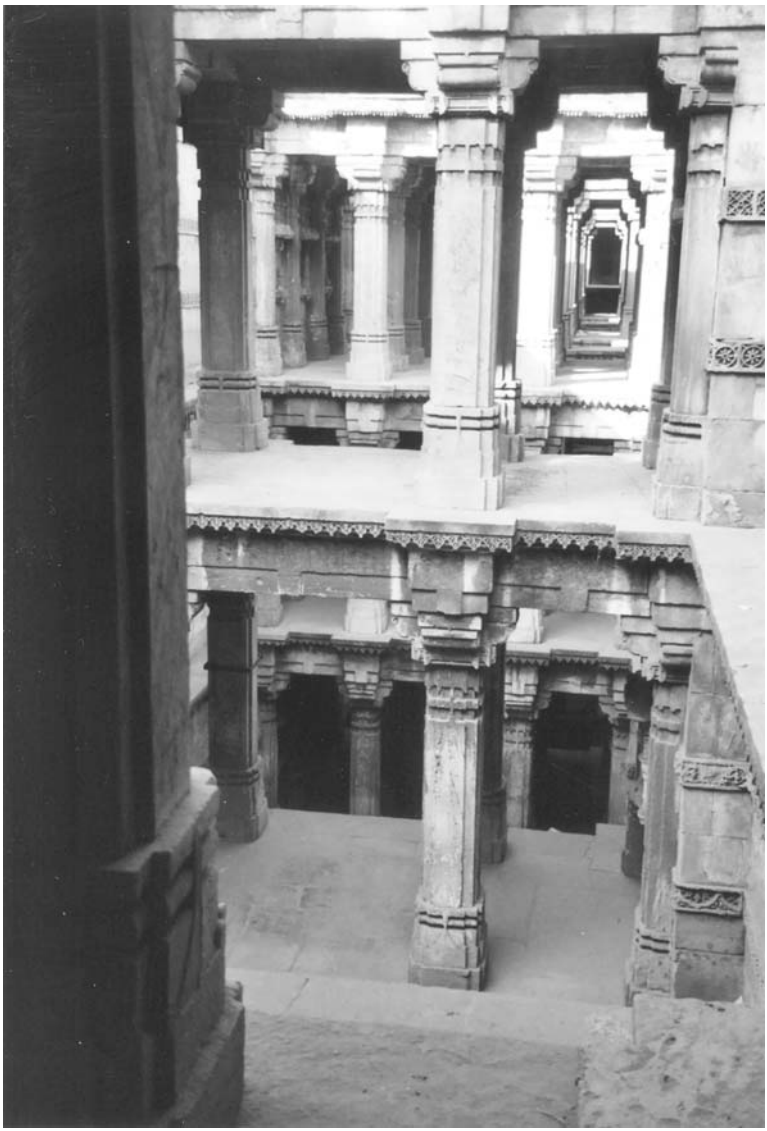
One of the unique features of water resources in Gujarat is the *baoli* or step-well, possibly a legacy from earlier water concerns of the Indus Valley people. Originally a Hindu creation, related to ritual bathing and temple rites, the building of step-wells became for noble families a religious obligation and eventually a status symbol.[42] Step-wells and public tanks peculiarly suited to the habits of Hindus, who were not accustomed to hot baths

or *hamams,* were built by Muslim rulers specifically for their subjects.[43] Locally called *wav*, the step-well is a series of steps going down three or four levels, interspersed with platforms and pavilions leading to a water source. Places for social interaction and spaces to rest are a feature of the elaborate Dada Hari Wav built in 1499 by a woman of Sultan Begara's harem. Not far away is Mata Bhavani's well, which is Hindu in origin and incorporates an underground Hindu temple. Baolis provided an innovative solution to the problem of fluctuating water levels during different seasons.

## HINDU–MUSLIM SYNCRETISM

Hindu–Muslim syncretism was not limited to Ahmedabad. A study of Gujarat folklore, written by Jackson, Tippetts, and Enthoven in 1914, lists 20 Muslim Pirs in Gujarat whose worship had been adopted by Hindus: (1) Datar Pir in Junagadh; (2) Datar in Rataiya near Khirasara; (3) Gobal-alsha Pir (noted for curing boils); (4) Tag Pir, a live saint near Bhayavada; (5) Miran Datar, a potent saint who restores the sight of blind persons and cures barrenness in women (wearing a ring in his name also exorcises evil spirits); (6) Ramde Pir (also called Hindva Pir), one of the first Khoja missionaries; (7) Haji Karmani near Dvarikhan; (8) Davalsha Pir near Amaran; (9) Lakad Pir and (10) Hussein Pir, both in the vicinity of Ganod; (11) Mahabali Dada Pir, close to the village of Varai, to whom milk is offered in egg-shaped pots; (12) Mangali Pir, at Dadvri; (13) Moto Pir at Khandorana; (14) Hidva Pir at Pirana, near Ahmedabad; (15) Ingarasha Pir; (16) Balamshah Pir; (17) Tamisha Pir and (18) Kasamsha Pir, both of whose shrines are on Girnar Hill; (19) Ganj Pir, near Tedia, to whom molasses offerings and vows cure fever and child ailments; and (20) Pir in the village of Vadhardun near Virangam, to whom suspected thieves are brought to determine whether or not charges are false. The three scholars also record that Hindus held in reverence the *tabuts* (ghosts) of Muslims.[44]

From the outset, however, Brahmanical Hinduism discriminated against Muslims as *yavanas* (foreigners) and *mlechchas* (outcasts), requiring them to live in separate quarters of the same town.[45] Still, Majumdar insists that in Gujarat, Hindus and Muslims had lived side by side for so many centuries "that they had naturally learnt to tolerate and unconsciously imbibed each other's social customs, common beliefs, and even superstitious rites, and the process must have begun long before the conquest of India by Babar and his immediate successors."[46] Indeed, in the 1911 Gujarat census, 200,000 Indians listed themselves as Mahomedan Hindus.[47] Certainly Islam was accepted by various groups of people over different periods of time, and many factors led Hindus to conversion, including rigidity of the Hindu caste system, role of merchants and traders, state practice of taxing non-Muslims (*jizya*), desire for political patronage, and aspirations of social mobility.



This 15th century *baoli* or step well was built as a public service and early solution to Gujarat's changeable water table.

The idea of forced conversion to Islam belongs to myths of colonialism reconfigured by Hindu nationalists.

Ismaili Shi'as, however, actively engaged in missionary activity in the form of *dawat*, an organized network of *da'is* (teachers and preachers).

Much like Hindu *bhakti* saints and their devotees, *da'is* commanded respect and enjoyed the good will of people among whom they worked. The first such missionary was sent to the subcontinent in 883 to Multan in Sind.[48] Regarded usually as Sufi *pirs* and sometimes as indigenous ascetics or *yogins*, Ismaili *da'is* were said to perform miracles, as well as to move their converts toward formal allegiance. The process led people gradually onto a new path by introducing a form of religion similar to their previous beliefs and practices—until they eventually brought their outward identities in line with their new beliefs and practices.[49] Indeed, this practice is still going on within the Imamshahi Satpanthi sect of Gujarat and Maharashtra.[50]

In that sect, religious songs or *ginans* celebrate a miracle involving Gujarati Kanbis (Patels) on a pilgrimage to the Ganges: on the way they encounter an Ismaili holy man, either Imam Shah or Pir Shams; are transported to the holy river and perform all rituals while sleeping; and wake up realizing that they have not moved from the village of Girmatha (near Ahmedabad).[51] Thus, the Sat Panth is a version of Islam indigenous to Gujarat including many Patels, the converted people in its hagiography, a prominent caste that has raised its status over the last century and become the driving economic force in Gujarati immigration to the United States and the United Kingdom. It is, therefore, not surprising that *hindutva* hatred of Muslims, upper-caste at base, has found fertile soil among the Patels of Gujarat.

Among all the Nizari Ismailis, known variously as the Sat Panth (True Path), Gupt Panth (Secret Path), or Nizari Dharm, secrecy was practiced until the 1840s. When the first Aga Khan entered the subcontinent, he ended the practice of *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation of one's faith) among the Guptpanthis, who retained outwardly Hindu, Shi'a Twelver, or Sunni styles of dress and behavior.[52] Islam was, in turn, affected by its Hindu environment, borrowing practices as well as gaining converts. Indeed, many Ismaili sects, including the Bohras and the Khojas, retain Hindu elements, such as the ten avatars of Vishnu, in their rituals. Among the Satpanthis, the expectation that the Mahdi would appear to restore justice at the end of the Kali-Yuga, was identified with Kalki, the tenth avatar and depicted as a riderless horse. Such elements, stressed as similar in both traditions, have, in turn, become part of a larger Ismaili meta-history.[53]

## SULTANS AND EMPERORS

Gujarat continued to prosper as a center of trade with the West throughout the fifteenth century, particularly under the able rule of Mahmud Shah (1459–1511), who completed the consolidation of the kingdom. In the process he destroyed the Dwarka temple at Jamnagar in 1473.[54] Known as "Begarha" either because of his long beard and crown of moustaches (like buffalo or *begara* horns) or because he captured two vital fortresses (*garhs*) at Champaner near Baroda and at Girnar in Saurashtra (Junagadh), he

united mainland Gujarat with the Saurashtrian peninsula. Mahmud Shah thus created "a powerful maritime state enjoying a monopoly of those west coast ports which served upper India" and flourished well into the seventeenth century.[55] It was finally overwhelmed by a deadly combination of Mughal armies on land and Portuguese seapower.

From the early sixteenth century, when both those players appeared on the scene, Portuguese adversaries attempted to wrest control of the Indian Ocean trade from the Arabs, while Mughals conquered, intent on replacing the Delhi Sultanate with their own splendid empire of Mongol and Turkish origin. We will deal with the Portuguese in our discussion of European dominance in Chapter 3, but the Mughals will round off our discussion of the precolonial period in Gujarat.

Although Babur was the first Mughal to invade India and set up a kingdom in Delhi (1525), it was his son Humayun who defeated the Sultan of Gujarat, stormed the rock-face of the fort at Champaner, and occupied Ahmedabad and Cambay. However, Humayun made a strategic mistake in not reinstating the defeated sultan Ahmad Shah as a vassal. Instead, he installed Prince Askari, who was so intent on making a bid for the throne at Agra that he promptly allowed Ahmad Shah to reoccupy his kingdom.

Humayun also had his difficulties with Bahadur Shah, Ahmad's successor. *Dacadas da Asia,* a history by Diago do Conto, eyewitness to the declining days of the Gujarat Sultanate and first archivist of Portuguese India, tells how Bahadur Shah campaigned against Chitor and Mandu and gave protection to Humayun's brother-in-law. A plot staged during the Siege of Chitor to entrap the Sultan resulted in his escape from there to Champaner, followed by removal of his treasure and women from there to Cambay, via Baroda, and finally to Diu (1535). Having taken refuge in Diu, the Sultan was forced to assign a place there for a Portuguese fortress, which he had resisted. He eventually lost his life when he attempted once again to cross the Portuguese.[56]

Bahadur Shah's successors were weak rulers, given to sensual indulgence and cruelty. Sultan Muhammad Shah kept more than three hundred women for his own use. If one became pregnant, he tore her womb open and killed the fetus. Detested by his subjects for his brutality, he was murdered by a trusted page, Burhan, while asleep.[57] During the reign of another weak Sultan, Muzaffar Shah III (1537–54), Hindus were subjected to prohibition of festivals and persecution. Rajput *wantas*[58] (land tenures) were taken over, resulting in insurrections that were put down and the perpetrators branded. Under the Sultan, no Hindu could ride on horseback in the city and Hindus had to wear a piece of red cloth round the sleeve. Holi, Diwali, and idol worship could not be practiced openly. After he was killed, Hindus made a stone image of Burhan and set it up as a guardian deity.[59]

Humayun, meanwhile, faced a serious challenge from Sher Shah, the Afghan ruler whom he had displaced from the Delhi Sultanate. Thus, the

second great Mughal was chased first to Sind and then to Iran where he bided his time during fifteen years of brilliant Afghan rule under Sher Shah, returning in 1555 to reclaim Delhi. He lived only a few months before suffering a fatal fall and was succeeded by his 13-year-old son, Akbar.

Itimad Khan furnished Emperor Akbar with information regarding the desperate condition of the Gujarat Sultanate and requested help. When the Mughals reached Ahmedabad, Itimad Khan surrendered the Sultan to them. The Mughal ruler took him under protection and led him to Cambay, where the Portuguese met the Muslims and reached an agreement with them.[60] Akbar then took possession of Portuguese factories in Broach and Surat and appointed Mughal captains to these towns. After the Sultan died in 1572, the Mughal empire formally absorbed the Gujarat Sultanate (1573). Akbar issued a *farman* (imperial decree) concerning Portuguese relations, trade, and commerce with Gujarat. During the period of Mughal rule, Gujarat was regarded as a Subah (province) of the Mughal empire, with royal princes appointed from Delhi as governors.[61]

Akbar's reign, which lasted almost 50 years, marked a period of relatively friendly relations between Hindus and Muslims. History tells of the Rajput Alliance, which brought Hindus and Indian Muslims into a civil service originally founded on Turk, Afghan, Uzbek, and Persian nobility. During his rule, European trading companies from the Netherlands and England set up factories in Surat, which had become the main port of Gujarat. Indigo and cotton textiles, particularly calicos, muslin, and chintz from the area, continued to be valued abroad. Akbar's administrative system helped to stimulate and expand trade, both foreign and domestic, which meant that Gujarat continued to prosper.

The emperor's personal curiosity about other religions caused him to invite Parsis, Portuguese Catholics, Muslims, Jains, Jews, and Hindus to his audience hall for discussion. Many of his court rituals were based on Sufi ideals, and he built the city of Fahtepur Sikri largely to honor the influence of a Sufi, Sheikh Chishti. But as Akbar's religious thinking evolved, his Infallibility decree, which raised him above the reach of Shari'a law, and his creation of a new religion, Din-i-Illahi (Divine Faith), did not endear him to Sunni *ulema* (religious leaders). Orthodox Muslims were further outraged by his leniency toward Hindus in abolishing the *jizya* (tax on non-Muslims) and forbidding cow-slaughter.

Akbar's son, Jehangir (World Conqueror) continued these liberal policies, although attacks began on Hindu temples and religious customs under his grandson, Shah Jehan. Both emperors were guilty of draining the empire's wealth through the pursuit of pleasures, patronage of the arts, and construction of monumental architecture. Dara Shikoh, a son of Shah Jehan, inherited his great-grandfather's tolerance and curiosity about religion. His writings stressed major similarities between Islam and Hinduism. Had Dara Shikoh inherited the throne, the story of Hindu–Muslim relations in India

might have been quite different than what ensued, although it is true that, like Akbar, he was suspect in the eyes of the orthodox *ulama*.

Instead, his brother Aurangzeb, fiercely dedicated to Sunni orthodoxy, systematically eliminated his rivals, including Dara, one by one and was crowned Alamgir (Universe Conqueror). He is remembered for the strictness with which fundamentalist Islam was heavily brought to bear on his subjects. First, a tax on Hindu pilgrims was reimposed and a guardian of public morality appointed. Un-Islamic pleasures such as alcohol, gambling, and opium were banned. Temples and Brahmins lost their endowments and Hindu administrative employees in the provinces were replaced by Muslims. In 1679, the *jizya* was reinstated. Perhaps most devastating was the destruction of newly built or rebuilt temples, such as the Viswanatha temple at Varanasi and the new Keshava Deo temple at Mathura.[62]

Commissariat writes, "It was the policy of Aurangzeb to make the Religion of the Quran the basis of his administration; and he pursued his policy to root out Muslim heresy as also Hindu 'unbelief' and 'idol-worship' with a tenacity which was undeterred by any opposition or political consequences."[63] A *farman*, issued in November 1665, enjoined Hindus (1) to keep shops open on inauspicious days; (2) not to illuminate bazaars on nights of Diwali; (3) prevent sticks from being wrested, cast into Holi fires; and (4) stop using filthy or abusive language on Holi.[64] He also prohibited clay images of horses and elephants from being sold on Eid, Shab-i-Barat, or Urs.[65] Further calculated to inconvenience Hindus, the preparation of almanacs by Hindu astrologers was to be discontinued.

Although a triumph for the *ulema*, Aurangzeb's religious policies aggravated the Brahmins, heavily taxed merchants, and Rajputs. The Sikhs, too, were provoked by Aurangzeb's execution of their guru, Tegh Bahadur, in punishment for Muslims converting to Sikhism.[66] Richard Eaton identifies 12 documented instances of Hindu temple destruction in Gujarat, but only one, the razing of the Surat temple by Mughal governor Haider Ali Khan, occurred during Aurangzeb's rule. However, the great Jain temple of Shantidas was desecrated by Aurangzeb and converted into a mosque in 1645 when he was viceroy under his father, Shah Jehan. Yet one part of Aurangzeb's 1665 Farman notes that before he came to the throne, idol-temples had been pulled down by royal orders at Ahmedabad and Gujarat *parganas* (local administrative units), but that these had been rebuilt and the idols reinstalled for purposes of worship. Officials are "enjoined to ascertain the true facts and act in accordance with royal orders."[67]

Moreover, Aurangzeb was not without concern for his people. In the years 1681–96, Gujarat was plagued with drought, famine, and disease: "neither water nor grass was to be seen." It was a time of intense distress and mortality, marked by bread riots, stoning of the Sultan's palanquin, and revolt by the Matias and Momnas.[68] At the height of the famine (1685–86), Aurangzeb removed the duty on food grains and continued the policy until

the price of grain went down. Again in 1694–95, he issued instructions to provincial administrators to buy up grain in the market and sell it to people at a reasonable price.[69] Curiously, a good bit of the temple destruction blamed on Aurangzeb was actually the work of Bhim Singh, a disaffected Rajput chieftain who sought to get back at the emperor through his provincial holdings. Thus, a Hindu was responsible for destroying 31 mosques during an extended attempt to punish Aurangzeb for his Mewar campaign.[70] Factual memory of one man's temple desecrations, however, has blurred with time and run together with remembered bigotry on the part of Aurangzeb. It was an unpleasant time for Hindus, Sikhs, and Shi'as alike. Hindus were not the only victims, just the most numerous.

Having destroyed the Hindu–Muslim collaboration on which the Mughal empire depended, Aurangzeb brought to a close the period of the great Mughal rulers. Plagued by Maratha and Sikh adversaries and intent on subjugating the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda in the Deccan, the emperor continued to lead his armies against strongholds of idolatry until he died at the age of 90 in 1707. Although all of the Mughal rulers who came after Aurangzeb paled in ability and accomplishments, his empire lasted in a much-diminished form for the next 150 years, finally put out of business in 1857 by the British.

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# CHAPTER 3

# European Dominance

> The claim that the basic ideas underlying freedom and tolerance have been central to Western culture over the millennia and are somehow alien to Asia is, I believe, entirely rejectable.
>
> —Amartya Sen

To the Portuguese belongs the distinction of politicizing the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. With the development of navigation instruments, such as astrolabes borrowed from the Arabs, guns mounted on military vessels, and better-designed ships, Portuguese mariners were able to found fortified factories in India at Cochin and Goa. Because European merchants could "short-circuit" Arab middlemen, Portuguese spice imports and profits rose dramatically. The Sultan of Gujarat, however, resisted Portuguese incursions and sought help from the Mamluks of Egypt, former allies and trading partners. In 1509, however, a huge Egyptian-Indian armada was destroyed by Almeida, a Portuguese naval captain.

Another notable figure in the struggle of the Portuguese for control over the lucrative ports of Gujarat was Malik Gopi, a Hindu nobleman who served the Gujarat Sultanate as minister over the city of Surat. A Brahmin and friend of the Portuguese, he rose to great wealth and political position in the fifteenth century. His success in business and ostentatious display of wealth attracted other merchants to Surat, and its prosperity continued to increase from that time. When Gopi personally was affected by the unquestionable maritime superiority of the Portuguese, he surrendered himself to them as a vassal.

"He understood the futility of the continued attempts of Malik Ayez and the Egyptians to oust the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean. The monopolistic trade of the Portuguese compelled him to join hands with them."[1] Unfortunately, Gopi viewed himself as above the law and used his considerable power to oppress people, particularly Muslims traders. In 1515, he was slain by Muzaffar Shah II for ill-treatment of Muslims and collusion with the Portuguese. Ironically, the title of Malik had been earlier conferred on him by the same Sultan at Gopinath.[2]

During the continuing conflict between the Sultan of Gujarat and the Portuguese for possession of the seaport of Diu (1510–37), acts of vengeance were committed upon defenseless coastal towns of Gujarat and Kathiawar. The terrible cruelties and injustices committed by various Portuguese governors were later regarded by Portuguese historians as one of the principal factors leading to the loss of Portugal's Indian Empire.[3] Yet Portuguese historians also note the courageous defense by a small Portuguese garrison for a prolonged period against overwhelming odds. Maintaining their hold during two great sieges by Turks and Gujaratis in 1538 and 1546, they achieved Albuquerque's objective of maintaining harbors and refuges on land secure under Portuguese command.

Dom Joao de Castro describes the Portuguese policy of ruthless terrorism in 1546. They captured ships trading with the enemy, intercepted 60 vessels carrying provisions, killed Muslims, mangled bodies, and set them afloat at the mouths of rivers so the current would carry them inland. Manuel de Lima returned from his mission with 60 Muslims hanging from the yardarms. Houses were set afire and towns burned at the mouths of the Tapti and Narmada rivers. "The cruelty outwent the destruction, for many Bramenish (Brahmin) young ladies, exempted from crime by their sex, from the sword by their faces, in colour and beauty not inferior to those of Europe, were not spared in the victory."[4] As is usually the case, unfortunate citizens suffered for the arrogance and stubbornness of their rulers.

In order to further prove to the Sultan that the Portuguese desire for revenge had not been satisfied by the victory, the mainland town of Ghoghla was pillaged and burned, natives and strangers slaughtered, the guilty and the innocent punished. Hindus were hanged in the temples of their idols; the throats of cows were cut; and temples were sprinkled with cow's blood, "an animal which is the depository of souls they adore with abominable worship." After the victory in 1546, six ships were sent sailing about the Gulf of Cambay to proclaim in all ports that Hindus and Muslims could return to Diu. Security was promised to persons and property; merchants began to come back in large numbers.[5]

A century later, a French traveler, M. Dean de Thevenot (1633–67) arrived in Surat and spent 13 months in India. From his writings, we learn that the Dutch had removed their trade from Diu to Surat where a sandbar prevented loaded ships from entering the Tapti, forcing them to anchor

at the mouth of the river. Travelers and merchants were searched, moreover, and their clothing removed during a 15-minute customs inspection. Two years after Shivaji's sack of the city, the walls were in ruins, but new walls, ordered by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, were under construction. Thevenot describes Surat as a medium-sized city with a large but fluctuating population. During the fair weather, from November to April, the city was very crowded with Persian, Arab, Turk, Armenian, Dutch, and English merchants.[6] French traders, however, did not turn up until 1668.

Thevenot notes that a Capuchin monk, Father Ambrose, apparently wielded great influence with officials and people in general, being called on to settle all disputes among Christians, some of whom were banished for irregular living. He went so far as to meet with Shivaji, who in turn spared European factories and monasteries in his pillaging of Surat. In that city were traded goods from Europe and China, including "porcelain ware, cabinets and coffers ornamented with turquoises, agates, carnelians, ivory," as well as "diamonds, rubies, pearls and all the other varieties of precious stones to be found in India." Other commodities included musk, amber, myrrh, incense, manna, sal ammonia, quicksilver, lac, indigo, and the root *roenas* for red dye.[7]

Thevenot also visited Ahmedabad and described the Bhadra Citadel, built by Sultan Ahmed I, as a royal headquarters with a palace, two towers, and military equipment. He remarks that it was named for Bhadra, the Hindu capital of North Gujarat at Patan for many centuries, with its temple dedicated to Bhadra Kali, the auspicious form of the goddess, known also to Jains as Chintimani. The principal commodities bought and sold at Ahmedabad included satins, velvets, taffetas, and "wondrous tapestries of gold and silken threads with woolen grounds." Exports from the local region consisted of indigo, dried and preserved ginger, sugar, cumin, and honey. The Dutch also bought chintz (painted cloths), although these were said to be "not as fine as those on the East Coast."[8]

Although he traveled to Cambay, Thevenot noted that in 1666 the sea no longer came up to the town and was a mile and a half away, resulting in reduced trade complicated by swift tides in the Bay. Malabar pirates, moreover, were known to prey on *almadies*, small brigantines used by the Portuguese for coastal trade. At Cambay, the trade consisted largely of agates, rings of precious metals, and ivory bracelets.[9] The Frenchman also described Rajput Garasias, chieftains who controlled all villages from Cambay to Broach and were responsible for the travelers within their jurisdiction. Indeed, if property was taken by bandits, the Garasias made every effort to assure its return.[10] Thevenot took strong interest in the Charans, criminal tribes who could be engaged for protection and who threatened to kill themselves if robbers harmed whomever they were guarding. For them, death was preferable to dishonor. People feared ruin brought upon one who

spilled a Charan's blood. In fact, Bahuchara, ghost of a female Charan suicide, was considered the worst dreaded but most worshipped deity in North Gujarat.[11]

## RELIGIOUS CONVERSION UNDER THE PORTUGUESE

The very idea of conversion, as Torkel Brekke reminds us, is a Western idea coming from the Latin and based on the central paradigm of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, whose unanticipated conversion was by an external agent and the convert a passive receiver.[12] Brekke goes on to question whether conversion is the proper terminology if the individual intentionally seeks to change his religious affiliation. He further calls attention to the fact that movement between sects, as well as between religions, is a well-known phenomenon in India. Using Buddhist conversion stories to make his point, Brekke emphasizes the influence of a strong and charismatic leader, combined with decisive rational faculties of potential followers, as elements of a complex process "that may express itself on many points along a sliding scale of volition and determinism, even in a single individual."[13]

The brutality of the Portuguese, however, created an overwhelming sense of economic and political dominance in the minds of potential converts to Christianity. Rowena Robinson views Portugal's Asian ventures as an extension of the Crusades, in keeping with the mission of defending Christians from Muslims everywhere in the world. Because the Counter-Reformation occurred simultaneously with the establishment of Portugal's *Estada da India*, control of the spice trade also assumed religious dimensions. Thus, Portuguese missionary activity was closely linked to the establishment of military and political rule in every region taken over. Indeed, Papal Bulls passed between 1452 and 1456 conferred on the king of Portugal authority to "conquer, subdue and convert all pagan territories."[14]

As the head of the Catholic Church both at home and in overseas territories, the Portuguese king nominated bishops, endowed religious institutions, licensed religious orders, and issued permits to individual clergy. Four major orders, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, and Augustinians, operated in Goa and Gujarat. Both Hindus and Muslims were regarded as pagans and therefore as subjects for conversion to Catholicism. Mass conversions were the preferred means of obtaining a body of local allies. Robinson describes two methods of conversion used in Goa: taking on care of orphans and offering privileges to attract adherents to the faith. Girls under the age of 12 and boys under the age of 14, who were without fathers, were given over to Christian guardians, who raised them according to Christian principles, provided a Portuguese education, and assured their incorporation in colonial service. Similarly, reserving jobs and offices for converts built a force of loyal administrative employees.[15]

In the middle of the sixteenth century, stronger methods of conversion were instituted: eliminating mosques, temples, and icons; prohibiting religious worship and the activities of priests; and making "adjustments" to existing socioeconomic and kin relationships.[16] These changes occurred as attitudes toward non-Catholic faiths hardened in Europe and missionary orders began to arrive in India. The Inquisition, introduced to Goa in 1560, could be used against Hindus as well as Muslims. In cases in which Hindu leaders tried to prevent others from converting, fines or jail sentences were the usual consequences. Many Hindus converted to avoid losing their property. Only later did they learn to adapt the new religion to their specific religious and social needs. But clearly they found few opportunities to prosper if they continued previous modes of religious worship.[17]

Conversion to Christianity, by contrast, offered a number of advantages, including status, a calendar of saints and feast days much like the Hindu one, and an easy way to align oneself with the new rulers. Robinson suggests that "accepting the new religion signified willingness on the part of the converts to come to terms with them [Portuguese] and negotiate with them within the changed environment."[18] Recognition in the eyes of the conquerors also meant access to administrative posts for those of upper-caste background and an opportunity to maintain their high ritual status. Thus, the church became a medium within which to express continued relations of social hierarchy.[19]

Portuguese forts and churches standing today in Daman and Diu are visible evidence of colonial control in Gujarat beginning in 1531, when Daman was seized, and 1535 when Diu came under Portuguese control. A peace treaty signed by Sultan Mahmud III formally ceded the island of Diu and the enclave of Ghoghla to Portugal. Moti Daman's great fort, built in 1559, features 10 bastions and circles 30 square kilometers of land. Its Sé (Cathedral), otherwise known as the Church of Bom Jesus, was built in 1603 and is remarkable for its elaborate woodcarving. Nani Daman contains the Fort of St. Jerome, with a giant gateway facing the river, and a Jain Temple containing eighteenth-century murals. Today, Daman, a town of 35,743 people, occupying 56 square kilometers, is a seaside resort in the southernmost part of Saurashtra.[20]

The town of Diu, with its narrow winding streets, covers an area of 40 square kilometers at the eastern end of an island (separated from the mainland by a tidal creek) off the south coast of the Kathiawar peninsula. Diu today has a population of 22,000 and is one of the few places in Gujarat where women (54 percent) outnumber males (46 percent), because of Catholic antipathy toward sex-selective abortions. In Diu, daily mass is still heard by Catholics in huge St. Paul's Cathedral, built by the Jesuits in 1600 and rebuilt in 1807. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi, however, has been converted into a hospital, and St. Thomas's Church houses the Diu

Museum.[21] A massive fortress, first built with a double moat in 1535 and reconstructed by Dom Joao de Castro after the siege of 1545, still stands. Diu, along with Goa, remained in Portuguese hands until December 1961 when it was occupied by the Indian army.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Portuguese power declined for a variety of reasons, including the rise of the Marathas and local reactions against Jesuit missionaries, conversion, and the Inquisition. In Portugal itself, forcibly converted Jews known as "Marranos" were permitted to emigrate. Many settled in Holland, where their commercial talents assisted the Dutch East India Company in their rivalry with the Portuguese. The Dutch, however, did not occupy any territory in Gujarat but instead confined their trading operations to South India, namely at Cochin. The English East India Company, however, was another story, for, despite the existence of numerous princely states in Gujarat up until 1948, Ahmedabad came early under British control.

## CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH POWER

The first Englishman to land at the port of Surat was Captain William Hawkins in the *Hector* in 1608. From that time on, the English, though opposed by port merchants, tried hard to obtain from the Mughal court a *farman* (imperial directive) to establish a factory there; sites further south were thought too unhealthy. During the reign (1605–27) of the Mughal emperor Jehangir, the British were permitted to set up a factory or trading house at Surat. Thus, initially the port of Surat became the cradle of British commerce in India.[22] Indeed, the well-guarded British factory there was the only building not destroyed in Shivaji's 1664 Maratha raid. A cluster of Portuguese islands and the small fort of Bom Bahia were transferred to Charles II in 1661 as part of Catherine of Braganza's wedding dowry, thus giving the British another toehold on India's west coast. In 1668, Bombay was formally transferred from the British Crown to the East India Company, with rent of £10 to be paid in gold "for ever."[23] Surat was subordinate to the British after 1709.

Meanwhile, the coveted *farman*, which would have offered land and official recognition, was not forthcoming. Not until 1716, after threats of withdrawing the Company from Surat and other locations in Gujarat, did the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar relent and sign the imperial *farman*. With this document, the East India Company entered into a direct relationship with the emperor and was legally compelled to take military action against anyone infringing its terms.[24] The Mughal empire, however, remained firmly in control in Gujarat and continued to present an imposing front to the world. The British, however, had their eye on Surat, which in the mid-eighteenth century, dominated trade on the west coast of India and was an extremely wealthy port. In March 1759, the English took possession of Surat Castle

with considerable loss of officers and men, and later seized Broach by storm in November 1772.

In an effort to consolidate control of territory around the Presidency at Bombay, the local British governor engaged in a series of Anglo-Maratha wars not authorized by the British Governor-General at Calcutta, which amounted to meddling in the Peshwa's succession dispute. Joining forces with the British in 1775, a combined Anglo-Maratha force moved into Gujarat and fought at Ahmedabad with some success until recalled. When negotiations between the Maratha Peshwa at Pune and the British broke down in 1778, the Maharaja of Gaikwad (Baroda) threw in his lot with the British and later signed the Convention of Wadgaon (1779), along with other Maratha confederates. Fighting ended in 1781, resulting in the treaty of Salbai (1782–83). Peace lasted until the Second Anglo-Maratha War Maratha War in 1803–04, which, although brief, largely destroyed Maratha power and assured British dominance in northern and central India. A last burst of Maratha antagonism against the British was squelched at Pune in 1817. The great Maratha confederate families (Gaikwad, Holkar [Indore], Scindia [Ujjain], Bhonsle [Nagpur]), forced to accept British clientage, became major princely states under the British Raj.

## THE BRITISH IN GUJARAT

Although the East India Company had wrested control of much of Gujarat from Marathas during the Second Anglo-Maratha War, some local rulers, including the Maratha Gaikwads of Baroda (Vadodara), made a separate peace with the British. By acknowledging British sovereignty, they were able to retain local self-rule. Gujarat was placed under the political authority of Bombay Presidency, with the exception of Baroda state, which had a direct relationship with the governor-general of India. From 1818 to 1947, most of present-day Gujarat, including Kathiawar, Kutch, and northern and eastern Gujarat, was divided into dozens of princely states, although several districts in central and southern Gujarat, namely, Ahmedabad, Broach (Bharuch), Kaira, Panch Mahal, and Surat, were ruled directly by British officials.[25]

A British visitor, Edward Eastwick, writing in 1880, made a number of observations about Indian society on the basis of religion. He noted that there were no missionaries in Baroda but that the Gaikwad Raja Dewan, Sir Madav Row, a Maratha Brahmin, had received his early education from Christian missionaries. Later, Row served as a schoolmaster and then became tutor to the first prince of Travancore and, eventually, Dewan to the court at Baroda. Although not popular with Marathas or Jujaratis, Row was an admirer of Anglo-Indian statecraft and imitated it, bringing routine and centralization to the Gaikwad princely state.[26] Eastwick also went out of his way to note the eclectic religious backgrounds of other significant figures at the court of Baroda, including an able Muslim revenue officer,

Khan Bhahadur Kazi Shahuddin, whose management was marked by ease of collection and a flourishing treasury.[27]

The Settlement officer was Khan Bahadur Pestonji Jehangir, a Parsi with a reputation for ability, independence, rectitude, and awards of considerable sums of money in legal cases.[28] Another Parsi official, Khan Bahadur Cursetji Rustomji, was both a Marathi scholar and a protégé of the British, with excellent knowledge of English. As the Chief Justice of Baroda, he presided over the Varishta Court. A talented Hindu administrator, Rao Bahadur Vinayekrow J. Kirtane, actually served as a quadrupal officer, overseeing the Khangj (Guicowar's private purse) as well as General, Education, and Police departments. The state administration also included an Englishman, G. F. H. Hill, who served as State Engineer.[29]

Eastwick was less impressed with Ahmedabad in 1878 and described it as a city of famine-stricken people under the control of a family of Desais, or "village Shylocks," who had been petty officials under the Guicowar. Taxes were paid to them on virtually everything that could be taxed: cooking fires, carpets, ghee. Muslim weavers suffered from taxes on cloth and Dheds from taxes on hides. Boat-builders and Parsi shopkeepers also suffered.[30] The vast majority of Hindus were Vaishnavas, many of them merchants and traders. Eastwick also described a deified priest called Maharaj, said to be a visible incarnation of Krishna, who collected fees for homage by sight, by touch, for washing his toes, swinging him, rubbing unguents on his body, sitting with him, occupying the same room with him, being touched by him or lashed by him, or drinking his bath water.[31]

Commenting on the decadence of former Muslim Gujarat courtiers, Eastwick writes:

> Their aristocracy live without aim or ambition, men crushed by their own "pride of birth," men who would borrow rather than earn, and starve rather than beg. . . . Their life is a round of inane pleasures and idle ceremonials, and the little substance now left to them is being in exhausted in "playing the king." . . . Many, finding time hanging heavy on their hands, abandon themselves to low gratifications of the senses—feasting and dancing and carousing . . . [32]

Muslims in general were described as the poorest class, although Eastwick is critical of their lifestyle: "Like their betters they despise work, but, unlike them, will beg, borrow, or steal, with the utmost pleasure in life. They live in a world of wine and women. Many of them sleep by day, and make the night hideous by their drunken revels." He goes on to say that Muslims, however, have fine redeeming traits: "As friends and servants they are invaluable; and if you treat them kindly they will lay down life in your service. As a rule they are above that meanness, that petty intriguing spirit and want of gratitude so common among their neighbors." Eastwick further comments

that the manners and habit of Muslims in rural villages "correspond to those of Hindus of their position, naturally enough, as they were originally all Hindus and have mostly to deal with Hindus even now."[33]

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

A Roman Catholic missionary, Jordanus Catalani, who arrived in Surat in 1320, brought thousands to Christianity before moving on to Quilon. The first evangelical Christian Protestant missionaries were Baptists who arrived in eastern India in 1793, although the Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians were not far behind, coming to South India in 1795. It was not until 1830 that the Church of Scotland sent missionaries to the Bombay Presidency, which included Gujarat. Some bought land and founded Christian villages, for nearly all converts came from the poorest sectors of society and were dependent on their European protectors. Missionary activity inevitably provoked opposition: converts were pelted with stones or dragged from their homes and maltreated by both Hindus and Muslims. Brahmins actively induced people to stay away from the foreigners out of suspicion and fear of forced conversion. "Outright antagonism instead of envy was the sentiment of other Indians as they saw their fellows deserting their religion and breaking their social ties to put themselves under the spiritual and material domination of foreigners."[34]

As Protestants, converts were not permitted to retain their former castes but rather to become a sort of new caste, although they maintained their own hierarchy within the Christian community. Even more destabilizing than conversion under the Portuguese, adherence to a foreign religion meant excommunication and therefore disruption of the whole social and material structure of one's life.[35] A convert rejected by his family would, under the *jajmani* system, lose his means of livelihood. Thus, missionaries were obliged to provide employment and sometimes even accommodations for those won over to Christianity. At Serampore in Bengal, for instance, the Baptists set up an indigo factory, paper mill, and printing works to provide employment for converts. In the face of such amenities, missionaries worried about deception by assumed conversions. They also struggled with the question of how many communion cups should be used for converts from different caste backgrounds.[36]

British missionaries were highly vocal about what they perceived as idolatrous Hindu religious festivals, such as the Jagganath car, which annually crushed some of the faithful at Puri (Orissa). Missioners also spoke out against the practice of *sati,* embedding hooks in the flesh in conjunction with sacred vows, and human sacrifice.[37] Missionary introduction of the printing press was a major contribution to Indian culture, although it was brought in with the intention of printing tracts and scripture. A Christian newspaper, the *Bombay Courier,* using Gujarati type for advertisements,

began to circulate in 1790. By 1812, large portions of the Bible had been printed in 12 Indian languages. A New Testament was printed in Gujarati at Surat in 1821, followed by a Gujarati Old Testament two years later.[38] Surat was also one of the cities where weekly distributions of food were made to the poor by missionaries.

Between 1793 and 1833, active Christian missionaries in India numbered 291, most of them in the Bengal and Madras Presidencies. In the Bombay Presidency, Christian missions were established at Ahmedabad, Surat, Kaira, and Diu in Gujarat.[39] The Charter Act of 1813 set aside £7,500 for the purpose of establishing schools in India. But missionary societies went further by establishing their own educational institutions at all levels: elementary schools, grammar schools, and colleges (high schools). Moreover, they also founded Christian centers of higher education so that children from their lower schools could progress through the system and become teachers. School texts were produced on missionary printing presses, and schools for girls were pioneered with the intent of improving women's condition. Missionaries were the first to train Indian women as teachers and bring instruction to higher-caste girls.[40]

In 1819, an astonishing number of children in various parts of India were being schooled by missionaries. At that time, the Baptists had 7,000 in schools, the Congregationalists claimed 1,500 in the South and 1,800 in Bengal, and the Lutherans were educating 4,000. The American Mission Board had 700–800 in its schools, whereas the London Missionary Society had as many as 39,000 enrolled in educational institutions. In traditional Indian society, education was denied to Dalits (untouchables). Missionaries, however, specifically reached out to Dalit communities. Most missionary schools in South India took the form of churches that were also schools located in or near Dalit settlements as a specific instrument of social empowerment. "Thus, while education for the Dalits brought about resentment among the Brahmanic caste communities it generated self-esteem and independence among Dalit converts."[41]

Clarke makes three significant points about Protestant missionary activity in South India, which may be equally relevant to the context of Gujarat. The first is that Dalits actively sought conversion because it provided them with a new world vision of an anticipated future and a psychological means of resisting upper-caste abuse.[42] Second, missionaries were not averse to the disruptions that their activities caused among higher-caste Hindus, who frequently sought to prevent their servants and employees from being baptized or attending mission schools.[43] Third, missionaries were willing to back their spiritual efforts with economic and social capital, including vocational training in agriculture, small-scale industries, and hospitals.[44] Similarly, in the Punjab, conversion to Christianity was a movement initiated by low-caste Chuhras who approached the mission workers and asked for instruction and baptism. There, it was a grassroots rural movement depending on local

initiative and functioning as a liberation movement among the oppressed.[45] Surprisingly, when the 1921 census recorded 315,031 Indian Christians in the Punjab,[46] the number was far more than missionaries could account for, indicating that many aspired to a new sense of self in this world perceived as resulting from Christian conversion.

Wallacepur, near Bhavnagar in Gujarat, is today an all-Christian village of 500 residents established in 1840 by a Christian pastor, Rev. Wallace, for low-caste Hindus from across the region. The settlers later adopted Christianity and in 1870 built a large church, although no written documents detail the founder or early history of the village. All residents know is that Wallace left after settling the village. Village pastor Nilesh Vaghela says, "We still follow Father Wallace's plan for the village with space for the cattle at the rear of the houses."[47] Wallacepur today has a 100 percent literacy rate, although girls are better educated, with most working as nurses and teachers in nearby cities; men remain committed to agriculture. All disputes are resolved internally through a pastorate committee made up of 10 older citizens and the pastor. The village is crime-free and has also won the Cleanest Village award from the district *panchayat* (council) for the last two years. The nearby village of Karena participates in Christmas celebrations with Wallacepur, whose residents in turn go to the Hindu village to help celebrate Diwali.[48]

The total number of Christians in India, according to the 2001 census, is 24.08 million (2.40 crores), or 2.3 percent of the population. Because of better access to education, Christians are a slow-growing community. About 70 percent of Indian Christians in 1991 were Roman Catholics, but Christians of every stripe in Gujarat's population total less than 1 percent. Attacks by Hindu nationalists on Christians (1998) in the Dangs district of South Gujarat, which has a largely tribal (*Adivasi*) population, involved the destruction of 10 churches and prayer halls, for no other reason than to target those who had left the Hindu fold.[49] Before the violence, local office bearers of the VHP had addressed rallies, which issued threats to Christians, and the BJP government had ordered a communal census with "mischievous questions" about minorities.[50]

Decades of British census-taking exacerbated communal violence by calling attention to numbers and requiring citizens to define their religious affiliations. Contemporary paper work has a similar effect by requiring Adivasis to record whether they are "tribal-Hindu," "tribal-Christian," or "tribal-Muslim." Even the categories are spurious: "tribal-Hindu" is in fact an oxymoron, as Adivasis do not share Hindu caste, gods, ashramas, or Puranas.[51] Small numbers of Christians hardly constitute a threat, yet empowerment of scheduled castes and tribes continues to be intolerable for higher-caste leaders of the Sangh Parivar. Consequently, Gujarat has enacted the Gujarat Religious Freedom Act, an anti-conversion law, which requires both missionary and converts to report details to the government or face criminal

charges. Christians are concerned that the law will provide new avenues of harassment or interfere with charitable work, which could be construed as bribery for people to convert. No evidence has been found to support VHP allegations of forced conversions. Rather, the goal of ghettoizing Muslims and Christians in the short run seems to be a political ploy to divide the traditional Muslim-Adivasi-Christian vote bloc. In the long run, however, it is something more sinister: a policy of religious genocide.

## THE BRITISH LEGACY

The legacy of the British in Gujarat, like everywhere in India, was problematical. However, it is clear that the English embrace of social hierarchy played into the hands of Hindu revivalists and nationalists, who tended to be upper caste in origin. The British also cultivated disparaging attitudes toward Muslims after the First War of Independence in 1857. Although the revolt had been led by Hindu maharajas, the symbolic act of restoring a Muslim emperor to the throne led the British to blame Muslims for the insurrection. When all rights previously enjoyed by the East India Company were formally assumed by the British Crown in 1858, Queen Victoria was pointedly declared "Empress of India." The British modeled their public Raj ceremonies after the pomp of Mughal durbars, further reinforcing the notion of victors taking over power from the conquered. In assuming control over Mughal feudatories such as Ahmedabad and Surat, the British continued their project of restoring the glory of ancient India by freeing it from Muslim rule.

Muslims, for the most part, responded by playing the part of the defeated, refusing to take advantage of educational and career opportunities offered by their European conquerors and looking inward to conservative leadership from their own community. Meanwhile, Hindu kingdoms, such as Baroda, remained under the rule of their Maharajas, who joined a new hierarchy of hereditary nobles modeled on that of England. Another ambitious British project, a population census, first conducted in 1872, produced surprising results. Despite the great power that the Mughals had wielded, the great wealth they had garnered, and their magnificent architectural achievements, Muslims in fact were not very numerous in the overall scheme of things: 40,750,000 were counted, whereas Hindus and Sikhs together amounted to 140,500,000. Sixty years later, in 1931, the ratio hadn't changed much: Muslims numbered 77,677,545, whereas Hindus numbered 239,195,140. Ian Talbot comments: "Whether or not the Indian census was as much a political exercise as a scientific survey, its consequences for self-identity and its politicization were immense."[52] Although maps and museums also contributed to minority identity formation, the census involved both classification and enumeration and differed from the earlier Mughal census in counting individuals rather than households.[53]

Also damaging from an intellectual standpoint was British scholarly support for the Asian migration theory, that India was settled by Aryan invaders, who in turn produced Vedic texts revered as the basis for Hindu thought and praxis. This theory at first allowed conservative Brahmins to identify with their colonizers and to celebrate *Sanatana dharma,* with its emphasis on caste, karma, rebirth, and Brahmin superiority. As *hindutva* evolved under thinkers such as Savarkar and Golwalkar, the theory was inverted to create the idea of a pure Hindu homeland with Aryans as indigenous inhabitants. Under the notion of Hindu *rashtra*, later invaders, both Muslims and Christians, could be relegated to roles of "outsiders."[54] Kaiwar shows how Hindu nationalists have been able to blur the distinction between religious texts and history books in an effort to account for the deterioration of Hindu culture, in the same way that Hitler sought to "restore" Aryan greatness and blame Jews for societal evils.[55] Twentieth-century British policies, however, tended to equalize religious communities.

Disregarding actual population numbers of religious groups, the Raj professed a policy of impartiality toward all religions. Although theoretically all were given equal weight, the British applied these ideals somewhat erratically. Having broken the spirit of Muslims after 1857, the Raj granted them a major political role in twentieth-century Independence deliberations. Other communities, such as Sikhs, Parsis, and Christians, were ignored, leading to Sikh violence in the Punjab. The way in which the British bent over backward to accommodate Muslim demands for Partition not surprisingly led to Hindu nationalist charges of "appeasement," which continue to be heard today.

Curiously, in response to communal riots in the 1920s, the government did not attempt to suppress aggressive organizations or punish perpetrators but, rather, focused on trying to contain the Independence Movement. To deal with violence between religious communities, the British established Conciliation Boards, consisting of Indians given the task of establishing communication networks among religious leaders in order to arbitrate points of misunderstanding and disagreement.[56] Such policies of conciliation, however, ignored power and demographic differentials and ultimately did nothing to suppress violence on either side.

Formation of the all India Hindu Mahasabha in 1921, a response to vicious Muslim attacks against Hindu temples and women in Multan, led to decades of communal resurgence. It was proposed that Hindu Sabhas be formed in every village to promote Hindu unity and regeneration. Physical culture centers were developed across India to make a show of Hindu physical strength and indoctrinate young men in the notion that Muslim men are unnaturally lustful and addicted to forcible abduction of Hindu women. While Gandhi was being jailed by the British, the *Sangathan* Movement "sought to efface the image of the Hindu as a dhoti-wearing coward and to replace it with the image of the Hindu as a militant who would be willing

to use whatever means might be necessary to maintain his honor and that of his community."[57]

British granting of communal reservations for Muslims in the various Council elections leading up to Independence further contributed to the split between Hindus and Muslims, which ultimately severed the subcontinent. Communal electorates were first promised to Muslims by Lord Minto in 1906, secured by electoral reforms of 1909, and affirmed by the Lucknow Pact in 1916. However, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) states that "the history of self-government among the nations who developed it and spread it through the world is decisively against the admission by the State of any divided allegiance; against the State's arranging its members in any way which encourages them to think of themselves primarily as citizens of any smaller unit than itself . . . "[58] Yet the report ultimately concludes that, out of consideration to the pledge of electoral safeguards made to Muslims, the system of communal electorates should be maintained. The upshot was that English notions of two great religious communities supplied the ideological frame for their self-understanding and for separate communal mobilization in the decades immediately before independence.[59]

# CHAPTER 4

# Mahatma Gandhi: Khilafat, Partition, and Beyond

> The golden rule of conduct is mutual tolerance, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall always see truth in fragments and from different angles of vision.
>
> —Gandhi

Ahmedabad is well known as the home of Mahatma Gandhi's ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati River. One can visit there and see a number of photographs of Gandhi with various Indian leaders taken at key moments in the independence struggle. Other than a bookstore and an expanse of green lawn, there is not much else to see. One must imagine the Mahatma, with his unpredictable wit and playful sense of humor, walking there with notables, followers, and lost souls. Today, conversations in India about Gandhi often produce the assertion that Gandhi's ideas no longer have any currency. One finds a *khadi* (handwoven cloth of handspun cotton) shop here and there, but Gandhi's ideas of handmade goods and local production seem somewhat outmoded in this age of globalization. Not so his ideas of nonviolence (*satyagraha*) and communal harmony (*sarvadharma*). Many of the NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) that joined together in the Gujarat Communal Harmony Project following the 2002 riots cite Gandhian values as the philosophical basis for their work. Yet they lament the fact that so much communal violence has emerged in Gandhi's city, in Gujarat in general, and in India as a whole.

If Gujarat is the stomping ground of communal violence, it was also the birthplace of a Mahatma (Great Soul), whose revolutionary strategy of *satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance, truth-grasping) helped to bring about Indian independence. Gandhi's father, prime minister of the princely state of

Junagadh, introduced his young son to a wide circle of friends: Parsis, Jains, and Muslims, as well as Hindus. His mother was associated with the Pranami sect of Hinduism, which eschews idol worship, preaches religious tolerance, and reads both Hindu and Muslim texts in its temples.[1] Gandhi was well aware of the issues dividing Hindus and Muslims, not only in Gujarat but in India as a whole. Nor was he oblivious to ideas of *hindutva*, whose advocates were marginalized by his rise to power in the Indian National Congress in 1920. Unfortunately, this very squelching of Hindu extremists by Congress assured their resurgence in other guises. Therefore, it is not surprising that Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 by Godse, who had been trained by both the Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Sangh Sevak (RSS) to hate Muslims and despise Gandhi for consistently "appeasing" them. One such early effort was Gandhi's belief that Hindu–Muslim unity could be obtained by bringing the Indian National Congress together with the Khilafat movement, a response by Indian Muslims to the disbanding of the Caliphate in Istanbul by the British at the end of World War II.

## SATYAGRAHA

When I first read Gandhi's words of doubt regarding his *satyagraha* campaign as the epigraph to Manohar Malgonkar's novel, *A Bend in the Ganges,* I was disturbed by the idea that Gandhi himself had anticipated the violence that would occur in the Punjab at the moment of Partition. And if he knew what was going to happen, why did he think Calcutta more important and go there? Gandhi wrote:

> This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour?[2]

Gandhi was prone to thinking out loud, and so we are privileged to listen in on his uncertainty as to whether or not nonviolence could succeed simultaneously as a political strategy and as a blueprint for communal harmony.

History, of course, has borne out the success of *satyagraha* as a strategy for winning independence from the British. The British, in turn, helped to sow seeds of communal violence through policies of divide and rule and their insistence on backing an independent Muslim state. As a consequence, the failure of *satyagraha* as a means to communal harmony was obvious in 1947 and is even more evident today when right-wing extremists condemn Gandhi's teachings. Moreover, his methods, including the fast, the *hartal,*

and the deliberate courting of arrest, "have been abused and debased by lesser men in pursuit of petty sectarian ends."[3] Yet, Gandhi's ideals had a major intellectual impact on the founding fathers of independent India. Its central challenges remained ones that Gandhi had identified: overcoming disunity and discrimination, developing the capacity to meet the nation's basic needs, and promoting the sort of integrity and commitment, which he referred to as Truth or *satya*.[4]

Gandhi defined *satyagraha* as the power "born of Truth and Love or non-violence."[5] He coined the word by combining the Sanskrit *satya* with *agraha* (holding firmly), the latter being cognate with the English word *grasp*. He insisted that true *satyagraha* does not arise out of anger or malice but is gentle and leads to internal as well as external freedom. He did not claim to have a monopoly on truth but, rather, believed that every individual has to search for it in his own heart; no one is capable of knowing the absolute truth. Therefore, no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his personal view of truth, and no one has the competence to punish.[6]

However, the one essential element in true *satyagraha* is the motive of its practitioner:

> Wrong motives occur when the intent is only to attain victory or satisfaction of a selfish interest. A *satyagrahi* concentrates on the common interest and strives not for retribution but to transform a conflict situation so that warring parties can come out of a confrontation convinced that it was in their mutual interest to resolve it.[7]

Two ideas need to be stressed in understanding this question of motives. One is that a commitment to a common good should be uppermost; the actions of a *satyagrahi* are characterized by selflessness. One has to be willing to set aside his or her own needs and interests in favor of those of a larger community; one must learn to focus on a more universal goal. Second is the understanding that a *satyagrahi* should employ the right means to an end. Gandhi believed that means and ends were convertible terms: "the belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes . . . "[8] These two aspects of *satyagraha* seem to be the ones most misunderstood in the misapplication of Gandhi's methods. They also underlie the "forced non-violence of the weak," which Gandhi referred to in his statement of doubt.

When one opts for nonviolence because it is the only means to an end, one is not really opting for the common good. And when one opts for nonviolence against one's oppressor as political strategy, does that also imply nonviolence toward one's neighbors as a long-term goal? If we examine more closely Gandhi's use of *satyagraha* as a strategy for winning Indian independence, we discover moments when Gandhi himself was constructing

the Independence Movement on a fragile platform of communal harmony. In fact, we must ask whether he established an illusion of peaceful cooperation, which in fact did not truly represent the opinions and feelings of those who purported to be involved in noncooperation and nonviolence movements, solely as a means of gaining independence from the British? Drawing on both historical and literary evidence, we will look first at the Khilafat Movement and then at the reconstruction work undertaken by village Congresswallahs as examples of communal cooperation. Finally, we will examine the work of a contemporary Indian psychologist who has written about communal violence. In each case, we will examine questions of selflessness and motives in carrying out nonviolent resistance.

## THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

One of the foundations of Gandhi's political strategy in winning independence was the Khilafat Movement, which brought together Hindus and Muslims in pursuit of a common, if futile, goal: preserving intact the spiritual and temporal authority of the Ottoman sultan as the caliph of Islam. Although it now seems preposterous that Hindus would have any interest in such a goal, Gandhi settled on this issue because it mattered to Indian Muslims. By destroying the Mughal empire, the British eliminated a symbolic structure of authority; yet, in its wake they had offered support to the Ottoman Empire and encouraged Indian Muslims to magnify its importance. Identifying with the demise of the Caliphate, the Indian Muslim elite of the early twentieth century understood Islam to be in danger and saw itself as threatened in a similar way. Gandhi appealed to this group because he saw the Khilafat issue as a means to bring Muslims into the Congress/nationalist movement, and elite leaders responded in kind, desirous of recognition as Muslim spokesmen for a united constituency.

In many ways, the Movement involved a strange set of bedfellows: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Ali Brothers, and Maulana Abdul Bari, all Muslims who sought out Gandhi, with his Sanskrit vocabulary, Hindu gods, and understanding of independence as Ram Raj. Yet, Gandhi was a Hindu leader who would consider Muslim religious ideals sympathetically and saw the wisdom of linking religion with political appeals to a mass audience. He wrote to Muhammad Ali, "... my interest in your release is quite selfish. We have a common goal and I want to utilize your services to the uttermost, in order to reach that goal. In the proper solution of the Mohamedan question lies the realization of Swarajya."[9] Because they shared similar political styles and Gandhi was up-front about his intentions, they were able to change the face of Indian nationalism during the years 1919–20. But their collaboration was not without its ups and downs. Minault tells us that the alliance between Gandhi and the Ali brothers and Abdul Bari

was "fraught with misunderstandings and personality differences from the first."[10]

During the Rowlatt *satyagraha,* however, a surprising degree of Hindu–Muslim unity emerged. When police violence killed both Hindus and Muslims in Delhi, "funeral processions met at the scene of the firing and Hindus and Muslims embraced, declaring that their unity had been sealed in blood."[11] In Calcutta, Hindus were admitted to the Nakhula Mosque, and in Allahabad Hindus and Muslims attended a joint meeting in the city's central mosque. Yet when Gandhi called off his civil disobedience campaign, his Muslim allies were not happy, and Hindus were troubled by attacks on British outposts by Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan. Although Muslims and Hindus apparently needed one another in order to pressure the British, they distrusted each other. "For the Hindus, Gandhi was the guardian of Muslim nonviolence; for the Muslims, he was the guarantor of Hindu adherence to non-cooperation."[12] Abdul Bari secured endorsements for a *fatwa* favoring noncooperation, stating that any cooperation with the enemies of Islam was "religiously unlawful" and that "it was permissible to have political alliances and friendly relations with non-Muslims who were not hostile to Islam."[13] Yet the *fatwa* further stated that Muslims might take the advice of friendly non-Muslims, "but the leadership of an infidel over Muslims is never permitted," a clause aimed directly at Gandhi.

In Malabar in 1921, the Mappilla Rebellion, an uprising of Muslim tenants against their Hindu landlords as well as the British government, occurred in the name of the Khilafat Movement. Estates, plantations, and Hindu temples were torched, conversions by sword happened, and "Khilafat kingdoms" were proclaimed in some villages. When Gandhi and the Ali brothers appealed to the Mappillas to renounce violence, the leaders were denounced as infidels.[14] When the Khilafat movement edged toward its effective collapse in 1922, and noncooperation was suspended, factions and divisions previously submerged by a semblance of unity began to surface. Communal violence occurred with increased frequency, and new movements with communal bias emerged among both Hindus (Shuddhi and Sangathan) and Muslims (Tabligh and Tanzim).[15] Gandhi lost friends by publicly chastising Muslims for perpetrating violence in five days of rioting in Bombay in November 1921. Later, Shaukat Ali blamed the Kohat riot of 1924 on Hindus and, in so doing, finished off what was by then a moribund movement.

In evaluating the Khilafat Movement as an example of Hindu–Muslim cooperation, Minault implies that Gandhi was to some extent a control freak intent on preserving his own position of nonviolence at the cost of others:

> The Mahatma's dedication to non-violence at all costs was not shared by his Muslim allies; his desire to dictate the entire plan of action and

> its policy was unacceptable to the Muslim leaders. The latter, especially the Ali brothers and Abdul Bari, chafed at Gandhi's attempts to curb their rhetoric, and they were undoubtedly inflammatory in their speeches on several occasions. Gandhi too evidenced insensitivity along the way, especially when he bowed to the viceroy's request and asked for the Alis' apology for certain statements, thereby undermining their hard-won political following and losing their trust. Later, when he canceled non-cooperation and civil disobedience, Gandhi misjudged his own following. As the expectations which had been aroused changed to disillusionment, even the Mahatma was unable to prevent the energies generated during the movement from turning toward communal violence.[16]

The question of motives may become blurred when one considers the needs of the nationalist movement, the Muslims, and the future of the nation-state. What was the greater good at that point in time, the community that stood to benefit from immediate negotiations with the British or future generations that would enjoy long-term communal harmony? It seems clear that Gandhi saw Hindu–Muslim unity as a strategy to gain independence, but he did not fully use the independence struggle as a strategy to gain long-term trust between Hindus and Muslims.

## PARTITION

A. K. Ramanujan has warned against using fiction in place of historical fact as evidence that certain attitudes and behaviors were existent at a particular time and place. Yet he never tired of reminding us that literature gives access to very different levels of truth, things that cannot be documented but explain the nature of events abstractly and symbolically, through objective correlatives, and in altogether more accurate ways than historical documents. In that spirit we may turn to *Tamas* ("Darkness," 1974), a novel by Bhisham Sahni, which has been translated from Hindi. Belonging to the second generation of writers about the violence of Partition, Sahni depicts events leading up to Partition in an attempt to distribute responsibility equally and show the superficiality of Hindu–Muslim cooperation. Made into a film, and broadcast by Doordarshan in six episodes, *Tamas* was both hailed as an epic achievement and condemned as inflammatory and simplistic.

Govind Nihalani, who wrote the introduction to the 1988 translation (Penguin, India), says that the telecast "refocused the attention of the public on the grim consequences of communal politics and the significance of secularism to preserve our democratic system and national unity." As a secularist, he says, Sahni underlines the subversive nature of communal politics

and illustrates how "innocent persons were duped into serving the ulterior purposes of fundamentalists and communalists of both sides." A verdict handed down by the Supreme Court of India, regarding an attempt to stop further telecasts, stated, "This is also the lesson of history that naked truth in all times will not be beneficial but truth in its proper light indicating the evils and the consequences of those evils is instructive and that message is there in *Tamas* . . . "[17] With this understanding of the significance of Sahni's novel, let us explore several scenes that involve reconstruction work by a Congress committee in a Northwest Frontier Province town just before Partition.

First we observe a local Congress committee, consisting of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, including Bakshiji, secretary of the District Congress Committee, and Mehtaji, former president of the District Congress Committee, who has spent 16 years in jail. The eminence of the group is undermined by their mixed ages and by a comical figure, the General, who has regularly courted imprisonment and goes about making speeches about the Freedom Movement. As they gather for a morning singing party, we observe them exchanging barbs about elections and other petty matters, so that an undercurrent of ill feeling is present between them. When it is announced that their work for the day will be cleaning lanes and *kuchcha* drains, it becomes apparent that not everyone has a taste for selfless action. Still, in order to quell dissent, they proceed to sing freedom songs as they walk to the site of the morning's work, their tricolor flag on high. Their slogans, however, are not well received. In response to "Bande Mataram, "Bharat Mata ki jai," and "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai," comes the counterresponse, "Pakistan Zindabad."

The progress of the Congress group is halted by a man, well-known to the others, who plants himself in the middle of the lane and challenges them: "The Congress Party belongs to the Hindus. Muslims have nothing to do with it."[18] In response, the men remind Mahmood Saheb that the Congress belongs alike to Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, and that he was once one of them. He retorts, "Whatever you may say, the Congress as a political party, belongs exclusively to the Hindus. The Muslim League represents the Muslims. The Congress cannot lead the Muslims." When Congress Muslims are pointed out, Mahmood Saheb says, "They are the dogs of the Hindus. We don't hate the Hindus, but we certainly hate their dogs. . . . Maulana Azad is the biggest dog of the Hindus. He follows Mahatma Gandhi everywhere, wagging his tail."

Not only are Muslim members of the Congress committee insulted, but Gandhi's closest Muslim associate is spoken of in the vilest terms. Although reminded of Gandhi's primary goal, that freedom will be for the whole of Hindustan, Mahmood Saheb replies, "The liberation of Hindustan will benefit the Hindus only. The Muslims can feel free only in Pakistan."[19] Here, Sahni shows us that the Muslim League, with its promise of Pakistan, has

seriously disrupted earlier Hindu–Muslim–Sikh unity of the Congress at the local as well as the all-India level.

Proceeding to a different lane, the Congresswallahs are by now tired, disheveled, and irritable about the prospect of cleaning drains. They very nearly make the fatal mistake of proceeding down a lane near a mosque while singing, although the Muslims among them, aware of danger, are thoroughly alarmed by the error. When the committee reaches an area where they are better received, class differences raise their heads. Children are defecating on the street, cattle are tied in a lane, and local men are embarrassed by educated people, from well-to-do families, cleaning the street. Worse, when the scum is removed from the drain, a terrible odor arises and mosquitoes swarm. Several of the Congresswallahs refuse to dirty their hands by using a broom, normally the work of Untouchables. One observes that "cleaning the drains is not going to bring *swaraj* any nearer."[20] He goes on to comment that although he is plying the spinning wheel and doing reconstruction work, it doesn't make much sense to him, thus calling Gandhian values into question. The committee's work comes to a halt when people begin throwing stones, and word comes that a dead pig has been left on the steps of the mosque.

In this scene, Sahni shows us that Congress commitment to Gandhi's ideals is, by this time, half-hearted at best. The writer implies that little real reconstruction work could be accomplished by local Congress leaders, who had not fully internalized Gandhi's vision of the common good. Although Gandhi is widely hailed as a transformative leader, who raised the aspirations and mobilized the potential of his followers, we see that the sacrifices that he demanded from his followers were not always appreciated. In the days leading up to independence, whatever earlier commitments and moral values had been developed in Gandhi's calls for *satyagraha* had begun to fray. Dalton comments, "Gandhi saw satyagraha as heuristic because it employed a kind of power that encouraged reflection and reexamination of motives, needs, and interests."[21] In its ideal form, satyagraha was that and more. But what we see in *Tamas* is the breakdown of positive aspects of nonviolence, so that what is left is obligation: a set of duties coupled with old habits, devoid of the original excitement of self-discovery and commitment to communal harmony.

As the novel progresses, deaths occur and communal groups demand allegiance. One by one members of the Congress committee fall by the wayside in order to prove themselves above suspicion as loyal members of their respective religious groups. The limits of Hindu and Muslim *mohallas* become clearly demarcated: "The Hindus and Sikhs dared not trespass into Muslim *mohallas,* nor the Muslims into Hindu and Sikh lanes. Holding lathis and spears, people guarded the entrances to their lanes."[22] Thus, lines are drawn in the sand between religious groups, and gratuitous killing results. When the Congresswallahs attempt to meet, ostensibly to establish a Peace committee, they squabble among themselves over whom they represent.

Attempts to force beef down the throats of Sikhs and Hindus result in forced conversions. In the aftermath of the violence, a peace meeting finally takes place, but the underlying conversation is about buying land in areas where people are leaving to avoid communal strife. Congress is now regarded as purely a Hindu organization, and in its place communities wrangle over representation on a Peace committee. The novel ends ironically, with a man who had commissioned the killing of the pig, riding next to the driver in a peace bus, which will go to each *mohalla,* calling on people to live peacefully together: too little, too late.

Sahni's novel clearly shows how communalism exerts a stronger pull on individuals than calls to serve the greater good. Only the rarest of persons can set aside his or her own needs and interests when challenged by his or her religious community. Yet Sahni also shows that the moment of betrayal to the Congress ideals is not a dramatic one but rather a gradual erosion of values, exacerbated by violent events in the surrounding society. This susceptibility to the need to prove one's membership in an identity group is at the root of the weakness that Gandhi implies. Yet, Gandhi uses the phrase "forced non-violence of the weak." He suggests that through *satyagraha* campaigns, nonviolence is being imposed as a condition on those who desire independence but have no other means to attain it. For these people who have always lacked power, and still lack it, nonviolence is merely a means to an end. In no way is it a convertible term.

The masses have little interest in communal harmony beyond its use as a tool to gain the immediate goal of independence, particularly when crimes are being committed against their respective religious groups. Gandhi's statement of doubt reveals that he understood human nature very well and knew that three-way vengeance lay just underneath the surface of his *satyagraha* efforts. But he, too, was intent on gaining independence, and although we may not accuse him of sacrificing Hindu–Muslim harmony for a more immediate goal, we should recognize that for him harmony was a secondary, although significant, priority. Gandhi believed that to promote communal unity was "the bounden duty of every nationalist."[23] It is clear that from the outset independence took precedence over communal harmony in his thinking and in his practice of nonviolence.

## HINDU–MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

Sudhir Kakar, in *The Colors of Violence,* explores the psychology of Hindus and Muslims involved in post-Partition communal riots in the city of Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh). He comments that secularists have underestimated the aversion between Hindus and Muslims because they rely on objective rather than subjective, experiential data.[24] We need to pay attention, he believes, to the "collective memory," which is the imaginative base for a sense of cultural identity. Thus, he identifies "two overarching

histories of Hindu–Muslim relations—with many local variations—which have been used by varying political interests and ideologies and have been jostling for position for many centuries."[25] What is most provocative is his assertion that in times of heightened conflict, nationalist histories assume preeminence and organize cultural memory in a particular direction, whereas in times of peace, the focus shifts back to histories that emphasize commonalities and a shared past.[26] In the interim between moments of conflict, memories of violence retreat, fade, or assume new meanings, whereas people emphasizing peaceful coexistence rise to the surface and are celebrated.

It is a useful idea, for it helps to explain why communalism seems to arise so quickly in the face of events like the inadvertent slaughter of a cow or a noisy religious procession passing near a mosque during prayers. It also helps us to understand that Gandhi was intent on manipulating and even creating symbols of commonality in order to reinforce the impulse toward peaceful coexistence. Thus, the Khilafat Movement, an artificially propped-up symbol of Hindu–Muslim unity, served a multiple role in creating cooperation between disparate communities in the independence struggle, while at the same time reinforcing the spirit of a Muslim community that had been badly served by the British, and encouraging Hindus not to fear the "otherness" of Islam. When the Mappillas rioted and called attention to economic differences between religious groups, the Khilafat Movement was dealt a severe blow. Instantly, the old nationalist histories reemerged, calling into question the symbol of cooperation. Similarly, as Partition neared, scattered acts of violence between religious groups brought to the fore the challenge of loyalty to the identity group and the need to prove one's commitment to a deeply entrenched historical perspective.

Writing about his first personal experience of Hindu–Muslim violence, Kakar describes his relatives streaming into his eastern Punjab home as refugees from areas around Lahore at the time of Partition. "I became aware of their bitterness about the leaders of a newly independent India, Nehru and especially Gandhi by whom they felt most betrayed. Gandhi was the pet object of my grandmother's aversion, and many of my uncles and aunts shamelessly encouraged her as she held forth . . . on Gandhi's many affronts to Hindu sentiment and advanced salacious speculations on the reasons for his love of the "Mussulman."[27] Here, we see a version of the anger that led to Gandhi's assassination by a member of the RSS, extremist ancestor of today's VHP/BJP. Surely significant is the sense of betrayal that Kakar's relatives exuded, a response that we also observe in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India,* set in the Punjab, a novel highly critical of Gandhi.

From what does this sense of betrayal emerge? Had they believed what Gandhi was telling them? That they should look on neighbors of other religious communities with love? That everyone was capable of selflessness? That they had nothing to fear from a community, some of whose members

understood the notion of a common good and followed Gandhi? In their eyes, when Gandhi, a Hindu, professed cooperation with Muslims, some of whom in turn were killing Hindus and Sikhs, he was betraying his own people. Did he also betray them by holding unrealistic expectations of human nature? In this example, Gandhi's commitment to Hindu–Muslim unity is called into question by people who have, in a time of upheaval, lost their capacity to imagine a common good. Yet, as the twenty-first century dawns, and communal rhetoric becomes more shrill, much of India seems to have lost that capacity. Only the few who still doggedly patronize *khadi* shops or study rural development at the university in Gandhigram (Tamilnadu) seem to revere Gandhian ideals of selflessness and communal harmony.

In Kakar's study, we hear a comment from a Hindu *pehlwan* (wrestler) whose gymnasium celebrates Gandhi right alongside violent Hindu heroes. When asked about this curious juxtaposition, he replies, "First, I talk like Gandhiji. . . . Only when talk fails I use force like Shivaji or Bose."[28] Using non-Western logic, ignoring the law of the excluded middle, the pehlwan does not see Gandhi and Shivaji as opposites excluding each other. Rather, he sees them as alternative possibilities. If one does not work, then the other will be called into service. There is at least an acknowledgment that negotiation should be the first avenue. But there is no understanding of selflessness or the right means to an end. Instead, a superficial nod in the direction of nonviolence is followed by recourse to more certain means: achieving one's ends by force. Any sense of convertible terms has been completely lost. Indeed, the wrestler does not perceive the irony of his own observation about a large wooden statue of Gandhi, blown down by the wind: "He has his back to us because he cannot bear to see the present condition of this country."[29]

Where has this reflection on nonviolence taken us? We have seen that Gandhi, in using communal harmony as a political means to the goal of independence, did not prepare the grounds carefully enough for a future nation-state built on that ideal. We could certainly say that he died too soon, his work unfinished. Or perhaps we should also lay the problem at the feet of Hindu nationalists, who have kidnapped the secularist vision of communal harmony and are holding it for ransom, while doing their best to shatter whatever Gandhian ideals remain.

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# PART II

# Where Hate Has a Home

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# CHAPTER 5

# The Sangh Parivar Organizations

> You call men professing other religions infidels, while they do the same to you, and their God curses you in the same way. Now will you please tell us which of the two should be considered right and which wrong? On reflection it is clear that there are errors in all creeds.
>
> —Dayananda Saraswati

In January 1948, shortly after India gained its independence, the world was shocked by the assassination of one of its great peace-builders, Mahatma Gandhi. His assassin, Nathuram Godse, a Brahmin member of the Hindu Mahasabha (founded 1915), believed that Gandhi was not a "good Hindu" because "he consistently insulted the Hindu nation and had weakened it by his doctrine of ahimsa (non-violence)."[1] As Godse's brother insisted, "We wanted to show the Indians that there were Indians who would not suffer humiliation—that there were still men left among the Hindus."[2] The Godse brothers had been trained by the RSS (Rashtra Sevika Samiti), an organization founded in Nagpur in 1925 by Dr. Keshar Baliram Hegevar to "regenerate" the Hindu nation.

The Sangh, itself not a political organization, eventually gave rise to two political parties, the Jan Sangh (now defunct) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Both parties centered on the ideology of V. D. Savarkar, whose book, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (1923), called for recognizing Hinduism as both a race and a religion, essentially developing an "indigenous race" theory modeled on German nationalism and Aryan mythography.[3] In order to celebrate the vitality and strength of a twice-colonized nation, the Sangh emphasized physical fitness, martial arts, and paramilitary training. RSS members were especially active in northern India at the time of the

subcontinent's Partition and played a key role in provoking communal riots in the area.[4] Partition itself was viewed by the RSS as a tragic division, provoked entirely by Muslims. Although the RSS was declared an unlawful association and its leaders arrested after Gandhi's murder, the ban on the organization was lifted in 1949, and the RSS reemerged as a legal organization. Since then, it has rebounded in a new, highly organized form with the same Hindu nationalist agenda.

An entire family of "Saffron" organizations, the Sangh Parivar, has evolved from the RSS, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a religious organization; the BJP, a political party; the RSS and Sadhvi Shakti Parishad, both women's organizations; and the Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. All of these organizations are dedicated to the ideal of *hindutva* and the construction of a powerful Hindu nation, rooted in the notion of hegemonic masculinity. Women embody national honor, as heroic mothers and chaste wives. Men, however, are dedicated to the ideal of the Hindu warrior,[5] a form of cultural nationalism that takes issue with certain minority groups. The Sangh Parivar organizations consider their enemies to be (1) Indian followers of foreign religions (Islam and Christianity); (2) Communists and their sympathizers; (3) Westernized members of the Indian intelligentsia committed to secularism; and (4) foreign powers.[6]

This sort of thinking has polarized Indian society, particularly in the north, pitting upper-caste and middle-class Hindus against Muslims, untouchables, converts to Islam and Christianity, and any who subscribe to "the false dogma of secularism." Fanning the flames of Hindu nationalism are the acts of Islamist organizations based in Pakistan but operating in India. Hindu and Muslim extremists, both operating under the banner of religion, fuel each other's violence. In December 1992, riots were provoked in six states of India in response to the destruction of the Babri Masjid. Muslims reacted predictably to the Hindu nationalist claim that the mosque stood on a site sacred to the Hindu god Rama. When the Vishwa Hindu Parishad mounted a full-scale campaign to liberate Rama's presumed birthplace and erect a Hindu temple there, Muslims responded with anger. In connection with the next stage of the project, planning the construction of the new Ram temple, widescale communal violence against Muslims occurred in Gujarat in February 2002.

## SAFFRON ORGANIZATIONS

Much has been written about the Sangh Parivar, which inherited the mantle of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha. Along with the Arya Samaj, the Sangh continued the Hindu nationalist thinking first voiced in the form of Hindu revivalism in the late nineteenth century. At that time, various new Hindu religious movements attempted to reclaim political space stolen from

them first through Muslim conquest and more recently through colonial hegemony. They sought to reconstitute themselves as powerful in the face of domination by others, as well as to reinvigorate the practices of Hinduism, which had become "diluted" through sharing of religious festivals and exposure to Western ideas. Although novelists such as Bapsi Sidwa in *Cracking India* celebrate the interaction of religious groups in pre-Partition India, Hindu nationalists thought it detrimental to the future of Hinduism. Never mind the fact that much of the strength of Hinduism lies in its insistence that there are many paths to the truth.

Over the millennia, Hinduism has evolved and survived, in part because it has borrowed so much from other religions. It countered Buddhism by co-opting the Buddha himself who "became" an avatar of Vishnu. It countered Islamic Sufi teachings by foregrounding *bhakti* (devotional poetry) as an egalitarian way of relating to God. Hinduism has suffered many threats during its 5,000-year existence. Not the least of those was resistance to Brahmin hegemony posed by the Upanishadic thinkers, who moved the sacrifice from a costly externally performed ritual involving giant altars and many priests, to an internally performed meditation on the concept of *atman-brahman*.

Despite this major shift in Hindu thinking, Vedanta became only one of many accepted schools of Hinduism, and *yagnas* (sacrifices) continue to be performed. Over the centuries, perhaps under the influence of Jainism, animal sacrifices, formerly a part of those *yagnas*, became symbolic rather than literal, and only vegetative materials are offered today in mainstream Hindu rituals. Hindu flexibility over the centuries has been remarkable. Thus, attempts to rigidify Hinduism now seem inexplicable, except as a paranoid reaction to new outside influence in the form of globalization.

British attempts to legislate against Hindu practices such as *sati,* widow abuse, and *devadasis* were compounded by activities of Christian missionaries who regarded Hindus as heathens whose benighted souls should be saved. It is not surprising that Hindu nationalists act in a similar way in their attempts to reconvert Muslims and Christians, whom they believe were unfairly, either by force or poverty, drawn to "alien" religions. Demographic statistics, however, suggest no threat from Muslims who represent 13.4 percent of India's population or from Christians, who make up 2.3 percent. What may alarm Hindu nationalists is the fact that there are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan: India has the second-highest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. As a result, Sangh Parivar organizations decry high Muslim birth rates and imply a demographic threat. They also work politically at breaking up vote-getting collaboration among Muslims, Christians, and Dalits (untouchables).

The fact that Hindu nationalism re-surfaced in the 1990s came as no surprise to historians of India, who knew that it was there all along. The Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati in Bombay, was

strongly critical of all other forms of religion, including Reform Hinduism, Saivite Hinduism, and Islam; and also sought to include new converts to Christianity from among those marginalized by Brahmanical Hinduism.[7] In the 1920s, the Arya Shuddhi movement, billed as a grand conversion campaign, targeted Sikhs, born Muslims, "neo-Muslims" and Dalit Christians. "Shuddhi now emerged as a symbol of central importance around which the Aryas began to rouse Hindu public opinion and mobilize the Hindu masses."[8] Consciously choosing scriptural Islam and Christianity as its models, the Arya Samaj put forth the Vedas as supreme texts of Hinduism, thus making conversion from one set of texts to another relatively painless. The formal conversion rite, *shuddhi karan*, was similarly analogous to Muslim and Christian rites.[9]

Another conservative Hindu *sabha,* although critical of the Arya Samaj, was the Sanathan Dharma Sabha (Council of External Religion), founded in 1895 to defend orthodox Hinduism and reach out to Indian emigré communities in Fiji, the Caribbean, and Africa. An influential Maratha historian, Balwantrao Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), organized Cow Protection Societies, celebrated Shivaji as a Hindu hero, and glorified the Aryan race and religion.[10] The Hindu Mahasabha, which first came on the scene in 1915, was an avowedly political organization, yet it shared the Hindu nationalist ideal of reviving age-old traditions and strongly opposed the secular and pluralistic views of the Indian National Congress. Before 1920, Indian demands for independence were bitterly split between radical Hindus led by Tilak and more moderate followers of Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915).

In fact, it is only a result of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India in 1915 and Gokhale's death shortly afterward that leadership of the independence struggle passed to a nonviolent leader who decried untouchability and was able to unite most of India's religious groups into effectively resisting British hegemony. Yet, although Gandhi and Congress were able to marginalize Hindu nationalist views of history and Indian identity, these ideas never really disappeared. Many nationalists outside Congress, as well as some within, shared the ideal of *hindutva*.[11] Although both Gandhi and Hindu nationalists believed that Indian unity could be derived from a common religious culture, Gandhi developed a pluralistic vision based on ideas from many religions. Nehru, in turn, entertained a secular outlook, finding a basis for unity in a shared historical past and a future of economic development.[12] Despite their best efforts to maintain a unified India, however, Congress leaders were unable to prevent Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1875–1948) and the Muslim League from successfully persuading the British government to divide the soon-to-be independent nation.

In response to Muslim demands for Pakistan, the RSS expanded rapidly between 1937 and 1940, with organizers operating in both North and South India. Between 1938 and 1940, the number of Sangh volunteers increased from 40,000, to 100,000, and officers' training camps were attended by

trainees from all over India. Violently active during the communal riots surrounding Partition, RSS *swayamsevaks* (core members) were central to the Carnage that occurred in the Punjab. "Through participation in riots, relief work in Hindu refugee camps and virulent communal propaganda, the RSS contributed vastly to the development of a massive fear psychosis among large sections of Hindus about the 'foreign' Muslims."[13] Following Gandhi's assassination, RSS *shakhas* (cells) indulged only in social functions and quiet group discussions. But eventually RSS leaders were able to persuade Nehru and Patel that Communism was a bigger threat and that RSS legality should be restored under certain conditions: (1) the group should have a written constitution; (2) they should maintain a regular register of members; (3) they should not admit minors without parental permission; and (4) they should work openly and only in the cultural field.[14]

Ironically, the success of Hindu nationalism has resulted, in part from ideas of political organization borrowed from the West. The Sangh was, for India, a new type of highly structured organization focused on obtaining political power through publications, outreach programs, conferences and seminars, and educational institutions. From the outset, the RSS devoted its attention to towns and recruitment of *swayamsevaks* from the ranks of university students, shopkeepers, and lower-middle-class clerks. Following its reemergence, it concentrated on cadre-training and culture but sent many of its cadres out to found or work in organizations connected with specific social groups or with specialized goals. By creating affiliated organizations catering specifically to women, youth, religious concerns, or politics, the Sangh gained cohesion and flexibility. Moreover, it was able to seek political power through electoral politics while at the same time maintaining its reputation for cultural concerns. These strategies proved so fruitful that they persist to the present day and have allowed the saffron organizations to win many of their adherents from among Indian emigrants who seek to maintain some links with India. *Sangathan* (organization) continues to be key to the success of the RSS and its affiliates.

From the beginning in 1925 the shakha has been the basic organizational unit offering both physical training and ideological teaching. Beginning with boys ages 12 to 15, the cell offers a games and physical culture program appealing to young people in overcrowded lower-middle class housing, complemented with oral teachings delivered by *pracharaks* who allow no questions. Gradually, participants develop a new group identity based on a sense of moral and physical superiority. A case study of Khurja revealed a pattern by which "young men move from communal-minded families to schools and colleges full of RSS teachers, and RSS shakhas provide practically the only other source of recreation, leisure-time socialization, and intellectual training."[15]

The teachings are simple and consist of eight major points: (1) as the original inhabitants, Hindus alone constitute the Indian nation; (2) Hinduism

is liberal, tolerant, and superior to any other faith; (3) as a result of repeated conquests by Muslims and British Christians, the Hindu nation must strengthen itself to counter future threats; (4) the idea that India is a land of many different and equal cultures is an illusion and the way to cultural survival is Hinduization; (5) divisive Western forms of knowledge erroneously perceived that India lacked a homogeneous civilization; (6) pseudo-secularists (Nehru and others) perpetuated the idea of multiculturalism within a pseudo-secular Constitution; (7) only a Hindu Rashtra will afford protection to non-Hindus; and (8) Muslims have been appeased by pseudo-secularists pursuing vote banks.[16]

Symbols help to perpetuate adherence to these certitudes. Belief in the RSS organization is uppermost, followed by veneration of the *bhagwa dhwaj* (saffron flag), which is worshipped as *guru*. The uniform is that of khakhi shorts and *lathi* (long stick), associated with the British Indian army and police as symbols of power. The RSS also emphasizes and reinterprets certain holidays from the traditional Hindu religious calendar and adds two of its own: (1) *Navaratri-Vijaya Dashami*, Rama's victory over Ravana, marked by shakha parades and weapons worship; (2) *Makarsankranti*, Hindu New Year in January, to foster "integral nationalism"; (3) *Varsh-Pratipada,* when Rama was crowned and Yudhishthira and Vikramaditya presumably started the old Hindu calendar year; (4) *Hindu Samrajya Diwas*, to celebrate the coronation of Maratha hero Shivaji; (5) *Rakshabandhan*, to remind *swyamsevaks* of the duty to sacrifice life itself if needed and to protect Hindu honor; and (6) *Vyas Puja*, when the bhagwa dhwaj is worshiped and members make anonymous donations to the organization (no records kept).[17]

At the top of the organization, supervising all of the shakhas, are the *sarsanghchalak*, nominated for life by his predecessor; *the sarkaryavahak* or general secretary; and the *prachar pramukh* or chief organizer. Other full-time cadres, all expected to remain unmarried, are the appointed *pracharak*s, controlled from the top, who are the real bones of the Sangh. With their celibacy, these leaders take on aspects of warrior monks, emanating both martial strength and spiritual discipline. This demeanor of fortitude, however, is leavened by a more human concern with families of the *swyamsevaks*, in keeping with the Sangh image of itself as a family of organizations offering its members a new extended family identity. Thus, Chakrabarti Radhey Lal Aswathi, an ex-*pracharak,* described RSS life as follows: "We go to shakhas, we visit people's homes, we look after people's problems. If a person is ill, we ask if he has money. If this answer is negative, we borrow from others to lend him some."[18]

Offering this sort of complete lifestyle, the all-male Sangh in 1996 had three million core members (*swayamsevaks)* meeting daily in neighborhood cells, with 37,000 shakhas in north and central India, as well as diasporic branches in 47 foreign countries.[19] Continuity of leadership has also been a strong point. In its entire history, the Sangh has had only four supreme

leaders or s*arsanghchalaks*: the founder Hedgevar; M. S. Golwalkar (1940–73); Balasaheb Deoras (1973–94); and Rajendra Singh (1994–present), the first non-Brahmin, a South Indian. Khushwant Singh observes that "part of the Sangh Parivar's success can be attributed to the charm and charisma of many of its leaders. They were men of polite manner, obvious sophistication and intelligence who cloaked their fascist ideas in sweet reasonableness and impeccable etiquette."[20]

## RASHTRA SEVIKA SAMITI

The first family affiliate organization, the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, a women's organization, was formed in 1936 in Wardha (Maharashtra) by Hedgevar and Lakshmi Kelkar, whose sons were involved with the Sangh. Today, the Samiti includes one million members in 16 states and diasporic communities. Sharing the same sort of rigid hierarchy, and subordinate to the Sangh, the Samiti has had only two *pramukh sanchalikas*, both of whom came into office as widows: Kelkar (1936–78) and Tai Apte (1978–present). The organization allows women who serve as *pracharikas* (analogous to *pracharaks*) to remain single, an opportunity not afforded most other Indian women. Like their male counterparts, the *pracharikas* are validated as ascetics dedicated to the Hindu nation. The Samiti is also divided into shakhas of four different categories: children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly. Each level receives ideological indoctrination and paramilitary training, which for women includes lathi-wielding, archery, karate, and rifle-shooting. In addition, the Samiti offers tutorials on selected Sanskrit texts, patronizes the arts, and provides free medical care to poor Hindu women.[21] Although the Shivaji celebration is missing from its festival calendar, the Samiti celebrates the same five others as the Sangh. The Samiti uniform is a white sari with a purple border.

According to the Samiti, Hindus are both sons and daughters of the motherland, symbolized by Ganesh, the androgynous son of Parvati, wife of Siva. The ideal Hindu male is a good husband and son, whereas a negative image of the male is he who harasses women, fails to respect Hindu femininity, or intermarries outside his caste or religion. Women are represented as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and citizens, with emphasis on family roles, although some space exists for women to enter the public sphere or fulfill their duty as *pracharikas*. Reproduction of sons, however, is uppermost, as is educating them and sending them to battle. Sita is the role model for wives, although the concept of *pativrata* (devotion to husband) is reinterpreted, so that the nation, as well as the husband, is a woman's god.

Paola Bacchetta notes that a woman's worship of her husband is conditional on his status as a good husband and good Hindu nationalist. "Thus it gives wives the right to evaluate their husbands, and it institutionalizes this reinterpretation by rewriting the rituals associated with normative

patrivrata."[22] As children of Bharatmata (Mother India) and Ashtabhuja (eight-armed goddess combining qualities of Mahakali [strength], Mahasuraswati [Intellect] and Mahalakshmi [Wealth]), Samiti daughters also venerate feminine warrior figures such as the Rani of Jhansi, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore, and Queen Chennana. All Samiti women are taught to regard Muslim men as rapists, rioters, and murderers, and the Muslim religion in general is understood to be degrading to women.

## BHARATIYA MAZDOOR SANGH

Another early affiliate was the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) established in 1955 to counter the influence of communism and theories of class warfare among workers. Although it rejects class struggle, the BMS purports also to be critical of capitalist greed and regards both ideas as Western imports grounded in materialism. In their place, this Sangh organization recommends a Hindu ideal: converting enterprises into occupational "families." "Workers should be invited to participate in management, and in return must cultivate harmonious relations with their employers: strikes are permitted only as a last resort, after conciliation efforts have failed."[23] Although the BMS rejects international labor solidarity and replaces May Day with Viswakarma Puja, it operates as a fairly conventional, if well-behaved, trade union. Some BMS units, however, sent volunteers for the dismantling of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in 1991. The BMS has enjoyed greatest success among white-collar workers, and today has more than three million members, most of them in the Hindi-speaking states of north India.

## AKHIL BHARATIYA VIDYARTHI PARISHAD

A more prominent member of the saffron family is the student organization Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), to which administrators and teachers also belong. The goal of the organization is to restructure relations between teachers, students, and administrators according to the family model. Their role in student politics involves contesting elections, running unions, and agitating for student demands, much like other student political organizations. The regional office of the ABVP is located in Ahmedabad, in connection with the Sri Gujarat Vanvasi Kayan Parishad. The ABVP has been very successful in recruiting RSS cadres from among the university and college student community, a strategy also followed by the Hindu Student Council (HSC), which has close ties to the Vishnu Hindu Parishad, a significant presence on major American university campuses.

The HSC works primarily with second-generation Indian Americans in order to bring them under the influence of *hindutva* thinking. "It does this through multiple levels of ideological work—by organizing mass meetings and readings on campuses on a narrow range of Hindu thought ideologically

in tune with Hindutva (such as *Bhagavad Gita* readings) and for those who wish to get more involved as a gateway to larger Hindutva operations in the US."[24] Today one of India's largest student organizations, the ABVP maintains active branches in 415 of India's 483 districts and working units in 121 of India's 167 universities.[25]

## SEWA VIBHAG

The service wing of the Hindutva Movement is hard to comprehend as a discrete entity because it operates through hundreds of organizations spread across India and other countries, with many different names and functions, each purporting to be an independent organization. In this way, the RSS is able to distribute *swyamsevaks* across a broad geographical area and to offer them multiple entry points for their ideological work. Education, for instance, offers an ideal cover for RSS ideas and the work of restyling identities. Thus, many educational endeavors that function under the name Vidya Bharati are actually RSS operations. At least 4,000 schools, going up to the high school and occasionally the college level, have come into existence since the founding of the Vidya Bharati scheme in 1977: Shishu Mandirs at the elementary level, Bal Mandirs at the high school level, and Samskar Kendras (informal schooling) in urban slums, forest areas, or remote villages. Although the government-prescribed syllabus is followed in these schools, it is augmented by lectures on patriotism and Hindus fighting Muslims, lessons on Sanskrit and yoga, and revisionist history. Visual displays of an armed Rama, the future Ayodhya Temple, and various Hindu nationalist heroes are prominent.

Similarly, organizations utilizing the title "*Vanvasi*" (forest people) reflect RSS interest in tribal people and an ideological rejection of their usual terminology (Adivasi), which implies that non-Hindus were the first inhabitants of India. By recasting Adivasis as *vanvasis,* the Sangh is able to claim the Aryans, who introduced Vedic civilization to India, as indigenous people of the subcontinent. Thus, the Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad in Gujarat (mentioned earlier in this chapter in conjunction with the ABVP) is an RSS effort, as are the Akhil Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashrams in Bihar; the Vanvasi Vikas Parishads in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa; the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams in Maharashtra, Hyderabad, and Delhi. Other saffron organizations working among the Adivasis are the Ekal Vidyalaya, Sewa Bharati, Vivekanana Kendra, Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan, and Friends of Tribal Society.[26] These Sangh organizations seek to bring tribal people "back" to the Hindu faith and stop their conversion to Christianity. The usual process is to transport tribal youth to a Sangh location for religious-ideological training and then send them back to their own communities to teach. In rural areas of Gujarat in 2002, "Hinduized" Adivasis and Dalits were encouraged to participate in communal violence against their Muslim neighbors. Although the Vanvasi

organizations masquerade as welfare or development groups, they are actually reconversion institutions linked also with BJP electoral politics.[27]

## BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

Despite the fact that the BJP holds power in a number of state governments, including Gujarat, it lost its hold over the center in the 2005 national election. The BJP is successor to an earlier party, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh or Indian People's Party, founded in 1951, which waged a campaign against cow-slaughter in 1952 and 1967, and encouraged anti-Muslim attitudes during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. Shakhas began to participate in electoral politics in the early 1970s and helped to organize the Janata Party alliance, led by Jayaprakash Narayan before the 1977 elections that toppled Indira Gandhi. The Janata victory made central ministers of RSS leaders Atal Bihari Vajpayee (b. 1925), Lal Kishan Advani (b. 1927), and Brijlal Verma, although the Janata alliance split in 1979 and the Jan Sangh collapsed after its unproductive participation in that government. The BJP, formed in 1981 as a Jan Sangh reincarnation, did poorly in elections until 1989 when it emerged as a major contender in the elections that defeated Rajiv Gandhi. Capitalizing on the fact that Rajiv had given in to demands for Hindu access to the locked Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and also intervened on behalf of Muslims in the Shah Bano case, the BJP began calling for *hindutva* and the demolition of the Babri Mosque.

In preparation for a 1990 procession to Ayodhya, BJP women developed an elaborate ritual for sending the *kar sevaks* to the battlefield, as if they were warriors in need of food and protection from police.[28] During the 1991 elections, India was treated to the spectacle of Advani, decked out like Rama in saffron robes with bow and arrow, mounting a chariot and carrying out a *rath yatra* (chariot pilgrimage) 10,000 kilometers across North India, motorized but much in the spirit of Gandhi's *padyatra* (foot pilgrimage) linking villages or Vinoba Bhave's *bhoodan* (land-gift) movement. In an effort to connect provincial towns with city-based *hindutva* organizations, while simultaneously winning votes for the BJP, signs were put up in those towns claiming that they had been "captured" and were now part of a "Hindu state."[29] Thus, the BJP won control over the state of Uttar Pradesh, and on December 2, 1992, colluded with another of the saffron organizations, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to permit destruction of the enormous 460-year-old mosque at Ayodhya by a mob of Hindu fanatics shouting "Ram Ram" as they hurled down bricks:

> Saffron-robed swamis and "*sadhus*" ignited the mob to demolition heat by their violent mantras, proclaiming this old Islamic monument nothing less than ancient demon Ravana's "dark place" constructed over the birthplace of Lord Rama and Sita's "kitchen." Thus believing

> that they acted in the name of god and with divine approval, that army of VHP-led batterers triggered shock waves of terror across all of South Asia, leading to the murder of thousands of innocents in Bombay.[30]

Muslims inevitably retaliated with equal misguided fervor, and the end result was the destruction of hundreds of Hindu temples in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Rallying followers to the cry of "Hindustan for the Hindus," the BJP was swept to power at the provincial level in Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1995 and managed, in coalition with the Akali Dal and other parties, to win control at the national level in the general election of 1996. BJP triumph was short-lived, however, for they held power for only 12 days before Vajpayee proved unable to pull together his Lokh Sabha majority and was forced to resign. The party proved more successful in the 1998 elections, winning 260 seats out of 545, but because it was not enough to rule without coalition support, Vajpayee joined forces with Jayalalitha Jayaram's Tamil All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party (AIADMK) and others under the banner of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The BJP had campaigned on a platform promising to "rebuild" the Ram temple at Ayodya; to enact a "Uniform Marriage Code," a first step toward a uniform civil code based on Hindu law; and to abolish Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which would open Kashmir to Hindu landlords from other Indian states. Unable to rule alone, however, the party dropped those issues for a time. Instead, BJP support was encouraged by nuclear tests conducted on May 11 and 13, 1998, in which five nuclear bombs were exploded in the desert at Pokhran in Rajasthan, not far from the border with Pakistan. In addition, a small war on the Kargil glacier was carried out against Pakistani outposts in the area.

Because atomic weapons and missile delivery systems are expensive and project a decidedly militant stance, India quickly got over its nuclear euphoria and that same year rejected the BJP in favor of the Congress party in state elections in Delhi, Rajasthan. and Madhya Pradesh. Although the BJP emphatically denied maintaining "Hindu-first" policies, *hindutva* beliefs colored a number of nasty incidents that occurred during the party's watch. Several Christian nuns were raped and Muslim mosques and *darghas* destroyed without punishment or reprisal from the government. As minorities began to feel threatened, they became more likely to cast votes for parties other than those led by upper-caste Hindus in league with Brahmin priests.

The NDA coalition ruptured in 1999, and new elections were called. This time the BJP garnered 183 votes, an all-time high, and Vajpayee was invited to form a government with the help of the resuscitated NDA. This government successfully fulfilled its five-year term, although it was swept from office in the 2004 election, with the baton passing to Congress and its United Progressive Alliance under Dr. Manmohan Singh, who as Finance

Minister under Congress Prime Minister Narasimha Rao who had launched India's economic globalization. Despite the fact that the BJP had revived the peace process with Pakistan, their surprising defeat reflected the discomfort of many voters with what had happened in Gujarat in 2002, when the BJP-led government allowed the massacre of Muslims to go on for three weeks without calling for intervention by the police or military.

## VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD (UNIVERSAL HINDU SOCIETY)

The VHP came into existence in 1964 when Golwalkar met with *sannyasis* and heads of religious organizations to establish a mass front uniting all Hindu sects under one umbrella. Thus, the religious arm of the RSS represents a much broader claim than its parent organization did before the 1970s. Rather than representing merely the politically aware elite among Hindus, the VHP purports to include the whole of Hindu society. This claim is supported by alliances with a broad range of Hindu organizations distinct from the saffron family and is meant to represent a pluralistic Hindu society:

> This claim has important practical implications. Having asserted it often and forcefully enough, the VHP can then present its own commands and injunctions as Hindu collective will. Each Hindu can be told authoritatively that all Hindus feel the need to arm themselves against Muslims, not because the VHP tells them to do so, but because the whole community so desires. . . . The claim of today's Hindutva to an immediate identity with the entire Hindu world thus conceals and legitimizes the operations of an intrusive, authoritarian, political formation which defines not only the Muslim, but also the Hindu solely in its own terms. A deeply undemocratic syllogism follows: Hindus are the majority, the RSS-BJP-VHP combine has the unique power of defining what being a Hindu means, and therefore, the will of this political formation must prevail on a permanent basis.[31]

Not only does this co-opting of Hindu society blatantly disregard the disparate nature of Hinduism, actually a collection of widely divergent sects loosely connected by a set of common beliefs, but the VHP attempts to impose an ecumenical order on devotional patterns of various regions. The effect is to rupture local patterns by requiring of Hindus everywhere the devotional traditions of north Indian Hinduism. For instance, Tapan Basu et al give the example of Bengal where a particular version of the *Ramayana* is a cherished epic but no tradition of Ram worship or Ram temples exists; rather, the central deities are Kali-Durga and Krishna.[32] In place of this diversity, the VHP seeks to substitute the myth of a common struggle against Muslim and European invaders. For the first 10 years of its existence, the VHP worked primarily in the northeastern states to counter the efforts of

Christian missionaries. After a group of Dalits converted to Islam in 1981, the VHP also began to proselytize against Muslims. The effect has been to tear apart local traditions in some areas where Hindus and Muslims had evolved habits of celebrating each other's holidays, saying prayers at each other's places of worship, or seeking healing at each other's shrines. Rama is celebrated not as the god who defeated Ravana, king of Lanka, but as the god who fights against Babur, the Mughal invader, and various forms of Hindu apostasy.

Most alarming about the VHP is the high degree of organization that it has cultivated. Legally structured as a trust with 100 board members and a governing council of 51, its power actually resides with the RSS. Not only does the VHP convene two major bodies for Hindu religious leaders, the Marg Darshak Mandal and the Dharm Sansad, but the trust is divided into 18 departments with a wide range of activities:

(1) Dharma Anusthan, which organizes *kirtans* and *bhajans* (devotional songs) in temples;
(2) Dharma Prachar, which supervises reconversions of Christians and Muslims;
(3) Acharya Vibhag, which trains *pujaris* (priests) for both VHP and non-VHP temples;
(4) Parva Samanuyaya, which coordinates festivals with non-VHP temple committees;
(5) Maths and Mandirs department, which coordinates activities among different religious establishments;
(6) a department that sees to Sanskrit education;
(7) Sarvodaya department, devoted to the uplift of tribals and Dalits, as well as their "conversion" to "respectable" Hindutva forms of worship;
(8) a department of cow protection that agitates against the legalized sale of beef in some states;
(9) a department affiliated with the Bajrang Dal, which supervises the training of young boys;
(10) its counterpart, the Durga Vahini, which looks after the training of young girls;
(11) Matri Mandal, which works among older women and small children;
(12) the very important Foreign Coordination department, which deals with Hindus all over the world as if they were a single "nation" divided into 30 branches;
(13) finances;
(14) publications;
(15) and (16) administrative departments;
(17) propaganda; and
(18) Ram Janambhoomi, which deals with the reconstruction of the Rama temple.[33]

Muslim sale of meat is distressing to Sangh Parivar Hindus who want to bring India under Hindu law and ban the export of beef from Muslim abattoirs.

This elaborate organization allows for control of every aspect of Hindu life for thousands of individuals both in the subcontinent and abroad.

The restructuring of history by the VHP is also illuminating. Traditional pilgrimage sites such as Gaya and Puri are not highlighted because they were not destroyed by Muslims. Rather, Somnath, Benaras, Mathura, and Ayodhya stand in the hindutva spotlight because they specifically suffered damage at the hands of Muslim conquerors. Yet, Richard Eaton has published an article on temple desecration that details the pattern, temple by temple, of Muslim attacks on Hindu temples. What he finds is that such destruction was inevitably carried out by military officers or ruling authorities, typically on the cutting edge of a moving military frontier.[34] Razing of temples often occurred in conjunction with a perceived need to sweep away all prior political authority in newly conquered or annexed territories.[35] Eaton goes on to say that "Whatever form they took, acts of temple desecration were never directed at the people, but at the enemy king and the image that incarnated and displayed his state-deity."[36]

With no mention of Sufi Islam as a peaceful vehicle of conversion, the VHP portrays Muslims as intolerant fanatics who rape Hindu women, force Hindus to eat beef, and continue to breed prolifically as a result of legalized polygamy. Other religions fare a bit better because they arose within the Indian subcontinent. Although Buddhism was co-opted centuries earlier into Vaishnavism, with Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, that religion, with its emphasis on nonviolence and meditation is viewed as having emasculated Hinduism. However, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains are conveniently absorbed into the Hindu Rashtra, as if they held no heterodox views, nor

ever contested Brahmin hegemony. Yet, Theravada Buddhists are atheists and Jains are materialists, Sikhs worship a holy book, and all venerate great teachers. Yet, the VHP includes these three religions in the great erasure of pre-Mughal history that constitutes a mythological Hindu past.

## THE BAJRANG DAL (HANUMAN PARTY)

The youth organization of Bajrang Dal is one of the most successful organizations in the RSS family and, as the paramilitary wing of the VHP, also one of the most dangerous. As a reserve force for "agitational activities," young men receive martial arts training at seven-day camps every year. The *kar sevaks* who destroyed the Babri Masjid came largely from ranks of the Bajrang Dal, as did many of the perpetrators in the Gujarat Carnage. Although portrayed as a spontaneous stirring of public sentiment, both of these actions were highly organized and orchestrated by the RSS. Before the anti-Muslim attacks, tridents (the weapon of Siva, god of destruction) and swords were freely distributed throughout Gujarat, and these were employed as weapons in the killings. Trident distribution programs were introduced to Gujarat in 1989, and more than 280,000 young men in that state have received this weapon, along with indoctrination, the highest recorded number anywhere in India.[37]

Training camps conducted by the Bajrang Dal and the VHP, and supported by elected BJP representatives, foment intense hatred against Muslims as "the enemy," with violence justified as a legitimate means of self-defense. Such camps are often conducted in Hindu temples.[38] According to VHP documents, the Dal is described as the "security ring of Hindu Society," and whenever "there is an attack on Hindu Society, Faith, and Religion, the workers of the Bajrang Dal come forward to their rescue."[39] Thus, these young "soldiers," who see themselves as defending the motherland, epitomize *hindutva* masculinity. Their official Web site, run from the United States, is known for frequent calls to violence against Muslims. The Bajrang Dal has been at the forefront of communal attacks on Christians in the tribal regions, toward artists and intellectuals, and against Muslims in Gujarat.[40]

## BHARATIYA KISAN SANGH (BKS)

The Indian Farmer's Union was formed in 1979 by 650 representative farmers carefully selected by RSS member Dattopantji Thengdi, who traveled around the country meeting with rural people. Billing itself as the largest Indian farmers' organization, "for the Farmers, by the Farmers and of the Farmers," the BKS claims no political affiliation but rather purports to be "working solely for the upliftment of the Farmers of India."[41] At their first

Hanuman, the Hindu monkey warrior god, is revered for his strength and loyalty to Rama by the Bajrang Dal, militant youth organization, of the Sangh Parivar.

conference, held in Rajasthan in 1979, and at subsequent annual conferences, resolutions continue to be taken on outstanding issues of the time. The organization pledges itself to work through nonviolent movements and demonstrations and to maintain the constitutional norms and conventions of democracy. Their flag is described as "ochre" in color (saffron?) "being similar to that of morning light" and signifying "regularity and radiance like that of sun. Like fire it signifies purity and power, as robes of seers and monks it denotes knowledge and renunciation."[42] Care has been taken *not* to call the flag saffron so as to minimize its connection with the RSS, yet the mention of seers and monks having robes of that color is a dead giveaway. The Bharatiya Kisan Sangh also boasts an emblem consisting of a globe featuring a world map with India at the center and a plough imposed on the map. The Sanskrit motto, "Krishi Mit Krishaswa" (Do Farming Itself),

taken from the Rig Veda, again suggests links to upper-caste organizers of the RSS. As the BKS Web site explains, "This phrase is part of larger Ṛg Vedic mantra from Akshdevan Suktam which means 'Don't gamble, do farming itself, and live graciously on the earnings.'"[43]

## SWADESHI JAGRAN MANCH

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) is more openly linked with the Sangh organizations and revered earlier leaders: Lokmanya Tilak, Veer Savarkar, and Sri Aurobindo. Yet, Gandhi and Tagore are also mentioned, thus giving legitimacy to the effort. Building on the idea of Swadeshi (or self-made), which was a major theme of the Indian independence struggle, the RSS founded SJM in 1991 in Nagpur. Its function is to arrange for help of professionals in the development process, to market Indian-made products, and to publish a monthly magazine, *Swadeshi Patrika*, in English and Hindi. Like the BKS, its chief founder was Dattopant Thengdi, in company with representatives of other Sangh groups: the BMS, the ABVP, the BKS, the Akhil Bharatiya Grhak Panchayat, and Sakhar Bharati. Other Sangh organizations subsequently joined, including the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, and the Bharatiya Sikshan Mandal. Today, it has 15 affiliated organizations and an all-India network of subunits. The SJM understands its role as continuing the struggle against imperialism, based on the principles of preferring the local neighborhood to the remote globalized world, and living a needs-based life as opposed to unlimited consumption.

The Swadeshi approach is to limit the size of the market and thereby reject the Western notion of a global market. At its outset, the SJM engaged in opposition to policy changes implemented by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh in 1991, in response to pressure from the International Monetary Fund to devalue the rupee and open India to multinational corporations. Following a meeting of workers at Nagpur in 1993, it was decided to boycott the products of well-known multinational corporations such as Pepsico, Coca-Cola, and Colgate Palmolive Peet. At subsequent conferences, protests were mounted against (1) permitting multinational corporations (MNCs) to fish in Indian waters; (2) exporting cattle meat by Muslim abattoirs, and (3) manufacturing mini-cigarettes (a threat to beedi workers). In 1996, a month-long Jal Yatra (boat march) was organized in resistance to the central government's decision to grant licenses for deep-sea fishing from both coasts of India. As a tool of "mass-awakening," boats started from Porbandar in Gujarat on the west coast and Kakdwip on the east coast and ended at Thiruvananthapuram near the southern tip of India.

The SJM also helped to expose the Enron scandal of 1995 when that company attempted to start a new energy subsidiary for the government of Maharashtra at an exorbitant cost. Because the advice of the World Bank

and the central energy tribunal had been ignored and the public kept in the dark, Enron was forced to withdraw the deal, which amounted to a great coup for the Manch. Swadeshi Chetna Yatras held in 1998 attempted to warn the public about external economic dangers, and the SJM continues to pressure the central government to dissociate itself from the World Trade Organization. Relying on family, community, and nation as its market delivery system, the Manch celebrates Swadeshi as a living tradition "under a veneer of a superficial West-centric Indian exterior."[44] An article on the SJM Web site, written by S. Gurumurthy, entitled "India shall be built by us, not by the US," states, "India has seen and overcome US sanctions, growing largely on its own savings, mostly on its own investment, mainly on its own consumption, and primarily on its own efforts. The lesson: the external can only be the additive, not the core."[45] Thus, Manch organizers preach self-reliance and dissociation from a global economic system on the basis of traditional Hindu dharma.

## AROGYA BHARTI

The newest kid on the Sangh Parivar block is an organization of health professionals, Arogya Bharti, which demonstrates once again the Sangh propensity for starting up organizations geared to creating community within a particular livelihood group. At the moment, Arogya Bharti is making waves by recommending use of the Hindu *swastika* as a substitute symbol for the Red Cross, which is widely used in India to designate any doctor's office or health clinic. Doctors in Ahmedabad have begun using the new symbol, which differs from the Nazi swastika in having four dots within the four segments. The Indian Medical Association has sought an explanation for the switch in symbols and notes that it is against the practice of the international medical profession to adopt a new symbol without approval from the international Red Cross organization. With permission, Muslim countries use the Red Crescent on their ambulances, whereas Israel favors the Magen David (six-pointed star). Ignoring the rules of an international organization in this matter is consistent with the Sangh Parivar's contempt for Western ideas and the Christian religion. According to the ophthalmologist Dr. Pravin Bhavsar, Treasurer of Arogya Bharti, a sustained word-of-mouth campaign by the RSS has resulted in many doctors changing their sign boards.[46]

## CONCLUSION

Although much can be admired in the philosophy of the BKS (Farmers) and the SJM (Swadeshi), the fact remains that they, too, are saffron organizations and are, therefore, channels for the dissemination of anti-Muslim, antisecular, and anti-Western ideas. The problem is that their main message

is so appealing that Hindus both at home and abroad do not realize that they are being drawn into a sphere of influence that can subtly transform their thinking toward Muslim and Western neighbors, colleagues, and friends. The modus operandi of the RSS is not to encourage critical thinking but, rather, to constantly inform and insist, so that the message becomes familiar and no other messages come through.

The goal, thus, is to thwart pluralistic conversations and to substitute instead an authoritarian monologue. Like Italian Fascists under Mussolini, forces of Hindutva have penetrated government administration and police, using religion as a convenient myth.[47] In the manner of Hitler and the Nazis, the Sangh has restructured history and imposed its propaganda through virtually every type of media known in India, both modern and traditional. Propaganda, as Udayakumar reminds us, is "a means of social control that relies on techniques that induce individuals and social groups to follow non-rational and emotional drives."[48] He goes on to offer a chilling comparison between Nazi propaganda principles and Hindutva historical discourse.

In India, the RSS successfully fulfills the first characteristic of Fascist principles: a central authority to administer propaganda efforts and oversee agency activities. Second, in both contexts, propaganda was/is based on ersatz historical ideas, lies, and distortions. Third, in order to mesmerize the population, leaders in Germany and India made/make good use of the fear-terror psychosis, reinforcing anxiety about defeat and/or victimization. The fourth element, displacement of in-group aggression onto out-groups, is quite evident in the role played by Jews in Nazi propaganda and Muslims in Sangh diatribes. Distinctive phrases and slogans are the fifth characteristic of propaganda in both contexts. The RSS coined the phrase "pseudo-secularism" to refer to the thinking of Gandhi and Nehru and taught the crowd at Ayodhya to shout, "Mandir wahin banayenge" ("We'll build the temple right there"). The sixth principle has to do with the effects of propaganda on public morale: observable discipline (*Haltung*) should be maintained at all times in an effort to keep up spirit and mood (*Stimmung*).[49] Hence, the development of the Hindu warrior persona, which does not tolerate the idea of vulnerability.

Udayakumar does note one difference: although Nazis faced counter-propaganda from Allied Forces, "Hindutva forces have a wide-open field with virtually no resistance to their historiographical project."[50] Unfortunately, the so-called global war on terror has made it virtually impossible for well-meaning Muslims to mount any project, local or global, in their own defense, so that the development of a global network of extremist Hindus has gone virtually unchecked. Even while the SJM decries the economic impact of globalization, the Sangh has made use of globalizing mechanisms to extend its network, raise massive amounts of money, and circulate propaganda. Many younger Indians employed in telecommunications at home

and abroad offer opportunities to develop Web sites, circulate e-mail, and extend "family ties" to unmarried workers and disconnected ex-pats. Under the guise of apolitical organizations registered abroad as charitable entities, the RSS continues to peddle its insidious drug of hatred in the guise of history.

# CHAPTER 6

# Muslim Reformers and Islamic Nationalists

> But even as your way is excellent in your eye, even so in other people's eyes their way is excellent. Toleration therefore is the only way.
>
> —Maulana Kalam Azad

After the last Mughal was removed from the throne and sent into exile in 1858, Muslims were a defeated minority in India. Most believed that they had lost political power forever and that their culture and civilization were in sad decline. A spectrum of Islamic viewpoints gradually articulated by Muslim leaders offered various paths to the future, yet no single figure, able to speak for a majority of the subcontinent's Muslims, came to the fore. New educational institutions were founded, but they, too, reflected schisms in the Muslim community and uncertainty about whether Islam should be considered in danger (*dar-ul harb*) in South Asia. The purpose of this chapter is to examine briefly various reform movements and ideas put forth by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian Muslim intellectuals, who operated on a rarefied plane, quite divorced from ordinary Muslims trying to eke out a living from day to day. Some of these movements contributed to Islamist movements existing today in India and other parts of the world. Other efforts show Muslims questing for an appropriate role in Hindu-dominated India.

These thinkers, for the most part, were exposed to new forces that influenced a shift in their thinking from a more other-worldly to a this-worldly Islam. In their various dealings with the British, Muslims came in touch with Western ideas of individualism and human rights, as well as capitalism with its emphasis on enriching and empowering the individual. Printing presses made possible the replication of key Islamic texts in Indian languages thus

ending the monopoly that the *ulama* (Sunni leaders) had on knowledge. Sufism, with its emphasis on saints, and Ismaili-Hindu syncretism came under attack. The new emphasis was on *tawhid* or oneness of Allah, a God to be feared and obeyed. On Judgment Day, the believer would answer for his deeds on earth. Therefore, Muslims should engage in self-examination and ask whether they had done everything possible to submit to God and carry out his will in the world. According to Asim Roy, self-conscious Islam led to "a powerful concern: to assert and to police the boundaries of difference . . . , to a deepening of community affiliation in the psyche . . . and development of a Muslim political identity."[1]

Perhaps the best known spokesman for Muslims in this period was Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–98), who founded the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental College (precursor of Aligarh Muslim University) in 1875. With his roots in Delhi's Mughal nobility and trained by serving the British, he sought to reverse anti-Muslim attitudes fostered by events of 1857. Both a political conservative and religious radical, Sir Sayyed sought to rouse his Muslim peers from the torpor of defeat and urged them to learn from the West so that they might compete with Hindus and others who had already jumped on the British bandwagon. His Western intellectual influences were Burke, Bentham, Macaulay, and Mill, but he was also influenced by Islamic revivalists and Wahhabis who declared India no longer *dar-ul Islam* (secure Islam). As a consequence, Sir Sayyed was deeply suspicious of the Indian National Congress. Yet, he did not seek to establish an Islamic government but, rather, to secure religious liberty for Muslims, whom he believed lacked sufficient political consciousness.[2] Aligarh, however, eventually became the breeding ground for the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement.

Among the front-rank liberal interpreters of Islam was a Shi'a, Justice Syed Ameer Ali (1849–1928), who carried on Sir Sayyed's ideas by reformulating Islamic doctrine in terms of Western thought, particularly ethical humanism. He believed that the Muslim community was backward as a result of material decadence and intellectual lag, and he sought to show that there was no conflict between Islam and the demands of modernity. In 1877, Justice Ali founded the National Mohammedan Association, with 34 branches, to assure protection of Muslim interests and political education of the community. He, too, opposed the Indian National Congress but stressed the similarity of Hindu and Muslim interests in the face of divergent social and religious outlooks. He sought to bring Muslims to the point at which they were on a par with Hindus in political development and education. Although he stressed the need for cooperation with and tolerance toward other religious groups, Justice Ali included no program for economic welfare of the masses. Rather, he sought for the Muslim elite a share in the spoils of government, thus laying the ground for separatist politics in the twentieth century.[3]

A major South Asian Muslim philosopher and poet, Mohammed Iqbal (1876–1938) espoused a brand of thinking called Constructive Revivalism,

which attempted to provide a systematic Islamic basis to the political ideas of Indian Muslims. Believing that Islam was a perfect system that could fulfill all the spiritual and material needs of modern man, Iqbal based his ideas on Islam as it was practiced by the Prophet and the first four caliphs. He reserved the most blame for Sufism, which had absorbed the best minds of Islam while leaving affairs of state to the greedy and mediocre. Muslims, he believed, could become strong and free only through self-affirmation, self-expression, and self-development. He coupled these ideas with a strong distrust of the West and Western civilization, characterized by materialism, negation of spirituality, and reason, to the exclusion of love. Capitalism, he believed, was responsible for the nation state, and he opposed the sort of nationalism that secularizes and racializes, epitomized by British policies. Iqbal, too, believed that India was not a single nation but, rather, a set of distinct communities.[4]

Although honored as the Father of the Idea of Pakistan, he did not favor Partition, but, rather, articulated the idea of a state within a state in his 1928 Presidential Address to the Muslim League. "Islam in its pure form," he stated, "had a contribution to make towards the building of a new India."[5] Iqbal's ideal Islamic democracy combined virtues of both monarchy and democracy but was firmly grounded in the idea that the individual was inseparable from society, with which he shared mutual and complementary interests. He also delineated a sort of Muslim superman who possesses all the attributes of a true follower of Islam and is a mirror of Allah: the perfect citizen and ideal member of the Islamic community. Iqbal rejected the idea of unlimited freedom as self-destructive. Nor did he think liberty possible in democracy because of economic exploitation in the social structure. Yet for all his commitment to an idealized vision of early Islam, Iqbal had no interest in any pan-Islamic movement.[6]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), a Muslim newspaper editor who worked closely with Gandhi, embraced a sort of synthetic nationalism. As a typical Muslim intellectual of modern India, he was clearly a bridge between older and newer thinking. Inspired by the rationalism of the Mutazzilites and by Sir Syyed Ahmed Khan, Maulana Azad early on distrusted the Sunni *ulama*. As he came under the influence of Rashid Raza of Eygpt, however, he began to espouse a more universal outlook for Muslims, beyond the narrow South Asian parameters of the Aligarh Movement. Also influenced by Jamaluddin Afghani, who was an anti-imperialist pan-Islamist, Maulana Azad attempted to develop a systematic Islamic theory of politics that could be applied to existing problems. As he visited Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey, he realized that territorial nationalism could be reconciled with Islam.[7]

The failure of the Khilafat movement brought Maulana Azad closer to Indian nationalism and the attempt to achieve a synthesis of East and West. In his work, *Tarjumanul Quran*, he showed himself intent on discovering

the unity of all religions rather than emphasizing Islam as the one true faith. Stressing the unity of God, an emphasis on right action, and life after death, he reasoned that the unity of man follows from the unity of God. Toleration was the core of his religious philosophy, and he urged unity with Hindus against British rule. Democratic and secular nationalism, he believed, would enrich and strengthen the Islamic community. Always optimistic, he failed to anticipate that differences between Hindus and Muslims would so escalate as to lead to bloodshed. As the most important leader of the nationalist Muslims, most of whom stayed in India after Partition, Maulana Azad taught that nonviolence was a matter of policy, not creed.[8]

Maulana Azad's Muslim separatist counterpart was Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), a secularist lawyer who embraced political liberalism and had little respect for emerging Muslim leadership. An opponent of pan-Islamism, Jinnah preferred to separate religion and politics, but *realpolitik* required that the Muslim League be revived and historical and spiritual differences between Muslims and Hindus emphasized. Distorting his earlier concept of liberal democracy, Jinnah was able to rearrange the notions of various nonprogressive Muslim leaders and give what amounted to an ideological and religious tinge to the Two-Nation theory.[9]

With concerns about how to protect the Muslim minority under democratic Indian with a Hindu majority, Jinnah adopted the theory of a separate homeland to be called Pakistan (Land of the Pure). These ideas in fact echoed those of Hindu nationalist Savarkar, who in 1927 stated that India could not be considered a homogeneous nation, but, rather, that there were two nations, the Hindu and the Muslim. Yet many Muslim nationalists, taken aback when Pakistan was announced, found the idea theoretically and practically unsound. Still, it had profound psychological appeal, even for Jinnah, who "himself was not clear and precise about the implications of his demands."[10] He laid blame for Partition at the feet of Gandhi who had rejected several Muslim unity proposals—a conclusion reached also by Godse, the Hindu nationalist who assassinated the Mahatma.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890–1988), also known as the Frontier Gandhi, managed to persuade 100,000 Pathans to lay down their rifles and fight the British nonviolently. He initially entered politics in 1919 during agitation over the Rowlatt Acts and joined the Khilafat movement. After attending a Congress meeting in 1929, Ghaffar Khan founded the Khudai Khitmagar (Servants of God, but also called the Red Shirt Movement), intended to waken the Pathans' political consciousness and follow Gandhi's principles of *satyagraha*. Ghaffar Khan opposed Partition and actively sided with Congress until 1947. Yet, he chose to live in Pakistan and continued to fight for rights of the Pathan minority and for an autonomous Pakhtunistan, despite repeated imprisonment and exile to Afghanistan. Ghaffar Khan attributed his belief in truth and the effectiveness of nonviolence to his Muslim faith: "There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me

subscribing to the creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca."[11]

## EARLIER MUSLIM REFORMERS

One of the earliest Muslim reformers in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), a Naqshbandiyya Sufi who attempted to relate the Sufi path to Shari'a and bring Sufism under Islamic law. He wrote numerous letters to nobles, courts, sultans, and emperors in an effort to influence their policies toward reviving orthodox Islam in public life. Reacting against syncretic tendencies in Islam, he criticized Hinduism as "too influential" at the Mughal court. Sirhindi blamed Akbar's religious policies, the Chishti practice of *sama* (incorporating music into worship), and inroads being made by Shi'as from Iran. Mughal emperor Jehangir (r. 1605–28) was so annoyed by Sirhindi's blunt remarks that he imprisoned the shaikh for a year. However, the shaikh's letters were so widely distributed that his influence continued to grow after his death.[12] The next emperor, Shah Jehan (r. 1628–58), began to respond to Sirhindi's protests by reversing some of Akbar's liberal policies. Under Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), however, *jizya* was reimposed, temple destruction used again as an imperial weapon, and Shari'a law introduced.[13] Many of the excesses so resented by Hindu nationalists stem from this period of Sunnis reasserting conservative Muslim policies.

The leading eighteenth-century radical in Indian Islam was Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi (1702–62). Born Abd al-Rahim, he was a prolific writer and thinker who developed a chain of *hadith* (sayings of Muhammad) instructions for Muslim scholars in the subcontinent. Shah Wali Ullah adapted data from many different sources to produce a systematic synthesis of all disciplines traditionally studied by Muslims: philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, law, Sufism, and history. His theory of subsequent stages of *itifaqi* or cultural development culminates in the notion of an international political order. This universal Islamic Caliphate, he believed, should be "made supreme over all other religions. And none may remain without submitting to the faith no matter who is raised in might and who is laid low in the process."[14] In addition to insisting that non-Muslims should not be treated equally, Shah Wali Ullah believed that "symbolic" rites and laws should be imposed on the common person but their inner meanings kept secret, which amounted to elitism of the *ulama* at the expense of Islam's democratic impulse.[15]

The most vital Islamic movement of the nineteenth century was headed by Saiyid Ahmad of Brelvi (Bareilly), who found his spiritual basis in Shah Wali Ullah's works but also provided organizing ability gained from his time as a soldier in the army of Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk. As a preacher, Saiyid Ahmad made a name for himself and acquired many followers in Bengal.

On a pilgrimage to Mecca, he gained fuller knowledge of the Wahhabis, a Puritan sect that had earlier controlled the pilgrimage sites and that later influenced the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. On returning to India, Saiyid Ahmad conducted a holy war against Sikhs and occupied Peshawar. His efforts to introduce Shari'a law to Pathan tribesmen, however, failed. After his death in warfare, a strong movement of Islamic revival continued in Bengal under local reformers and scholars, four of whom were Brelvi's disciples.[16]

## ISLAMIC REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS

In the face of rapid transformation of Indian culture by the British, one response of religious leaders from many different communities was to revive older principles of Islamic polity and interpret them in radical new ways. In some cases, Islamic revivalists were exceedingly defensive; others stressed mysticism or terrorist *jihad*. The Dar al-Ulum, Deoband, was founded in 1867 out of the ashes of the madrasa founded by Shah Wali Ullah in Delhi. The founders of Deoband inherited the tradition of Wali Ullah, with his emphasis on curricular reform and regenerating the Islamic social order. Because armed resistance to infidel rule had failed, the Deobandis focused on founding an educational institution that would lead Indian Muslims along an upright religious and social path.

Under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotavi, the school was connected to the government educational network and adopted aspects of the English system, including academic organization by departments, progression of classes, required attendance, regular examinations, and granting of a degree on completion of a full course.[17] However, in order to carry out its mission of Islamic instruction, the school sought funding from all levels of Muslim society and avoided dependence on government patronage. Deobandis avoided political involvement and concentrated on preserving traditional Islamic sciences while preparing men for religious service. Curiously, most of the Deobandis were not only *ulama* but also Sufis linked with the Qadiri and Nazshbandi orders. Thus, both teacher–student and *pir*–disciple relationships helped extend Deobandi influence to other parts of India.

Other Islamic revivalists, such as Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi, were considered progressive, although their ideas were also drawn from the Ikhwanul-Muslamin (Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt. For these men, Islam was the complete guide to life, with no other system offering such a degree of social justice and balance in human relationships. Based on the medieval tradition of Islam, which aims at establishing the rule of God on earth, that goal required propagation, organization, and acquisition of political power. They believe that Western individualism and capitalism had led to societal degeneration, economic exploitation, and de-Islamization, thereby depriving colonized people of their will to resist. Maudoodi believed that Western

education in India had done permanent harm to Muslim minds and culture by spreading rationalism, irreligion, and atheism; and by making Muslims ignorant of their cultural vitality. Nationalism and democracy were viewed as false gods that alienated religion from the state. Equality of the sexes, moreover, was thought to destroy the family.[18]

The remedy was total rejection of Western values, culture, and education and the establishment of Islam as the one supreme reality. Thus was born Islamic nationalism, counterpart to *hindutva*, and recognizable in today's world as the ideology guiding Al Qaeda, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, and Hamas. The four main ingredients of Islamic nationalism include (1) National Pride (and sense of superiority); (2) National Consciousness (our nation right or wrong); (3) Self-Preservation (including tactics of invasion, self-defense); and (4) National Prestige, Aggrandizement (dominating other nations). For such thinkers, the only possible alternative to the Western notion of the nation-state, seen as counter to the law of God, is Islam, which seeks to bring mankind together "into a moral and spiritual framework and make them mutually assistant to one another on a universal plane."[19]

To Islamists, Indian nationalism as put forward by the Indian National Congress thus appeared as an imitation of the Western idea of nationalism, lacking in righteousness of viewpoint. Indeed, for progressive revivalists, if the objective of the movement was not Islamic, then the fight against British rule was *haram* (religiously illegal). Democracy was understood not only as un-Islamic but also as anti-Islamic. What was needed instead was cultural nationalism, which would in turn give birth to genuine nationalism. The implication of such thinking, like that of Savarkar and Jinnah, was that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. A political solution was thus to be found not in a unitary principle but in a federal principle. This view provided the ideological foundation for the Muslim League and led as well to mutual distrust and suspicion.

To further elaborate on this notion of cultural nationalism, Maudoodi recommended establishing Shade Darul Islam, a national organization of Muslims, which would have as its charge an educational system, maintenance of *zakat* (welfare tithe), and Muslim personal law. Thus, Muslims would constitute a state within a state, guaranteeing that the armed forces would not be used against any Muslim country. Although he insisted that an Islamic movement for separation was not Islamic Nationalism, the Muslim League made political capital out of his idea of cultural nationalism, much to Maudoodi's disgust. In India, he argued for Islamic separation, but later in Pakistan, he was an isolated figure, bitterly critical of the new state, which was Muslim but un-Islamic.[20]

Like other Islamic revivalists, Maudoodi believed that no human agency can make law; therefore, democracy poses a major challenge to the functioning of an Islamic state in the modern world. Shari'a law, by contrast,

provides a body of constitutional law, a basic theory of the state, a source of authority for legislation, qualifications for rulers, as well as defining functions of legislative bodies, executives, and the judiciary. It further answers problems of administration; prescribes rules of conduct for police; defines responsibilities of rulers; delineates the sphere of the state; outlines the rights and duties of citizens; and deals with international law, war and peace, neutrality, and alliances. If society were established on such a foundation, they insisted, the Islamic state would come into existence, realizing the spiritual and moral ends prescribed by the Prophet. It would be an ideological state, built exclusively on the moral and spiritual principles with a caliph as vice regent.[21]

## THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

Although one might expect the Khilafat Movement to stem from Maudoodi's thinking, it arose instead in the precincts of Aligarh University, which, unlike Deoband, was dedicated to preparing Western-educated Muslim for posts in government and the professions. An outgrowth of pan-Islamic thinking, Indian *khilafat* advocacy actually stimulated the development of a pan-Indian Muslim identity. Thus, although defenders of the Caliphate professed to look toward international Islam for protection, they, in fact, used the movement to reconcile Islamic identity with Indian nationality:

> A united, pan-Indian Muslim constituency, if it could in fact be mobilized, would in turn permit genuine Muslim participation in the Indian nationalist movement. . . . Muslims in India, if united, could offset their minority status by their ability to bargain from a position of strength, whether with the British government or with the Hindus in the Indian National Congress. The Congress, needing Muslim support to strengthen the campaign for self-government at this critical period, would have to listen to Muslim desires, recognize minority rights, and make some political concessions.[22]

It was with alarm that Indian Muslims responded to British removal of the only remaining Sunni Muslim ruler, the Ottoman sultan-caliph, following Turkey's defeat in World War I (1918). Launched in 1919, the Khilafat Movement was an attempt to preserve the spiritual and temporal authority of the traditional Sunni caliph in the person of the Ottoman sultan. Without hope of success, Muslims also demanded restoration of the 1914 boundaries of the Ottoman empire. For Indian Muslims, who had not yet regrouped following their own earlier resounding defeat by the British, it was empowering to stand for an Islamic cause. Ultimately, the goals of the Khilafat

Movement were less important than the process that it unleashed. Among the noted leaders of the movement were the Ali brothers and their mentor, Abdul Bari.

Two brothers, Muhammad (1878–1931) and Shaukat Ali, had attended an English medium school and later completed their education at Aligarh College. Shaukat joined government service, whereas Muhammad took a B.A. degree in history at Oxford and returned to champion Aligarh as an all-India affiliating institution. During the Balkan conflict, the brothers were active in Turkish relief, collecting subscriptions and sending a Red Crescent Mission there in 1912. On return, both brothers became active as newspaper editors and sought to create an identifiable all-India Muslim opinion through print media and public speeches. For their efforts, they were interned by the British government under the Defense of India Act in 1915, for England was then at war with Turkey. The Lucknow Pact and growing Hindu–Muslim unity were marred by a series of Hindu–Muslim riots in North India in 1917–18, and the Ali brothers were jailed in 1919 when they further criticized British policy toward Turkey and condemned the Rowlatt Acts.

Because imprisonment made leaders more heroic in the eyes of the masses during the independence movement, the Ali brothers were well positioned to assume a major role in the Khilafat agitation after their release. Minault describes the Ali brothers and other Khilafat leaders as "professional politicians": partly journalists, partly orators, partly holy men. They toured everywhere and communicated their ideas in the vernacular press, on public oratorical platforms, in local mosques and bazaars, by handbills and pamphlets, in poetry and song, in processions and demonstrations. New methods of organizing political activity were born and new styles of religious and political leadership defined.[23] With two other delegates, the Ali brothers journeyed to England in February 1920 to present the Khilafat demands. Insisting that their platform was religious and not political, they claimed to speak for all Muslims in India. On return, they continued to work with Maulana Azad to educate Indian Muslims about solidarity and anti-British struggle.

Maulana Mohammed Ali's pan-Islamic ideas and the declaration of India as *dar-ul-harb* (Islam in Danger) led to the emigration of large numbers of Indian Muslims to other Islamic countries. Ali believed that if Muslims could not protect the Khilafat, and if the British couldn't help them to do so, Muslims were obligated to leave India. Later, he attempted a compromise between pan-Islamism and Indian nationalism, stating:

> Where God commands I am a Muslim first and Muslim second, and a Muslim last, and nothing but a Muslim . . . but where India is concerned . . . I am an Indian first, and Indian second, and Indian last, and nothing but an Indian. . . . I belong to two circles of equal size but

> which are not concentric. One is India and the other is the Muslim world. In India the Muslims are the "blood brothers of the Hindus" but outside India there are millions who share my faith.[24]

Thus, for Maulana Mohammed Ali, nationalism implied not only independence from Britain but also, for Hindu and Muslim communities, freedom from fear of domination by each other. He believed that Indian nationalism was unacceptable, even harmful to Muslims, if it violated the spirit of Islam, and therefore he took a stand in favor of separate electorates as a safeguard.[25]

Despite his belief in extremist nationalism, Mohammed Ali played a positive role in creating a mass basis for Indian politics, yet was unable to offer constructive solutions to the problem of composite nationalism. Even at the height of Hindu–Muslim fraternization from 1919 to 1922, when thousands of Muslims were imprisoned for advocating the Turkish cause, Congress and Khilafat volunteer organizations remained separate bodies, united only at the upper level. The joint Khilafat movement collapsed in 1922, moreover, in part a result of Mappilla-inspired communal violence in South India, but also of Kemal Ataturk's denial of the Turkish throne to Abdul Mejid in 1924. Thus, the cause of the Caliphate, which automatically resides in the figure of the most powerful independent Muslim ruler wherever it may be, disappeared until such time as another strong Muslim kingdom might arise.

An organization of Muslim clerics, the Jamiyyat al-Ulama-i-Hind, inspired by the Deoband Movement and founded in 1919, joined forces with the All-India Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League in uniting Muslims across India. The purpose of the Jamiyyat, however, was not political but rather to organize the *ulama* into a body to express unified opinions on *Shari'a* law and, thus, to direct Muslim opinion. Although they were political allies of the Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League, the Jamiyyat's real interest lay in the religious guidance of Muslims. Even during their involvement with Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement, *ulama* attempted to establish separate *Shari'a* courts, develop a scheme to collect *zakat* on a regular basis, and appoint district *amirs*. Most efforts did not come to fruition but did succeed in uniting Muslim religious leaders and creating a network of solidarity. The Jamiyyat, moreover, remained committed to a Non-Cooperation *fatwa*, issued by distinguished *ulama* and reinforced after the arrest of Khilafat leaders at Karachi, which called for Muslim soldiers and police to resign from government service. When the British proscribed the *fatwa,* it was reprinted, distributed, and proclaimed from Muslim platforms and pulpits all over India.[26]

Gujarat played an infamous role in the collapse of the Non-Cooperation movement. Thinking to try out civil disobedience in Bardoli, a district near Surat in his native Gujarat, Gandhi had planned to launch the movement there on November 23, 1921. Rioting broke out in Bombay when the Prince

of Wales began an official visit, so Gandhi postponed the planned civil disobedience. Because pro-government religious communities, Christians, Parsis, and Anglo-Indians, were targeted in the riots, Gandhi chastised Muslims for being major perpetrators, despite a lack of evidence, and immediately went on a fast. Plans for Bardoli were postponed until January 1922, when he and his followers began educating the community about civil disobedience. They issued a daily newsletter in Gujarati, held meetings in nearby villages and conducted door-to-door campaigns urging withholding of taxes and services from the government.[27] To the British viceroy went an ultimatum: either the government should revise its policies concerning the Khalifat and Rowlatt Acts, or else a no-tax campaign would begin in Bardoli. When the government rejected his terms, Gandhi called for civil disobedience to begin in February. But before that could happen, a police station was set afire in northern Uttar Pradesh (UP), causing Gandhi to postpone noncooperation and civil disobedience in Bardoli indefinitely and call off the entire movement, on the excuse that Indians were not ready for *satyagraha*.

## PRE-PARTITION COMMUNALISM

Into the vacuum left by the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements came new Hindu and Islamic movements with a communal tinge. As a result, communal violence became a common occurrence. Between 1923 and 1928, the British classified 112 incidents as serious communal disorders,[28] usually provoked by desecration or ritual pollution of places of worship. Leaving animal flesh, notably beef in Hindu temples and pork in mosques, was guaranteed to provoke violence. Most riots, however, were localized, occurring in particular areas or provinces. But as violence came to be intentionally evoked by communal politics and facilitated by modern modes of communication, riots in any location acquired wider implications. Rumors were quickly set in motion by the press and by party platforms.[29] Yet, meetings of leaders to work toward communal harmony also occurred. Passions earlier channeled into religious appeals and noncooperation protests inevitably found their way into new cultural and religious movements. Among the Hindus, Shuddhi and Sangathan came to the fore, and in response, respectively, Muslims developed Tabligh and Tanzim.

The bloody Mapilla revolt in Malabar in 1921, ostensibly a movement of armed Muslim peasantry against oppressive Hindu landlords, also involved Khilafat volunteers who did not subscribe to Gandhi's program of nonviolence. Angered by soldiers searching and possibly desecrating a mosque, gangs of Mapillas adopted guerilla tactics in an orgy of rape, murder, looting, and burning. Hindu temples were torched and conversions effected by force. When civil authority collapsed, martial law was proclaimed and extended for six months. Khilafat flags accompanied the carnage, perhaps because Mapillas misunderstood the Non-Cooperation movement. Sectarian

violence was condemned by truly nonviolent Non-Cooperation leaders, who emphasized economic grievances of Muslim tenants and the fact that conversion by the sword is against Islamic law. The British government, although aware of the martial tradition of Mapillas and the large number returned recently from fighting overseas, blamed the revolt on religious fanaticism and the Khilafat agitations.[30] Their report could not help but further the communal divide.

Alarmed by the sectarian nature of events in South India, Swami Ahradhanand of the Arya Samaj organized a movement in the Punjab to counter Muslim conversions and reconvert any so-called Hindus who had been earlier converted to Islam. Originally developed in the late nineteenth century, Shuddhi (ritual purification) employed orthodox Brahmins and aimed also at social reform. Untouchables were drawn to the ranks of the Arya Samaj by converting outcastes to Arya Samaj ideas and thus securing for them access to wells and temples.[31] New Shuddhi efforts, however, were aimed at Mappilla converts or Shi'as who had retained Hindu ideas and practices. The Aryas also created Mahabir Dal processions and promoted cow protection, in order to win Hindus away from attending Shi'a Muharram observances involving colorful *tazia* processions of decorated floats depicting the shrine at Karbala where Imam Husain was martyred. Thus, the Arya Samaj hit hard at Hindu–Muslim syncretism and specifically at Shi'a Muslims.

In response, prominent *ulama* and Sufis began their own missionary movement, known as Tabligh. By sending Muslim preachers to the same marginal Muslims targeted by *Shuddhi*, their efforts were inflammatory. With the Malkana Rajputs of Agra District, the two groups came into conflict. Tabligh supporters accused the Arya Samaj of coerced reconversion and enjoined the Muslims to remain true to Islam. The lives of leaders on both sides were threatened by their followers.[32] Discovery around this time of the *Deval Smriti*, 90 verses written in the fourth and fifth centuries and entailing rituals to be undertaken following defilement by non-Hindus, facilitated rapprochement between *Sanatana Dharma* (orthodox) Hindus and the Arya Samaj.[33]

Another Hindu movement that acquired strength through consolidating communal resources was Sangathan (Unity), which emphasized Hindu mutual defense. Led by Lala Lajpat Rai, a member of the Arya Samaj, the organization reflected disillusionment in the wake of Gandhi's collapsed Non-Cooperation movement and failure of the Khilafat movement. To make the point that dhoti-clad Hindus were not their identity, those who trained at *akharas* frequently made a display of strength in religious processions. Sangathan also published inflammatory pamphlets, not unlike those circulated in 2002 by the Bajrang Dal, alleging that Muslims commonly took advantage of Hindu women. The popular press obliged by publishing fictitious descriptions of harassment, abductions, and forced conversions, just as they did in Gujarat before the 2002 Carnage.

Again in response, Muslims organized the Tanzim movement but were unable effectively to counter Sangathan. Under the leadership of Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Jamiat-e-Tanzim called for organization of a Muslim volunteer corps, schools, charitable institutions, and banks, as well as the collection of an all-India Muslim fund to support these projects. Kitchlew's Urdu daily, also entitled *Tanzim,* published strident editorials and articles detailing activities of the Arya Samaj, Shuddhi, and Sangathan. Communal riots occurred in Agra and Saharanpur (UP), towns where Shuddhi and Tabligh had been active, as well as Delhi and Kohat (Northwest Frontier), where an anti-Muslim pamphlet had been published by another militant Hindu organization, Sanathan Dharma Sabha.

Immediate catalysts for such conflicts, however, were conflicts between Hindu and Muslim festivals and respective modes of worship. At Bakr Eid, for instance, the animal slaughtered in memory of Isaac could sometimes be a cow. When Ram Lila or Dasara coincided with Muharram or Bakr Eid, as happened two to three years at a time every third decade,[34] riots ensued over tall Shi'a *tazias* tearing limbs off sacred papal trees or joyful Dasara musicians (cymbals, drums, conches) encountering processions of mourning Shi'a reciting *qasidas* in memory of Husain. The British government responded by ordering restrictions on processions.[35] Yet, religious tensions continued to escalate.

Although there was hardly any violence in Gujarat at Partition in August 1947, the Punjab at that time literally exploded in communal violence. Six million Sikhs and Hindus moved to India from the new territory of Pakistan, and five million Muslims moved west to the area declared Pakistan. An estimated one million never made it to their destinations. Murder, rape, kidnapping of women, seizure of property, and mass acts of violence occurred on all sides with such frequency as to stagger the mind. Bapsi Sidwa's novel *Cracking India* gives a chilling account of the carnage in the section entitled "Rana's Story." Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have published a disturbing collection of oral histories of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu women who were abducted, forcibly converted, or succeeded in emigrating during the months leading up to and after Partition.[36] Although these things did not happen in Gujarat, they colored the sensibility of both young nations: grudges were held and hatred nurtured long after 1947. Protection of one's own women and abuse of women from opposing communities continues to be a major theme in communal provocations and violence.

## CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM EXTREMISTS

Because it is adjacent to Pakistan, Gujarat is thought to have a permeable border, expecially where Muslim extremists are concerned. Today in Pakistan, several Islamist organizations operate, primarily in Kashmir. The

Taliban and the Harkat-ul-Ansar, both trained in Deobandi thinking, have risen to the fore, replacing the modernist Islamist thinking of Maudoodi and the Jamat-i-Islami's Hizbul Mujahideen. Similarly, Wahhabi warriors, organized as a *jehadi* group, the Lashkar-i-Toiba (Army of the Pure), are based in Lahore and function as a subordinate branch of Dawat al-Irshad. The latter is an organization that has contacts with the Arab world and, like the Saffron organizations cultivating NRI Hindus, raises funds among expatriate Muslims in the West.[37] Significant Islamist attacks in India, including that on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 and the machine-gun attack on a Hindu temple in Ahmedabad in September 2002, are blamed on cross-border operations of the Lashkar-i-Toiba.

The Parliament attack is thought to have been a smoke screen for the escape of Osama bin Laden, whereas the Ahmedabad temple attack was revenge for the Gujarat Carnage earlier that year. Yet, Islamist violence continued with the deadly 2005 Diwali attack in Delhi on crowded markets and a bus, in which 60 were killed and 180 injured, and the 2006 attack in Varanasi on the Hanuman temple and cantonment railway station, when 78 were killed and 100 injured. Seventeen simultaneous explosions in several areas of Ahmedabad in July 2008 killed 38, injured 90. Similar simultaneous explosions occurred in New Delhi in September 2008. Yet, two Bajrang Dal leaders killed in a Kanpur bomb-making workshop in August 2008 suggests RSS terrorism designed to foment anti-Muslim hatred. Muslim violence today is an extremist outgrowth of earlier Deobandi and Wahhabi thinking, both of which celebrate pan-Islamic nationalism, oppose innovations in Islamic practice, and reject the eclecticism that developed under Akbar's rule. Although these groups have sympathizers in India, indiscriminate labeling of Muslim groups as "terrorists" has made it easier for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-dominated state governments to persecute their moderate Muslim minorities.

The VHPA(America) model, moreover, has been taken up by Islamic nationalists of the Jamaat-e-Islami, with an effort to insert themselves into the lives of young Muslim Americans. They have not tried to raise huge amounts of money in North America, however, as this bastion of Islamic orthodoxy receives adequate funding from the ISI, the drug mafia, and the Saudi government. Just as dollars fund Hindu *dharma* in India, however, some "dollars for *zakat*" (obligatory annual payment for charitable purposes under Islamic law) are also collected in the United States. Unfortunately, support of communal politics in South Asia ends up communalizing the donors as well.[38] Islamic centers have been proliferating across North America and some Muslim Americans, both converts and immigrants, have succumbed to the call to defend the faith in Afghanistan and Iraq. As with proponents of *hindutva*, Islamic orthodoxy continues to work at and succeed in pushing back efforts at Hindu–Muslim synthesis.[39]

## THE SACHAR REPORT

Indian Muslims as a whole are not well-off and in some areas are more impoverished than Dalits, who have benefitted from reserved seats in universities, election lists, and government jobs, to say nothing of nongovernmental organization (NGO) programs. Despite BJP objections, findings by the prime minister's high-level government committee clearly show that 40 percent of India's Muslims are living in poverty compared with 27 percent of Indian Hindus. Fewer than 4 percent of Muslims graduate from high school, and the Muslim share of government jobs is only 4.9 percent, despite the fact that Muslims are 14 percent of the population. The Sachar Report recommends that 15 percent of government funds be allocated to a central government scheme for Muslim welfare and development. Further, the report urges the establishment of an equal opportunities commission to examine the grievances of all deprived groups. Education for Muslim girls is also put forth as a significant need.[40] What the Sachar Report does not mention, however, are reservations, perhaps believing that such a suggestion would set off another round of competition for reservations, as occurred with the implementation of the Mandal Commission for Other Backward Castes. Ironically, Muslims in Gujarat are better off than those in other states with large Muslim populations, such as Bengal and Andra Pradesh, yet their economic activities hardly constitute a threat to Hindus. But the Sangh Parivar has perhaps achieved its goal in Gujarat by waging war on Muslims, wealthy and poor alike. The Sachar Report also shows that Gujarati Muslims in "Vibrant Gujarat" have not recovered financially from the 2002 Carnage.

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# CHAPTER 7

# Motels and Convenience Stores

> Pride in one's religion and culture is not communalism provided it does not lead to the hatred of others' religions and cultures.
>
> —Shakir Moin

Within the last 20 years, residents of the United States have become aware of the Indianization of small businesses in neighborhoods and cities across America. Beginning in the late 1980s, faces behind the counters at local convenience stores had a darker tinge, and most clerks, often members of a single family, spoke with an accent. Gas stations came under new management, and attendants were usually Indian, most from the state of Gujarat. In Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, a mecca for tourists, most of the less expensive family-owned motels came into the hands of Indians. Motels are an especially lucrative prospect for an Indian family able to save enough to make such a purchase. The family can live there, provide clerk, maid, and maintenance labor, and if they are able to keep up standards of cleanliness, rake in the profits. Because every town in America has motels, convenience stores, and gas stations, prospects for economic success in America seem virtually unlimited.

This wave of Indian immigration was not India's first introduction to the American economic scene. The first Indian immigrants entered the United States in 1790 as part of the maritime industry connecting India with the United States in the age of clipper ships. In the nineteenth century, Sikhs were brought to the San Joaquin Valley in California to work as migrant laborers. Subject to strict immigration laws, they were not allowed to marry or to become U.S. citizens. In 1946, the Indian Citizenship Bill legalized naturalization for Indians and created a quota of 100 immigrants annually. In

the 1950s, Indian metallurgists came to work in America's steel industry. So many Indians lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by the mid-1960s that they were able to build a Sri Venkateshwara temple near Monroeville, with a highly visible *gopuram* (tower); *shilpas* (craftsmen) imported from India did the fine sculpture on the building. But Indians who gathered funds to build that temple were from South India and represented a highly trained professional class, largely upper-caste Hindus. Their numbers were augmented when the Immigration Act of 1965 lifted all immigrant quotas on South Asians.

An Indian professional working in the United States could more than double what might be his or her annual income in India. Moreover, emigration to the West was considered a prestigious move. When medical personnel were invited to the United States to help ease a shortage of doctors during the Vietnam War, many physicians from India answered the call, coming to work in Veterans' Hospitals and inner-city emergency rooms. Although the medical scene in those settings was not appealing, it was so much better than what many doctors could expect in India at that time that they found it acceptable. Once again, Indians who came during the late 1960s and early 1970s were highly educated, skilled professionals mainly from upper-caste families. Today more than 30,000 ethnic Indian medical doctors practice in the United States and enjoy membership in the American Association of Physicians from India (AAPI), which maintains its own legislative office in Washington, DC.

As of 2007, 1,500,000 Asian Indians reside in this country, and although perhaps 30,000 of them are here illegally on lapsed visas, most are here legally and have attained a high degree of financial and business success. The Patels from Gujarat's merchant caste appeared on the scene in the late 1980s, snapping up hotels, motels, and small local businesses as they came up for sale. In 2002, approximately 75 percent of the 24,049 Patel heads of household in the United States owned motels.[1] These entrepreneurs have formed the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) to network and further business goals. Those immigrants were followed quickly by software engineers and programmers who flooded the computer industry in the 1990s, although many today come only temporarily on H-1 (work) visas. Graduates of India's prestigious Institute of Technology (IIT), they come from all over India and reflect the excellent mathematical and engineering training found there.

In addition, more than 5,000 Indian Americans are involved in higher education in this country, teaching at colleges and universities and earning tenure at educational institutions across the nation. Business statistics show that Indian immigrants started more than one quarter of immigrant-founded companies, which in turn created about 450,000 jobs and generated more than $52 billion in sales in 2005.[2] Indian immigrants are

primarily founders of companies in the innovation/manufacturing-related services fields, although they contribute as well to the biosciences and computers/communications fields.

Yet, statistics do not reflect the true experience of Indians who come to the United States. India is a society in which one's identity is created through membership in a large extended family; a caste reflected in one's name, mannerisms, and status; and a particular group of language-speakers. When an Indian emigrates to the United States, he may find it difficult to create an identity based on individual characteristics such as personality, interests, and class origins. Markers for caste and class in India vary tremendously from those that identify Americans. Indo-English novels tell of upper-class Indians who went to study in England in the earlier part of the twentieth century and came home with lower-class British wives who had worked as waitresses or maidservants.[3] Such women were kind to lonely Indian students, attracted by their exotic backgrounds, and in turn these fair-skinned women seemed beautiful and surprisingly available. Although Indians in the U.S. software industry tend not to come with their families, many have found a quite different antidote for their alienation.

## VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD AMERICA

In 1970, Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) members living in the United States formed the Vishwa Hindu Parishad America (VHPA) in New York City and registered it as a nonprofit organization with the stated goal of bringing "cultural enrichment and cultural awareness to American society, based on time-tested Eternal Hindu Values."[4] The seemingly innocuous phrase "Eternal Hindu Values" is a code term for *hindutva*. Although only 35 attended the first annual conference in Canton, Ohio (1974), 5,000 attended the tenth conference in New York City in 1984. During the interim, the RSS built a large student organization in India (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad [ABVP]), with the aid of affiliated software experts who help to maintain Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Web sites with messages of *hindutva*, historical revisionism, and hatred toward Muslims. Under the aegis of civil rights in the United States, Hindu nationalists take full advantage of minority affirmative action and religious freedom to push a particular type of Indian identity. Indians who experience racism in the United States are encouraged to turn to *hindutva* and press for their rights.

Prema Kurien reports that immigrants manifest a stronger attachment to the homeland if they receive a hostile reception in the receiving country. She refers to a number of studies that show that encountering hostility triggers a process of "reactive ethnicization" in which "home country culture and traditions are reaffirmed and acquire a heightened significance as a self-defense mechanism against the discrimination."[5] It is evident that the

experience of racism and marginalization helps to propel immigrants toward religious institutions. Being religion-identified may, in fact, offer a way of avoiding a purely racial identity.

The focal point in the lives of Indian residents in the United States and the United Kingdom is the temple, which functions as a house of worship, community center, and social club. Events of every sort are advertised on temple Web sites and newsletters, and large crowds frequently turn out to greet visiting political leaders. In California, a BJP/VHP stronghold, it is not unusual for thousands of dollars to be contributed in a single evening, as was the case when Advani raised $30,000 for the Overseas Friends of the BJP in 1992. In Los Angeles, a crowd of 8,000 turned out in 1991 to hear Morari Bapu, a Gujarati religious leader linked with the BJP.[6] American politicians also attend such events in order to garner electoral support and mobilize funds for political issues impacting Indian Americans. By offering traditional Hindu ceremonies, Sangh-related temples draw in Hindus of all ideological persuasions who want to reinforce their cultural ties. When the Hindu Ektamata Samiti held a massive Vedic fire sacrifice (*mahayagna*), 3,000 Indians participated. Thus, the VHP manages to put forth its own brand of Hinduism as a significant source of the sacred for many NRI Indian families.

Young people are targeted through activities such as summer camps, comic books, essay competitions, weekend events, and heritage language classes. Summer camps serve as a way of preserving Hindu culture for Indian youth who are otherwise attracted to American cultural norms. Traditional values such as arranged marriage, Brahmin hegemony, the need to protect women, and the importance of the extended family are propagated. Comic books featuring Indian epics and tales of Hindu chauvinist heroes are sold in temples, grocery stores, and video rental operations. Such stories present Muslims as adversaries and Hindus as victims of Muslim treachery. In Houston, a large Gujarati community sponsors special youth festivals for Makar Sankranti and Ram Navani, both important Sangh Parivar holidays. The Hindu Student Council, modeled on Vidyarthi Parishads in India, is active at all major American universities. Faculty, staff, and graduate students engage in outreach activities during orientation and continue their networking throughout the academic year with Web site activities, lunch discussions, and Sunday classes on the Bhagavad Gita.[7]

One of the most distressing aspects of the so-called Yankee Hindutva is the shift in thinking of many formerly pluralist Indian Americans. I have observed sadly as dear friends of mine, both well-educated and former Gandhians, have begun to send out overtly anti-Muslim e-mails. They now perceive themselves as Hindu victims at the hands of minorities, a sort of talk I never heard from them 20 years ago. As they are drawn into social activities at nearby temples, they are exposed to the message of the Sangh Parivar: Muslims, Christians, and secularists are not to be trusted, and organizations that

encourage ongoing relations between Hindus and Muslims must be avoided. Hindus are urged to boycott Pakistani businesses and goods.[8]

Perhaps because the Marxist focus on labor included an emphasis on positive communal relations, the distinction between secularism and Marxism is conflated in Sangh thinking. Those who share the pluralist ideals of Nehru and Ambedkar are branded as left-wing extremists and derisively referred to as Marxists or pseudo-secularists. Gandhi, however, has lately been coopted by the Sangh because his idiosyncratic brand of Indian nationalism embraced all religions but had a decidedly Hindu slant. Although Hindu nationalists assassinated him, today they use Gandhi's birthday as an occasion to celebrate traditional Hindu values under the Sangh banner.

In the West, Sangh efforts intentionally blur distinctions between secular Hindus who simply want to maintain cultural ties and Hindus who desire a stronger religious affiliation. Attendance at *pujas*, the need for priestly officiating at family rituals, and involvement in a temple community quickly draw immigrant Indians into the circle of the VHPA. Caught between the desire to be integrated into American society and the need to retain their Indian identity, NRIs seek comfortable Indian connections of one sort or another. Because Yankee Hindutva makes a conscious effort to mediate the link between American societal expectations and Indian lifestyles, it is especially attractive to Indians in search of a footing in a new place.

Many who come as software engineers find the Internet a safe space to express their Indian identity and nationalism that seem out of place in corporate America. The Internet, however, is also a space that attracts Hindus with specific interests or regional ties. Such "isolated sites become spawning grounds for the technocrats who need to re-invent their identity each night after having sold their souls to corporate American during the day."[9] According to Kurien, "from around 2000, the Internet became a major site of Hindu American activity, with the formation of hundreds of Internet discussion groups devoted to Indian or Hindu-related topics and of Internet e-zines like Sulekha.com (which bills itself as the '#1 Indian Online Community'), Outlook.com, and Rediff.com."[10] Not surprisingly, such Internet forums are dominated by Indian engineers and programmers. The VHPA, moreover, has established more than 2,500 sites on the Web. By the sheer profusion of their efforts and by championing *hindutva* ideology as the neglected culture of Hindu Americans, Sangh Web sites offer sectarian handholds that subtly, little by little, poison the minds of their users.

## THE INDIA DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF FUND

The IDRF (India Development and Relief Fund), a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization, was established in the United States in 1989, with the stated purpose of raising money for organizations in India "assisting in rural development, tribal welfare, and urban poor."[11] In 2000, the IDRF raised

$3.8 million and disbursed less than half of it ($1.7 million) in relief and development work.[12] Although the IDRF claims no connections with the Sangh Parivar, careful examination of its funds, its officers, and the organizations that support and raise funds for it reveal strong institutional links among the IDRF, the RSS, and their affiliates in India and the United States. These links are discernible through documents submitted by the IDRF to U.S. federal and state government agencies and also through documents published by the IDRF as part of its public relations effort. A full study of these links has been published on the Internet by Sabrang Communications (Mumbai) and the South Asia Citizens Web (France).

In its application for tax-exempt status, the IDRF identified nine organizations as representative of the types of organizations that it supports in India. Among them are five Vanvasi organizations, including the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams in Gujarat, which deal with tribal people. Four others include the Vikas Bharati (Bihar), the Sewa Bharati (Delhi), the Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (Tamil Nadu), and the Jana Seva Vidya Kendra (Karnataka). All nine can be identified as Sangh organizations, suggesting that from its inception the goal of the IDRF was to support the work of the Sangh Parivar in India.[13] A further list of 67 other organizations, identified as Sister Organizations, includes 51 that are definitely Sangh affiliates. Among these are four "flagships" for the RSS operations: (1) Ekal Vidyalays (One Teacher Schools), a VHP project aimed at indoctrinating students in tribal villages; (2) Vikasan Foundation, which promotes its own version of Indian culture by collecting money to fund Hindu religious schools (*gurukuls*) in India and abroad; (3) Bharat Vikas Parishad, which works to involve entrepreneurs and wealthy Indians in national service to protect Bharatiya values; and (4) Sewa International, an organization set up to attract and coordinate foreign contributions for Sangh-related organizations in India.[14]

Fund-raising is carried on by *hindutva* organizations in the United States, Hindu Students Council (HSC) and Friends of India Society International (FISI), which raise funds exclusively for the IDRF and VHPA, paying virtually no attention to major nonsectarian development and relief organizations such as Association for India's Development (AID), Asha for Education, Pratham-USA, Child Relief and You (CRY), Indian Development Service (IDS), and Indians for Collective Action (ICA).[15] Fund-raising drives are often organized around the theme of "Islamic Terrorism," whereas *hindutva* Web sites, such as VHP-America, Hindu Universe, Nation of Hindutva, HinduWomen, Global Hindu Electronic Network, and HSS-UK, offer links to the IDRF, "a Hindu charity." In addition, the IDRF hosts Web pages for the HSS, "an organization started in the USA and other parts of the world to continue what RSS is doing in India."[16] Hindu Unity, a particularly militant *hindutva* Web site serving as the voice of the Bajrang Dal abroad, maintains

a "hit list" of people opposed to its views and openly advocates violence toward minorities.[17]

In their published report, Sabrang and the South Asia Citizens Web maintain that during the years 1994–2000, approximately 75 percent of the IDRF's total disbursements went to IDRF-designated organizations, and of those funds, 80 percent were sent to Parivar organizations.[18] Moreover, the majority of IDRF-designated organizations are not actually involved in relief and development work. Rather, 70 percent of the IDRF funds go to organizations dealing with education in tribal areas, hostels, reconversion programs, and Hinduization efforts.[19] Even in the case of disasters such as the Gujarat earthquake of 2001, the Sangh organizations used their funds to help only Hindu victims, bypassing Muslim and Christian victims. Thus, even the 15 percent of IDRF funds that goes to relief must be classified as "sectarian."[20] As an example, RSS reconstruction efforts after the 2001 earthquake frequently involved the building of temples and crematoria, but not mosques, churches, or cemeteries, in villages with mixed religious populations.[21] Four IDRF-supported programs in Gujarat include Shri Apang Parivar Kalyan Kendra (Bhavnagar), Muni Seva Ashram (Goraj), Kutch Kalyan Sangh (Bhuj), and Sri Gujarat Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad (Ahmedabad, regional office of ABVP).[22] Three are located in rural areas where the process of conversion to Hinduism effectively creates a *hindutva* identity and brings *dalit* or *adivasi* communities into the traditional Hindu caste order.

## FUND-RAISING IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

IDRF headquarters is located in North Bethesda, Maryland, although the organization also has offices in Freemont, California; Arlington, Massachusetts; Houston, Texas; Woodbridge, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario; and Hyderabad, India. According to the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate, much of the IDRF's fund-raising is done through electronic fund transfers via portals such as PayPal, company foundations, Givingstation.org, and credit card commissions. Research suggests that amounts in excess of a half million dollars may have reached IDRF in this way.[23] Many large U.S. corporations (CISCO, Sun, Oracle, HP, AOL) offer to match employee contributions to U.S.-based nonprofits. Unsuspecting corporations thus contribute large amounts of matching funds to IDRF in response to employee-directed requests. For instance, in fiscal 1999, the Cisco Foundation gave nearly $70,000 to IDRF, in addition to matching grants given by employees, so that a total of at least $133,000 went to IDRF from Cisco.

Although Cisco policies state that "organizations/projects receiving donations must have a nonreligious primary purpose" and exclude "organizations

whose primary mission is to promote a particular culture, race, or religion, the corporation has been misled into funding organizations that promote sectarian hate."[24]

Similarly in the United Kingdom, the VHP-UK and the HSS collected nearly £1million in 2001–2002, according to the charity commissioner's records.[25] Organized in 1972, the U.K. branch of the VHP has branches in various parts of London, as well as Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham, Northampton, Nottingham, Bradford, and Bolton. Professor Gautam Appa of the London School of Economics writes:

> Here in Britain the VHP (UK) and the HSS have a strong organizational base among Gujaratis from East Africa. Like its counterpart in India, the VHP (UK) fronts many organizations. Management committees of many Gujarati temples include one or two VHP members. There is overlapping membership of the VHP (UK) and local government-funded centres purporting to cover such innocuous sounding cultural activities such as language or yoga classes and prayer group. A key aspiration of all these front organisations is to work as a bulwark for the promotion of the goals of the VHP and RSS in India, including the nefarious goal of Muslim-bashing. I have seen their information sheets for members detailing how much money each local government administration spends on Muslim as opposed to Hindu organizations. Recent reports suggest that the extreme racist British National Party has approached them for joint work against Muslims, their common enemy.[26]

VHP-Canada operations began in 1970 and continue to expand, and branches have also been formed in Zambia, Netherlands, West Germany, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Kenya, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mauritius, and the West Indies. In some places, the RSS goes by other names, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) or Sanatana Dharma Swayamsevak Sangh (SDSS). FISI, Friends of India Society International, started in 1978 when India was going through an Emergency under Indira Gandhi, who suspended civil rights. After the Emergency was lifted, two forums, India for Democracy (USA) and Friends of India Society (UK), merged with the mission of building Hindu nationalist lobbies in world centers such as London and Washington, DC. Lobbying in Washington is carried on by organizations such as the Overseas Friends of the BJP, the U.S. chapter of RSS, the VHPA, and FISI. In particular, relations have been established with AIPAC, the Zionist lobby in the United States, and Sangh-related organizations support American foreign policy favorable to Israel. Both Sangh lobbyists and AIPAC have enthusiastically embraced America's war on terrorism, which gives India and Israel license to criticize and mistreat their respective Muslim minority populations.

## COMBATTING THE HINDUTVA WAVE

To mount a pluralist counteroffensive to the Sangh network, Indian secular organizations in Chicago have made a concerted effort to build bridges among Indian religious communities and to promote communal harmony. Groups committed to this effort include the Coalition for Secular and Democratic India (CSDI), South Asian Progressive Action Collective (SAPAC), South Asia Group for Action and Reflection (SAGAR), Indian Muslim Council-USA (IMC-USA), World Tamil Organization (WTO), and Sikh American Heritage Organization (SAHO). Similar projects elsewhere at regional and local levels involve dialogues to increase understanding, rapid reaction to crises and other events, as well as consciousness-raising and workshops. Most of these efforts, however, are based in large population centers and fail to address the isolation of the immigrant from a small-town background who wants to be somebody in the midst of the anomie served up by an immense country:

> Overqualified but low-ranked technocrats with foreign-born English accents dealing with native Anglo-American arrogance or underappreciated academics teaching at small colleges in remote locations and third-tier universities are all given a voice and feel powerful when affiliated with VHP and BJP organizations like the Overseas Friends of the BJP or the Friends of India Society International. The VHP International links and organizes this new transnational bourgoisie; the leadership travels back and forth to raise and disperse funds and help soothe the way for political and financial accumulation.[27]

Since the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque in 1991, Indian American groups in North America have fought a defensive battle to reestablish the pluralism of Nehru and Gandhi. By hosting speakers from India and exhibitions from cultural activist groups such as SAHMAT (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust) and sponsoring a national tour of the play, *Tumhari Amrita,* an epistolary drama involving a Muslim man and Hindu woman, groups such as the American India Foundation have endeavored to heal the breach between Hindus and Muslims in the United States. In addition, a coalition of secular and democratic groups managed to overturn the classification of the VHPA as a "cultural organization" for charity purposes by AT&T. But far more needs to be done. Lacking the huge network and strong India connections of the Sangh, secular pluralist organizations have no dedicated funding base. Nor are they prepared to deal with problems facing NRIs who feel alienated or face genuine crises as they adjust to a new homeland.

Issues such as whether wives and daughters should be allowed to work, how much liberty daughters should have in dress and social life, whether

marriages should be arranged or marriage permitted to American men, are questions that Indians struggle with in the context of American society. Secularists tend to be laissez-faire toward many of these questions and to advocate blending in with American culture. They are unlikely to view these issues as serious questions or take a firm position on any of them. Sangh organizations, by contrast, emphasize the role of women as the embodiment of tradition and celebrate such traditional Hindu heroines as Jijabai (mother of Shivaji); Ahaliyabai, the Maharani of Indore; and Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi.[28] Although in India, the Hindu Right declares itself opposed to women's liberation, in the United States it tends to view women as "a resource by which the community might increase its earning capacity and its power: this is the motivation, rather than any feminist ideal, for the difference in the agendas of Yankee and Desi Hindutva."[29] In any case, as immigrant Indian families struggle to adjust their Hindu values to those of the dominant culture, they find comfort that they are not alone by allying themselves with Yankee Hindutva. Perhaps most important, they also find firm positions from which to take advice on family matters if they align themselves with the HSC or the VHPA.

## DEALING WITH THE INTERNET

Although much Sangh hate-mongering against Muslims is muted by Internet providers, quite a bit of it is not. Some of it takes the form of Internet messages sent to specific individuals or list-serves. Some of it fits right in with the American war on terror or the Israeli project to discredit Palestinians. At this point it might be useful to take a look at messages being circulated by Indians in the United States and also examine several of the most damaging Web sites. Let me cite four particular messages sent to me. The first dealt with the assertion that the Taj Mahal was built on top of a Hindu temple. Accompanying it was a list of Muslim sites in India allegedly built over earlier Hindu buildings (the VHP maintains a list of 2,000 such sites). In the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition and the assertion that two other sites, the Krishnajanmasthan-Shahi Idgah in Mathura and the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi, are next in line,[30] the implication seems to be that the Taj Mahal should be destroyed. One wonders how Hindu chauvinists could so lose their sense of proportion as to even hint that the existence of one of the most beautiful pieces of architecture ever created should come into question. Such revisionism can only stimulate hatred, tear apart the fabric of the Indian nation, and play havoc with the actual historical record.

Another e-mail that came my way on Sunday, August 20, 2006, was entitled "Muslim History Test." It listed 12 questions concerning historical events in a multiple choice format. The actual answer to each question was "Muslim male extremist(s) between the ages of 27 and 40." The apparent

objective of the e-mail was to refute the argument that racial profiling is inappropriate at airport screenings. This message, however, was being circulated by Indian Americans who typically send anti-Muslim statements of various kinds, so whatever the original intent of the e-mail, it was being put to the use of those committed to *hindutva*. On another occasion, a retired Indian doctor sent me an e-mail with a picture of Muslim extremists taken from Wikepedia and pasted into an article about peaceful Muslims in London trying to reclaim the true ideals of their religion. "Are these peace-loving Muslims?" questioned the message line.

On another occasion, my doctor friend wrote:

> There are verses in the Quran that clearly spell out the duty of Muslims to kill, enslave and appropriate the properties of non-Muslims. That is fully espoused by Mohammad and he himself led the raids against Jewish towns and cities in Arabia as soon as his new religion was established in the 7th century. He has ordained that good Muslims must take part in Jihad against non-believers and the honorific title of Ghazi is given to one who does so successfully.[31]

What is most painful about this message, written out of the individual's own convictions, is that it is a gross misrepresentation of Muhammed, the Qur'an, and the concept of *jihad*. Furthermore, it contravenes the experience of Hindus in India who suffered at the hands of random invaders but lived for centuries peacefully under Muslim emperors. Moreover, wherever the information about Jewish towns and cities originated, it demonstrates collusion between Zionists and nationalist Hindus in attempting to discredit Muslims. Yet this same individual goes on to say, "There is NO place for conversions forcible or otherwise in modern times, much less declarations of grandeur of any religion."[32] He no doubt refers to the oftenmentioned *hindutva* stereotype of forced conversions to Islam, but he could as well be condemning the forced reconversion of Christians and Muslims to Hinduism in our own day. It is nonetheless painful to see well-educated Indians succumbing to errors of history foisted on them by the Sangh.

Web sites linked with Sangh organizations are also quite illuminating. For instance, the Hindu Student Council Web site denounces "inaccurate, misleading propaganda by an anonymous group." That group, of course, is one that uses the title "Campaign to Stop Funding Hate," described as "attempting to present itself as a reputable source of information about HSC while actually being a mix of outdated information . . . and inaccurate claims published by anonymous authors concealing their true motivations for initiating this misleading attack."[33] The article goes on to insist that HSC has always been open about its activities, which include hosting speakers, performing community service, holding *poojas,* celebrating festivals, and participating in interfaith discussions at the chapter level on college campuses. Among the

various organizations that it reaches out to are two major saffron groups: the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America. There is a disclaimer, however: "the fact that HSC shares many values with all of these organizations and believes that Hindus must be unified and strong does not mean HSC is responsible for any of the actions of those groups or their affiliates. Neither does it indicate that HSC is being secretly (or not so secretly) run by any of those organizations."[34]

Another HSC Web site article attempts to discredit those who have mounted the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate by publishing brief biographies of five individuals, four of whom are said to be linked to a Forum of Inquilabi Leftists. The article further tries to tie Forum of Indian Leftists (FOIL) to terrorism by noting that it supported Maoist Marxism in Nepal (as did many Nepali intellectuals opposing royal rule) and implying that because *inquilabi* means "revolution" in Urdu, the organization must somehow be linked to Muslims. The five individuals, however, are Hindus and Christians, and at least one, Samip Mallick, is associated with Association for India's Development (AID), a reputable organization that works wonders by encouraging NRIs to donate to and actively initiate development projects in their home regions. Yet, according to the HSC Web site, "AID, posing itself as a 'developmental organization', worked on various projects with the DYFI (Democratic Youth Federation of India) and SFI (Student Federation of India)," both of which "are associated with the Communist Party of India-Marxist and their members have been convicted of violence and murder."[35]

It is clear that software engineers on both sides of this debate are using their talents to benefit their respective organizations and points of view. However, although Marxists have committed violent acts in Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (longtime Marxist strongholds), it is also evident that the violence in Gujarat was fomented by the Sangh Parivar and its related organizations and funded to a great extent by contributions, witting or unwitting, from NRIs abroad. I will not forget the remark made by a Sikh taxi driver as we rode from the airport to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. When I mentioned that I was doing research in Gujarat, his comment was, "Too many Muslims there." Where, I wondered, did that hatred spring from? As a Punjabi, he might have had residual hatred of Muslims from experiences of his family at Partition. But what would he know about Gujarat? Curious about attitudes of Indians in my own rural Pennsylvania county, I embarked on a small research project to determine region of origin, patterns of contribution, attitudes, and temple affiliation.

With 16 respondents, the sample was not huge, but the results were telling.[36] Eleven named Gujarat as their place of origin in India, with five from other Indian states; 13 are citizens or permanent residents. Ten make their living from hotel or motel ownership/management, three from medicine, and two from software engineering. Patterns of sending money to

India include eight who send money to family, six who donate to poverty and development organizations, and eight who donate to religious organizations (several checked multiple categories). Temple affiliations were also multiple in many cases, but most included temples linked with the Sangh Parivar and known to convey *hindutva* ideology: ten, including 45.5 percent of those from Gujarat, were affiliated with the HARI temple (Rama is the presiding deity) in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania (near Harrisburg), and six, including 54.55 percent of Gujaratis, with a Swaminarayan temple[37] in Washington or Harrisburg. Although it is true that ethnic Indians affiliate with temples where others from their region cluster (Tamils from South India identify with a Murugan temple), the HARI temple in Harrisburg is not predominantly Gujarati in its membership. It is worth noting, however, that the largest group of Swaminarayan devotees in the United States are Patels.[38]

To the question of whether India should be a Hindu nation, eight answered yes, including 54.55 percent of the Gujaratis, and six (including one Sikh) answered no. Peripheral comments included such responses as "Yes, that's where Hinduism originated," "Yes, due to preserving culture and historical values," and "Yes, Hindu law is good for everyone." These remarks are consistent with *hindutva* values. The final question, "What do you think is the biggest threat to India?" produced a variety of responses, some multiple: Muslim terrorists (5), corrupt politicians (5), population growth (5), poverty (2), communal violence (1), drought (1), HIV/AIDS (1), natural disasters (1), and selfishness of the educated/privileged (1). Again, it is perhaps predictable that two of the most frequent responses, "Muslim terrorists" and "corrupt politicians," are consistent with the Hindu nationalist message that (1) Muslims are the greatest threat to Hindus and (2) Congress party politicians are corrupt. Nor is it surprising that none of the Gujaratis regarded communalism as a threat despite the Carnage of 2002. Although this poll represents one small town in one largely rural county, one should multiply the results thousands of times to obtain a true picture of how many NRI Gujaratis in the United States are touched and influenced by the Sangh Parivar message. "For both the first-generation middle-class immigrants and their children, the VHP's brand of Hinduism, reified as "Indian" culture and tradition, figure as the primordial and sacred symbols of ethnicity and legitimacy in America."[39] Witting or unwitting, the participation of so many Indians in the Sangh Parivar thought web is deeply disturbing.

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# PART III

# Where Healing Is Possible

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# CHAPTER 8

# SEWA: Work as Antidote to Violence

> To be poor is to be vulnerable. The condition of being poor, of being self-employed, and of being a woman are all distinct yet interrelated states of vulnerability. Poverty makes one become a chronic victim of forces beyond one's control. With every misfortune, problems compound, leaving one increasingly powerless and setting in motion a spiral descent into starker poverty. Only work, a steady source of income, and asset ownership can break one's fall.
>
> —Ela Bhatt

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad, India, with a half million members, is well known throughout the world for its innovative union organizing and employment training for women working in the nontraditional sector. Many of us have shown the SEWA film *Kamla and Raji* to our Women's Studies classes or read about SEWA's empowerment work in Ela Bhatt's *We Are Poor but So Many* (2005), Kalima Rose's *Where Women Are Leaders* (1992), or Dan Crowell's *The SEWA Movement and Rural Development* (2003). Today, SEWA, which was organized in 1972 as an urban trade union, has members in six Indian states and is predominantly a rural trade organization, with two thirds of its current members living in rural areas. "While the founding members of SEWA were all working-class women from the commercial capital—Ahmedabad city—of Gujarat state, the typical member today is a working poor woman in a remote village in a semi-arid or desert region of north Gujarat."[1]

Unlike other trade unions, SEWA seeks to recruit and organize workers from a wide spectrum of trades into a single union. As many as 83 different occupational groups are organized into four main branches of the

organization: vendors and hawkers, home-based workers (embroiderers, garment makers, bidi rollers, incense [*agarbati*] rollers, kite-makers), laborers and service providers (tobacco workers, waste pickers, agricultural laborers, cleaners, construction workers, head loaders, casual day laborers, contract factory workers), and rural producers (animal rearers, milk producers, gum collectors, salt makers, small farmers). Statistics on religion or caste are not collected on a regular basis, as SEWA follows Gandhian ideology. However, approximately one third of the membership is Muslim, the rest Hindu or tribal. SEWA focuses, rather, on assuring a representative structure by updating its membership data by trade each year. Grounding its work in the Gandhian values of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *khadi* (local employment and self-reliance) and *sarvadharma* (integrating all faiths, all people), SEWA opens itself to all religious groups as well as all castes on an equal basis. At SEWA, all members are treated as workers—irrespective of caste or religion, and women at all levels call each other "Ben" (Sister).

In the wake of earlier destruction of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya (1992), the tragic accident at Godhra in February 2002, and widescale carnage against a moderate Muslim minority, Hindus and Muslims withdrew from mixed communities in which they had been living. Trust between religious communities evaporated, and families on both sides suffered severe post-traumatic stress and loss of income. It was quite clear to everyone that the right-wing Hindu Gujarat state government had colluded with Hindu extremist rioters, for the riots had all the earmarks of a pogrom. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), already oriented toward relief work as a result of drought and an earthquake in recent years, immediately came to the rescue. As accompaniment to material relief in the refugee camps, they developed programs oriented to restoring trust between Hindus and Muslims. CARE, for instance, funded The Gujarat Harmony Project, an effort that brought together 10 local NGOs focused on programs challenging ghettoization, such as learning about each other's religions, celebrating each other's holidays, emphasizing economic networks, organizing cooperative sports teams, and trying to impact public policy making.

In addition to relief work, many of the NGOs took an immediate stand, began to document victim's stories and spoke out against the massacres. To everyone's surprise, SEWA, considered a powerful moral and political force with its large membership, did not issue any statements. As a result, many other NGOs continue to criticize SEWA for not taking a stand on behalf of targeted Muslims. Spokespersons from some of those organizations still resent SEWA's silence and suggest that SEWA was reluctant to alienate the state government. But SEWA has a far different story to tell, one that suggests that a different approach to communal violence might make good sense.

It is true that SEWA had over the years developed a good working relationship with local government. From the first day of the riot, the senior

staff had tried to coordinate some response from government departments to settle the situation but were "overwhelmed by the magnitude of the situation."[2] Because SEWA already had a working relationship with police on issues such as street vendors, the organization was respected. At the height of the riots, police commissioners were contacted directly and in some cases sent help, but "in some areas the police did not dare to go." While doing a post-riot survey of burned houses, SEWA got police protection, but SEWA actually protected the police in some areas where their organizers were known. However, live bombs were planted in front of the SEWA office and more than 152,000 members came under attack. Although none of the SEWA organizers lost their lives either during or after the riots, those who were on the spot when the riots started were victimized in areas where they had gone to work (Manali Shah, 11/11/16). What quickly became apparent, however, was that wherever possible members within various trade subgroups had tried to help each other across religious lines, even at the height of the massacres.

According to Reema Nanavaty, SEWA Director of Economic and Rural Development and General Secretary at the time of the riots, "Amongst the poor, there is not this kind of communal divide—their livelihoods are so connected. If you look at working class households and women, when the riots were on, you saw not just organizers but members sitting together, concerned about each other. It's the very reason why our membership has remained intact despite the riots."[3] In one rural area (Borsad in District Anand), a SEWA savings and credit group had two leaders, one Muslim and one Hindu. Together they went from house to house saying, "Don't fight" and took the leadership in preserving village harmony. They also informed police that in some cases the wrong people had been taken to the police station.

In keeping with its philosophy of emphasizing trades rather than caste or religion, SEWA leaders chose not to polarize their membership by speaking out against any religious community or condemning the right-wing Hindu state government. "We felt that restraint was the need of the hour in an atmosphere filled with hate and fury, politics and even criminal activity."[4] Thus, SEWA's approach was to act on behalf of riot victims, rather than to issue statements. SEWA leaders believe that they clearly expressed their stand through their actions.

Curfews in the wake of the riots impacted all laborers severely: many were housed in refugee camps and had no means of continuing their accustomed work. Wherever they lived, both Hindu and Muslim women who had been employed in the informal sector found their supply and marketing systems disrupted. With other NGOs and eventually the government, SEWA supplied rice, dal, and milk powder to the camps, and initiated child care as well as sessions on health, literacy, and sanitation information. Its biggest contributions, however, were therapeutic listening and instant livelihood projects.

Women were encouraged and taught how to make paper bags out of rags and newspapers, sew quilts, and roll incense and *bidis*. So that wages would keep coming, SEWA collected raw materials from suppliers in other communities and delivered finished goods to contractors. SEWA was constantly in touch with the District Collector and met with him daily to solve local problems. When the government announced a relief package, SEWA saw to it that compensation actually reached their members.

SEWA leaders maintained a good working relationship with the Collector and with government at all levels, even *panchayats*. According to Jyoti MacEwan, SEWA General Secretary, "It was easy to call on them. Because we gave no statement, there was no attack on SEWA."[5] Rather than join the Gujarat Harmony Project, SEWA concentrated on huge numbers of their own members who had lost their homes, their possessions, beloved family members, and their livelihood. Out of a total membership of 120,000 in Ahmedabad, 40,000 were in relief camps; whereas while in rural areas, 52,000 members were affected (*Shantipath,* 2002: 35). But SEWA also extended their livelihood projects to other women in the five camps where they provided services. "Our union actually became stronger after the riots," observes MacEwan.

SEWA leaders and organizers tried to track down their members by going to those refugee camps. It was very hard to find them because they had all gone to different places. "We met them and saw their burned houses and then we would come back to the SEWA office to share what we had found. Sometimes we just cried as we heard from each other what had happened."[6] But then they developed Shanti Centers in camps and areas having the most members: 5 refugee camps (out of 46) and 4 rural districts. There, they focused on three goals: rehabilitation, livelihood, and life education. Every evening, SEWA leaders from all areas came to the office in downtown Ahmedabad for three hours to plan their work for the next day. Each morning, they gathered at the office and went out to the affected areas in teams intentionally comprised of mixed religions. This went on for four months until the camps closed and even afterward, up to a year. But SEWA members who returned to their neighborhoods faced huge livelihood issues. Some Hindu employers refused to take back Muslim employees or give contract work to Muslims. Sometimes their wages were lowered.

With the help of government funding, SEWA was able to address these problems by building on its short-term relief work. They developed two innovative long-term programs, one for Muslim and Hindu widows, *Shanta* (Peacemaker) Program, and the other for orphaned children, *Hamare Bachche* (Our Children). Through these programs, SEWA established the principle that the most immediate need for riot victims is the same as their long-term need: a way to earn a livelihood. Because so many Muslim men were killed, a huge number of widows who otherwise might not have much

contact with the world outside their homes were faced with no means of income. Because so many children had lost their fathers or both parents, their future education was compromised. How, wondered SEWA, could their organization provide ongoing support for women who needed not only work but also mentoring and help with legal issues, psychological problems, and housing? How could all those children be kept from becoming child laborers, street children, or an impoverished next generation?

Not unlike SEWA's work in the refugee camps, the Shanta Program, which began three months after the riots ended, involves extensive mentoring. In fact, the grassroots teams were already in place, so it was not difficult to develop *Shantipath*. Central to the program are "Hand-Holders," team members trained to assist widows with health care, insurance, trauma counseling, legal issues, compensation, and family issues. Two Hand-Holders meet twice a week with each Shanta Ben (Peacemaker Sister) to determine whether her work situation is financially viable: whether she is getting work on a regular basis, and whether she needs further employment training or help with marketing. Women gather for group counseling at Shanti Kendra (Centers) along with others engaged in the same sort of nontraditional work (e.g., vegetable selling, *bidi* rolling, incense manufacture, milk production). Through the *Hamare Bachche* program, their children are guaranteed an education up to age 18. Hand-Holders assist with admission to schools, and, as surrogate parents, negotiate with teachers and principals.

Many problems confronted the widows: if the husband's body had not been recovered and no death certificate issued, government compensation could not be obtained. Without a certificate of residence, because of uncertain housing or burned records, children could not be admitted to schools. Recovering all kinds of certificates from hospitals, courts and record offices has been time-consuming work for Hand-Holders, but all are wholeheartedly committed to what they are doing. In a large group meeting with Shanta Project Teams (both Shanta Bens and Hand-Holders) from two rural districts, one of the mentors observed, "The main strength of the widows' relationship with SEWA is that our members went continuously. They never quit, despite the danger. Even when we were told, 'You go back!' we didn't. So they trust us at a time when it is difficult to trust anyone."[7] Many Hand-Holders are still engaged in trauma counseling, not just for the women but for whole families and their neighbors. "But now the women are no longer crying. Now they stand up with confidence. Children also stand up with confidence. But there are some difficult cases also." Help is available from doctors at the civil hospital for health issues and psychotherapy. All Shanta Bens received three psychiatric consultations immediately after the riots, and for three years afterward some women still received medications and participated in group counseling.

SEWA Handholders and Shanta Bens from two rural districts eat lunch together at a meeting in Ahmedabad.

The stories of the Shanta Bens are both heartbreaking and uplifting. I include only two here, one from the city and the other from the countryside:

> (1) My husband was a victim of the riots. They cut his body into three parts and burned it. I went to my parents for Eid. Then my sister-in-law refused to take me back, so I went to a camp, where SEWA helped me. I was deeply shocked by everything that happened. But I got training from the National Institute of Fashion Technology in tailoring and garment cutting. Now I am very happy. My oldest son is studying in an English medium school, and I have many new friends[8] (Parveen, 11/12/06).
>
> (2) I was married at the age of 14. As is the custom here, I was at my parents' house for the birth of my baby, who was 4 months old when the violence came. My in-laws had said, after 5 months, we will come to bring you home. But the riots came, and I lost my house, my husband, and my father-in-law. The three of us, my mother-in-law, the baby—we had no one to care for us. So we went to my parents' house, where SEWA found me. Because I already had skills, they gave me a sewing machine. I do contract work. *Hamare Bachche* takes care of my daughter, who is now in school.[9] Beaming with pride, Fatma's

Hand-Holder also spoke up: "Today she came alone for the first time to this meeting. Usually she comes with her mother-in-law."

I ask a group of women at an Ahmedabad Kendra, "What is one important thing about the Shanta program?" The women, some wearing the veil, some not, described what mattered to them: "(1) Having work (they do ironing, bidi rolling, agarbati rolling, wall hangings, tailoring); (2) Having assurance that our children will be educated—it means they will be well settled; (3) Finding a new life and working to earn money, what I never thought of; (3) Finding Shanta Ben, who are like family members—they support me whether I am ill or happy; (4) Having an open space where we can share everything; (5) SEWA offers us strong support in so many dimensions. After all that has happened, I think we are fortunate!"[10]

Meeting with a group of 11 women in the Kalol village (Panch Mahal district), where widows have been given houses by the Islami Relief Committee, I find myself in the upper story of a small house. Five of us from SEWA are sitting on the bed, with nine women on the floor, as is usual in India. Two are missing: they have gone to see about their pensions. A poster on the wall says in English, "Love is enough." Jubeda, who came from a well-to-do family and is articulate, tells how she lost her husband, son, and sister's husband in the riots and found herself in a refugee camp. "We were getting only rice, no *roti* (bread) and no health care. We didn't know why SEWA was coming at first, but when we said what our needs were, they took us to Ahmedabad. They even flew me in an airplane to Delhi where we stayed in a hotel. We testified before the Women and Child Development Minister how after two years we still were not able to give education to our children. We wanted them to extend the educational benefits up to 18 years. And it happened like that. Now I have a buffalo and I sell milk to the dairy cooperative. Those people like my *Sathi* (giving cooperation in every respect)."[11]

Salwa also has a buffalo and, with good fortune, it was pregnant when she got it, so now she has two. Because she feeds them a diet based on oilseeds, they produce milk high in fat, so she is able to earn more. The scene is lively—all the women are trying to talk at once. Medinah says, "Before we weren't able to speak so many words. Because of SEWA, only now we are able to talk."[12] Sultana has not had good luck. Her buffalo died, so now she is dependent on her widow's pension, with no other income. Nasima, who wears gold jewelry and a matched *shalwar kameez*, tells about her job with an NGO where she experiences harassment from a male boss, who gave her help earlier on but is now blackmailing her. Her son, who was originally under the *Hamare Bachche* program, shifted to a city school at the urging of the NGO but came back after a year. She now bears his educational expenses. I begin to understand that this meeting is not just to tell me their stories but also a session in which the women are

Widows in the village of Kalol eke out a living in isolated refugee housing with occupational training and assistance from SEWA.

bringing their latest concerns to SEWA, a rare opportunity to talk to some higher-ups.

These stories, however, illustrate the ups and downs for women in India and the fact that attractive young widows continue to need mentoring long after their initial trauma. We look at a color composite of the seven family members that Jubeda lost in the riot: mother, father, sister, sister-in-law, granddaughter, brother, brother-in-law. It seems too much for any one individual to bear. Yet with the support of SEWA, she says, along with the others, that she wants to stay in this place. Nobody wants to go back where there is no male protection. "There is no benefit or use to go back. We are happy here."[13] Although they have been accepted in their new home, they consider their houses too far away from the main village of 200 families—but so far away that problems are few. Twenty-five widows of various ages are living in this little settlement, an island of women in rural Gujarat. Still recovering from their losses, they are surprised at the joy they find in the company of women, although somewhat dazed by how far they have come from their previous lives.

Under the *Hamare Bachche* program, 17 of their children are studying at a nearby school, the Shanti Niketan Rotary Vidyalaya, which is 90 percent Hindu. Like other children covered by the program, their education is guaranteed until age 18, a truly remarkable plan. Devised by SEWA and backed

by the federal government, the plan also requires tailoring the education to fit the needs of particular children in local areas. Plenty of negotiation, badgering, and networking are also involved. Because of one principal's friendship with SEWA's founder, Ela Bhatt, the Kalol children were granted admission at this Gujarati/English-medium private school. The children's fees are being supported as a social service project by the local Rotary Club and the school. As their initial academic preparation was not up to standard, extra activities have been introduced to bring them up to the school's average level. However, academics are not everything. Ironically, one young Muslim girl won first prize in a competition to draw the Hindu god Ganapati for the Navratri Festival.

I met with 13 of the children, who were dressed in their school's regulation uniform of neat checked shirts and matching olive pants/skirts. Most of them come to school by auto rickshaw. They do a lot of work at home: cleaning cooking utensils, washing clothes, bringing in vegetables, outside work. But they say they also have time to do homework and have no problems with it. The principal, however, has confided that they are poor in their studies, primarily because they were not well-prepared previously. Asked about future aspirations, a sixth standard boy said he wants to become a boss; a fifth standard boy, a doctor. A third standard girl wants to be a SEWA Hand-Holder. They say a little prayer before we go: "Live and let live. Let there be harmony between us regardless of caste or creed. A feeling of friendship should always flow between us."[14] Yes.

Unfortunately, the three-year government grant that supported the project has run out. SEWA, however, is committed to continuing the Shanta Project using other funds, perhaps obtained from the business sector in India and abroad. SEWA, moreover, has paid a price for its caution in condemning the state government. Thinking perhaps that SEWA's large membership might be helpful to the BJP party, the Gujarat state government attempted to trap SEWA into knuckling under to a charge of corruption in the use of grant funds channeled through the state. When SEWA refused to give in, the state government withheld the funds. Now SEWA has discontinued its partnership with state government and is working toward economic self reliance. In order to pay their bills, SEWA's economic organizations have borrowed from banks at the market rate of 11 percent, which amounts to a self-sacrifice in the Gandhian sense. Although SEWA is both suffering and struggling, it refuses to compromise its values.

But the political climate in Gujarat has grown difficult, not just for SEWA, but for every NGO with a human rights agenda. Budgets have come under scrutiny, and everyone fears government interference in projects aimed at building communal harmony. The BJP, in addition, seeks to destroy the traditional voting block that embraces tribal people, Dalits, and Muslims by turning them against each other. "The whole space for human rights in civil society is completely wiped out," states Reema Nanavaty. "The state

will not support any NGO or any program of human rights. But we cannot compromise on values or ideology. Truth will someday prevail."[15]

Confronting a state government that withholds funds, stops policy support, and spreads negative messages among its membership, SEWA views the struggle as *satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance). "We stood and we battled, and therefore we took a heavy blow," says Nanavaty. Although we always believed in partnership, we no longer have a partnership with the state."[16] SEWA leaders continue to describe themselves as Gandhian. Although certain practices, such as insistence on cloth bags, have fallen by the wayside, other Gandhian principles are faithfully observed, including the idea that remuneration for administrators should be no more than three times what members earn. Thus, it is often difficult, now that SEWA has grown, to attract professionals who share Gandhian values. But many come with that commitment, and others acquire it. However, Nanavaty noted in November 2006, "The last year and a half has been an extremely tough time. Now we must become more like a business organization and turn to the market and the private sector for help."[17]

Yet, SEWA itself superficially resembles a business organization. After years of networking with women's NGOs all over the world, most struggling with minimal budgets and small staffs, I was astounded to realize the scope of SEWA's operations. Taking up four or five buildings in Ahmedabad, SEWA encompasses the SEWA Union (trade groups), the SEWA Academy (training, research, communication), a Rural Marketing Organization (104 co-ops), the SEWA Bank (micro-credit and lending), SEWA Housing Trust, SEWA Legal Services, Gram Vikas (rural network), Banascraft (Kutchi embroidery) program and retail shop, and a finance unit—all run by women, all member-owned, and all economically self-reliant. Surely SEWA, which has built this impressive organization over 32 years, is some sort of model for corporations, co-ops, development projects, and women's liberation worldwide. Yet, I wonder if it could have happened only in Gujarat, whose people, with their strategic location on the shores of the Arabian Sea, have been engaged in trade and entrepreneurship for at least four millennia. Does that explain SEWA's commitment to this significant idea: that everyone should be economically self-sufficient and fully employed, that only then social security is possible?

But SEWA also puts 11 questions before its members at every step. Do we have (1) employment? (2) income? (3) nutritious food? (4) health care? (5) child care? (6) proper housing? (7) assets? (8) organized strength? (9) leadership? (10) self-reliance? (11) education? Some of those questions would be asked only by women. Combining Gandhian principles with the women's movement, the labor movement, and the cooperative movement, SEWA has achieved something truly astonishing: a well-run business/organization/movement that is steadily improving the lives of thousands of women. With such a record, it is not surprising that SEWA has acquired

detractors and political enemies along the way. Although cracks in the NGO network can be mended, most distressing is the question of who is bankrolling those political enemies. Although certain Gujarati businessmen are big funders, unfortunately we must also look to Gujaratis in the United States and the United Kingdom for an answer to that question.

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# CHAPTER 9

# The Gujarat Harmony Project

> To slight a single human being, is to slight those divine powers and thus to harm not only that Being, but with Him, the whole world.
>
> —Mahatma Gandhi

In the years just preceding the communal riots of 2002, Gujarat had suffered from a plague epidemic (1994), a bad drought (2000), and an earthquake (2001). Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) had been hard-pressed to deal with this string of crises. The Carnage of 2002 seemed to be the last straw, particularly when a biased state government made no attempt to halt the violence, which lasted for three weeks. However, earlier disasters meant that NGOs had a history of relief work and knew how to respond to devastation. In 2002, however, their disaster mitigation took on greater dimensions as these organizations, many of them established according to Gandhian ideals, sought to engage in peace building and rehabilitation as well as to meet immediate needs.

Following the riot, NGOs in Ahmedabad and Vadodara (Baroda), with the help of international donors, began to put the pieces back together. One massive effort was a collective, initiated by CARE, which attempted to draw Hindus, Muslims, and Christians into the work of healing.[1] As a response to violence, "The Gujarat Harmony Project stands out as an important example of restorative justice in the face of the failure of the retributive justice system."[2] Selected from organizations that had immediately provided emergency relief, rehabilitating displaced communities, Gujarat Harmony Project (GHP) partners, under the direction of Binoy Acharya of Organization for Development Education (UNNATI),[3] rehabilitated displaced communities, restored livelihoods, and facilitated social reconciliation in areas of Gujarat

disturbed by communal conflict. This partnership brought together 10 development organizations: eight NGOs, one trust working on Muslim women's health issues, and one strongly feminist collective. In addition, UNNATI assisted with program design and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Science provided trauma counseling.

In this chapter, I deal with the 10 GHP organizations: SAATH and Samerth, development organizations based in Ahmedabad; Olakh, a feminist collective based in Vadodara (Baroda); the Gujarat Sarvajanik Trust, a Muslim charitable organization in Ahmedabad; the Kamdar Swasthy-Sharaksha Mandal, a union of Ahmedabad's low-caste textile and sewerage workers; the Ahmedabad Women's Action Group; the Centre for Development, which works with Dalits; Sanchetana, a Community Health and Research Center; the Tribhuvandas Foundation, which deals with health issues for rural people affiliated with the Amul Dairy Cooperative; and St. Xavier Social Service Society, a Christian organization encouraging interaction between Ahmedabad citizens of different castes and religion.

All 10 have dealt in creative ways with the aftermath of violence, proving that it is possible to rebuild trust and deal with trauma in ways that restore people's self-esteem and livelihoods. The work of these groups also illustrates the importance of linking peace building with development work, as one without the other leads either to short-lived recovery or hostile relationships down the road, and sometimes both. Wherever economic issues are uppermost, as they were in Gujarat as the result of destroyed businesses apparently targeted on purpose by rioters, development is essential to the successful restoration of communal harmony.

Binoy Acharya notes that the GHP started from the UNNATI office, which as the strategy partner provided program design components and direction. Money to fund the program came from both CARE and the Dutch Embassy. Acharaya approached all organizations that were running camps and doing relief work about the possibility of participating in the GHP. Organizations had to agree to work within a designated framework and also to already have a certain amount of institutional structure to participate in a foreign-funded project. More than 10 responded, but not all could fit into the projected program. A major criterion was that anything an organization proposed had to be intercommunal in the target population. Gradually, Acharya was able to carve out a design for the project, with each organization, depending on its particular strengths, contributing a different aspect or working in a particular area. Following the recommendations of the Indian American scholar Ashutosh Varshney, the GHP organizations proactively tried to create community interaction in the form of daily level engagement. Training of trainers was held, building on the syncretic traditions of Gujarat, including art, culture, and historical identity formation.

Subhendu Pratihari of CARE described the three main components of the Gujarat Harmony Project: realism, rehabilitation, and reconciliation.

As an attempt at conflict transformation, it was a pioneering effort: working with mixed communities consisting of 90,000 participants and 10,000 households. The reality of the situation was that there had been a complete break between communities and a high incidence of severe mental stress, marked by violence, suicide, and insanity. Rehabilitation included psychosocial care, offered with the help of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Science, as well as life skills education for children and adults and training in how to resolve local conflicts. Reconciliation efforts included (1) promoting intercommunity engagement through organized events and joint holiday celebrations; (2) promoting associational engagement to strengthen civil society and also to create Hindu–Muslim women's micro-finance groups; and (3) building the knowledge of civil society organizations regarding peace and reconciliation through posters, debates, and essay competitions. At the same time as they served their target populations, the partner NGOs were networking and building alliances with international peace practitioners, educational institutions, and NGOs outside the project.[4]

All of the GHP partners engaged in capacity-building, using a tool entitled "Do No Harm," developed by Mary Anderson of Local Capacities for Peace, USA. Any organizational project involving particular programs and attitudes would have to readjust so as to eliminate any negative impact at the program level; it was also necessary to be vigilant for unintended consequences. Activities from all partners fell under the categories of (1) habitat security development; (2) livelihood security; or (3) educational promotion. In pulling the GHP together, CARE was picking up where the Citizen's Initiative, primarily a cooperative relief project, left off. All one-partner organizations had been part of the Citizen's Initiative and had gained experience in working together, even though only eight of them were located in Ahmedabad. They tried to reflect the "Do No Harm" approach in virtually every aspect of their respective projects, which were quite individual and reflected the strengths of each organization.[5]

## SAATH

Founded in 1989, SAATH (Cooperation) is an NGO with the goal of facilitating "participatory and sustainable development processes that would make human settlements equitable living environments, especially for the vulnerable groups."[6] An Integrated Development Program was instigated in the slums of Ahmedabad early on, and until December 2000, most of SAATH's work took place in those urban areas. Following the 2001 earthquake, the organization expanded its work to 12 villages and 4 hamlets in the rural Khadir region of Kutch. In the aftermath of the 2002 communal riots, SAATH began relief work in riot-affected areas of Ahmedabad, which led to long-term development initiatives integrated with efforts to encourage

social reconciliation. The SAATH team numbers 252, with 70 percent of the team members being women, reflecting the critical role of women in both development and peace-building. Ahmedabad, a textile city and the location of Gandhi's ashram, traditionally has been a place where positive interaction between Hindus and Muslims took place. In recent years, however, stereotypes encouraged by television and extremist politics have flourished.

The 2002 riots caught SAATH, a large NGO with many years of working in the Ahmedabad slums, by surprise. Although not operating in any area with a Muslim population, they immediately joined a citizen's initiative to supply food and household necessities to refugees. This work, carried out primarily by Hindus, laid the foundation for later projects, including the development of a new community-based organization. "For the Hindu women, going into a Muslim-dominated area during the peak of the riots wearing the vermilion *bindi* mark on the forehead, a visible sign of Hindu identity, was in itself a significant challenge. Many Muslim women regarded them as 'the enemy,' and, unsurprisingly, questioned their intentions."[7] Chinmayi, a social worker, recollected: "It wasn't easy, but SAATH said we must do it. For 15 days I didn't tell my husband what I was doing. We took clothes, food, medicines at first and later began working with pre-school children."[8] They first shared stories and songs with children as a way of dealing with trauma, then began to deal with ongoing fear felt by women, and later extended their work to men.

SAATH had already developed community-based organizations in Hindu areas, so they were able to involve the women of Sakhi Mahila Mandal (SMM; a federation of self-help groups registered in 1996) and the young people of Ekta Yuvak Mandal (EYM; both men and women) in riot relief and rehabilitation projects in seven neighborhoods. Of these, two locations in Guptanagar, which was 10 percent Muslim before the riots, saw violence: although perpetrators from outside started the dirty work, local residents took it over. Muslims from there fled to refugee camps, and many have since moved to Juhapura, which, although previously a mixed area, has become a ghettoized "safe area" for Muslims. Today, women from SMM maintain projects in two neighborhoods of Guptanagar, and EYM manages projects in Behrampura. With their help, a new community-based organization, Sankalp Mitra Mandal, has been founded in Juhapura, the Muslim community. In all locations, women and youth carry out most of the reconciliation work and receive high-quality training as part of a "Do No Harm" program.

According to Rajendra Joshi, Director of SAATH, "damage done to children is the worst. They will grow up thinking that violence is acceptable. They hear their parents talking about what they have participated in. So we started working with some schools."[9] SAATH developed a Life Skills program, to get children to reflect and think critically about what had happened, and a Human Rights education program to train teachers. It took a

Kite-maker sells his wares outside the Muslim ghetto of Juhapura, where SAATH-mentored projects help to dispel stereotypes.

year for normalcy to set in, although SAATH began work in August 2003 just as soon as the refugee camps were disbanded (June 2003). Most rebuilding support came from Muslim relief agencies, with 30 percent offered by the NGO-CBO sector. The Gujarat Harmony Project has led to new forms of Hindu–Muslim cooperation. "Before the riots, we had looked on Muslim relief agencies as just that—only providing relief—but now that we've begun cooperating, we've discovered that we have things to learn from them as well. For instance, we've been able to work with the *madrasa* teachers on Life Skills. *Madrasas* are now places where we can talk about human rights and help to disrupt stereotypes."[10]

SAATH itself is less visible now, for the community-based organizations have taken over the ongoing work of reconciliation. But even while maintaining a low profile, the parent NGO must negotiate with criminals, bootleggers, and slum lords to make sure that the trust-building work will not be disturbed. Improvements in Guptanagar, a Hindu community, are impressive, for streets are paved, houses have toilets, and street lights have been installed. These projects have been carried out with the persistent efforts of residents, including the women of Sakhi Mahila Mandal. Their Home Management program for 400 women currently provides training for housemaids, and after a police check and health clearance, licenses them in child care, use of appliances, first aid, fire-fighting, and rescue. Dossiers are prepared for each woman, and SMM signs the contract with employers.

Women pay 3,000 rupees for training but can obtain a loan from a revolving credit fund and pay back 5 percent of each paycheck. Working women deposit another 7 percent in a small credit bank for their own use. The SMM Credit Coop, which is self-sustaining, has a 98 percent payback rate; all members are shareholders and receive a 5 percent annual dividend. Everything is carefully monitored and detailed records kept. With considerable pride, one SMM member observed, "We are not helpless. We are not asking for anything just because we are poor."[11]

Juhapura, which absorbed several thousand Muslim refugees, is a rather different story. Lanes are unpaved and the neighborhood overcrowded. Local members of the Sankalp Mitra Mandal, however, manage all activities. A preschool offers three classes of 32 children each, and their curriculum, if not their building, is equal to any in the Western world. Elaborate lesson plans, based on Montessori principles, involve the celebration of all religious festivals. A parents' meeting is held weekly to discuss human rights in the context of their children's activities. On the day I visited, along with tiffins of food, students were taking home kites in honor of Uttarayan. Because most of the kites are made by Muslim families, this festival offered an opportunity to recognize symbiosis between religious communities.

At first parents were reluctant to come to meetings, but now they come regularly. Student progress is monitored and careful records kept, along with portfolios of their work. Psychosocial group activities, prescribed by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Science (NIMHANS), a Bangalore-based organization, were also introduced for adolescent boys, women and girls, and the elderly as part of the overall Gujarat Harmony Project.

In Juhapura, too, a savings and credit program has helped to reduce the vulnerability of those who lost homes and livelihood. Interest-free loans allow beneficiaries to repay in easy installments. A community fund, formed from the interest, is used for future development of the area. One benefit of this system is to "discourage people from asking for more than their requirement as well as to instigate them to restart life normally again!"[12] Loan committees were formed, with each committee responsible for identifying and verifying beneficiaries, signing contracts and disbursing loans. Repayment of loans has been less successful here, perhaps because both men and women are involved. Reconciliation efforts, however, continue via the medium of development programs. A Community Health Program aimed at preventive health care and slum-specific health concerns tends to long-term health and education needs of women and children through an outpatient dispensary, programs for mother and child care, and tuberculosis (TB) monitoring.

In order to change attitudes, every program aims at disrupting stereotypes in day-to-day activities. This practice is built into schools, training, credit activities, health, sports, and festival celebrations. At Juhapura, youth have

Muslim child from Juhapura takes home an Uttarayan kite at a Montessori preschool, founded on a curriculum of tolerance and respect.

been involved in the development initiative. In addition, a youth team was mobilized to participate in sports events, including matches between teams from different areas of the city. "The non-Muslim players had till then felt that Juhapura was a 'restricted zone' for them, and they had never dreamt that one day they would be playing a match in that area."[13] SMM workers continually ask questions: What things connect people? Which things pull them apart? What are shared cultural elements and histories? The workers try to educate each other as well as those whom they serve. A group of SMM women say they have lots of educational opportunities in their work with SAATH. They want all women to get the same opportunities to "come out" into the community and improve themselves. More livelihood options,

they believe, are the way to accomplish that. In that way, good practices can be reflected to others in the community.[14] In this spirit, SMM refused to succumb to demands for separate tailoring classes for girls from different religious communities.

## SAMERTH

While SAATH worked in the southern part of Juhapura, Samerth (Enabling) brought its peace-building projects to the eastern and western parts of that huge Muslim ghetto. They began work in March 2002, coordinating relief and providing items such as plastic water tanks, sanitary napkins for women, utensil kits, and buckets for washing clothes and bathing; a bore well was sunk. Police harassed the relief workers, checking vehicles to see what was being brought into the camps and refusing to give permits for more than four days at a time. Later, Samerth focused on educational issues, paying fees for children to attend their previous schools and taking documents for others to new schools. "There was a possibility that their parents would just give up," explained Gazala Paul, Managing Trustee.[15] Because widows had no livelihood, they were offered sewing projects, which involved stitching school uniforms. Parent–teacher forums were held to discuss day-to-day problems. In 31 mixed Hindu–Muslim schools, Samerth introduced curricular peace modules and founded Peace Clubs.

Livelihood kits, funded by CARE, were provided for 136 different trades, including carpentry tools, sewing machines, garage tools, air conditioner repair, watch repair, electronic goods, handcarts, weighing scales, cycle repair, embroidery machines, interlock and overlock machines, ironsmithing, and painting. Large grants were needed by some refugees, like the 56 mattress makers whose working capital required cotton material and stuffing. Among women, savings and microcredit groups were initiated. Once their basic needs were taken care of, displaced women could begin talking about domestic violence, reproductive rights, and personal law.

A variety of cultural events were designed to encourage unity. Samerth sponsored a Drishti Theatre initiative featuring plays that dealt with issues of communalism and victimization of women. Four hundred women saw a play entitled "E Loko" (Those People), followed by an actor–audience dialogue. GHP-related organizations also put on a play by Hiren Gandhi, an activist-playwright, entitled "Sanskruti ka Safar Nama" (Cultural Journey). At a GHP-sponsored concert, "In Saan Hain Hum" (We Are Human), more than 500 men and women stood up and held hands, many weeping, in response to songs developed about communal harmony. Another cultural project involved a *mushaira* (traditional Urdu poetry recitation) at which poets from all over India recited poems dealing with tolerance and unity. Qawwali programs (Sufi music) featured local people who sang their own songs about religious integration, as well as songs of Sufi saints. Children

were encouraged to make puppets out of scraps and to put on a show. Young people made up a play entitled "Break the Border" and performed it in an area where violence had occurred. These events, attended by both Hindus and Muslims, offered entertainment but also caused the audience to think seriously about what had happened and how they could prevent it from happening again.

## OLAKH

Olakh (Identity), an avowed feminist organization in Vadodara, emerged in 1996 out of Nimisha Desai's concerns about the lack of support structures and emotional space for women in crisis. This group of women from a spectrum of religious communities, castes, and class backgrounds, engages in networking and advocacy on women's issues, as well as action-based research. Olakh offers training in violence mitigation and peace building for other organizations, as well as a number of other programs for women. Their library and documentation center contain materials in three languages. Olakh has also initiated a feminist counseling center, which offers both face-to-face counseling and telephone counseling. Like other NGOs, Olakh provided material aid and emotional support to victims of the 2001 earthquake, the 2002 Carnage, and the 2005 and 2006 floods. This feminist organization is wholeheartedly committed to social reconciliation and conflict transformation at the community level, and that commitment is reflected in every project they undertake.

Four days after the 2002 Gujarat Carnage ended, women of Olakh began to mobilize and ask what they could do. "Feminism teaches us to be more human," observed Mamta Baxi, a professional social worker.[16] Although they faced resistance from their own families, the women of Olakh began to track down people they had worked with previously and linked up with a local network of individuals and organizations, Shanti Abiyan PUCL. Their initial work involved relief in 64 pockets of Vadodara and fact-finding in refugee camps. The next step was to institute mobile libraries.

"How can we think of reading? We are traumatized!" refugees responded initially. But they had nothing to do, nothing to occupy their minds. Young people picked up the idea first and requested jokes. But soon people began to select materials describing positive human relationships. They couldn't always finish a book, but just reading seemed to open things up. Olakh held discussions: What did women feel? What did they remember? How did their experiences relate to the characters in the books? People were soon able to talk about their problems and realized that not all their trauma stemmed from the Carnage. Pairs of Hindu and Muslim women working together on projects helped to break stereotypes and dispel myths. For two and a half months they were able to go about their work unimpeded because the government relaxed the curfew only for women, fearing that more violence

Olakh social worker Runki Mukherjee and director Nimisha Desai discuss a project for their feminist collective, which continues to bring Hindu and minority women together.

might emerge from men. Teams of two would go into the lanes, call people out, read them two stories, and sing one song of peace building, then raise a discussion. At first, it was "very hard," and they had to explain over and over again, "We are not the perpetrators."[17]

On March 8, 2003, Olakh brought 65 Dalit and Muslim women who had not spoken to each other for a year to the Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad to initiate the process of intercommunity dialogue. The solidarity engendered by the trip assisted in the building of a collective, which, in turn, has fostered women's leadership at the larger community level. Two initiatives emerged from the collective: micro-credit and a campaign for justice. Community workers from Olakh are known as *Samaj Shilpis*, sculptors of the community. Olakh sees women not as victims of violence, but as actors leading the process of reconciliation and peace. It employs techniques of dialogue, group-based interventions, and information sharing on laws, policies, and rights, to extend women's skills and knowledge, and develop their perspectives on key issues.[18] To promote peace in riot-affected communities, Olakh organized Maitri Yatra (friendship rally) and performed a street play, "Lassonwala Chacha," about a garlic seller who is also a peace advocate. Social reconciliation programs have also been built around sports, painting and theater workshops, speak-out sessions, and exposure visits.

Olakh continues its reconciliation work in three urban communities and one rural area. In Kalyan Nagar, a huge slum with 60 percent Hindus and 40 percent Muslims, Olakh facilitated a joint struggle to save an illegal homes from being demolished. In Maniyar Mohalla, an urban area in the walled city, Olakh tried to build dialogue and establish a collective, but had difficulty attracting equal Hindu representation. Fagvelnagar, housing the poorest of the poor, is located on the river, but suffers from an unusual cultural divide: Hindus and Muslims from Gujarat live in one lane, and counterparts from Uttar Pradesh (UP) occupy another. Only the UP Muslims attacked and burned the Hindu neighborhood. When violence occurred for the first time in 50 years in Maretha, a village 15 kilometers away, Muslims fled. To encourage their return and acceptance, Olakh started meetings in the different lanes to build a women's collective. Because a gathering space is important for women, Olakh next developed a Creative Learning Center with a library, sports equipment, and musical instruments—a place for women and girls to support each other and discover their common identity beyond caste, class, and religion. Although the village *panchayat* threatened and harassed team members and gave Olakh eight days to leave the village, local women declared, "If Olakh leaves, we will become Olakh."[19]

Olakh's "Friendship Pots" symbolize the value-based education underlying all of their reconciliation work. Making space for *Dalits* is difficult in Gujarat, where caste issues are strong and so-called upper castes fear *Dalit*–Muslim solidarity. Each woman is given a pot into which she occasionally puts small change. When it is filled, she should use the money to help somebody who is not a blood relation. "When you use your hands to help somebody, you will not harm them."[20] Women made the pots and painted them in an inter-community workshop because "positive energy is generated from creative work." From such activities, *Dalits* and Muslims began to come together; then Hindus gradually joined them. Computer classes organized in Kalyan Nagar have similarly brought youth from different communities together six days a week. On the seventh, Olakh organizes a study circle or shows a film. In spite of men complaining that women are questioning and speaking too much—"learning to sit on chairs," Olakh persists in creating dialogue about all kinds of violence, showing how the continuum of violence relates to women.

## THE GUJARAT SARVAJANIK TRUST

The Gujarat Sarvajanik Trust, a Muslim organization that came into existence only after the 2002 riots, is headed by Afzal Memon, a businessman and Chief Trustee of the Mariyam Maternity Hospital, located in Jamalpur, a Muslim area of Ahmedabad. With the help of funding from the Gujarat Harmony Project, the Trust set up a trauma center and provided psychiatric treatment in the immediate aftermath of the Carnage. In addition, they

provided educational classes and paid the tuition for riot victims to build up their confidence and give them work skills. Cultural programs were also offered in an effort to once again bring Hindus and Muslims together to celebrate each other's festivals according to long-standing tradition. Confidence building was an essential aspect for both communities, particularly those living in border areas. In those areas, sewing classes were established for both Hindu and Muslim women so that they would understand and experience the concept of coexistence. However, most of those areas remain polarized.

Now, unfortunately, development funds have dried up. CARE stopped funding the Gujarat Harmony Project after 18 months, and so it is impossible to continue the programs started earlier. It is difficult for any Muslim organization, no matter how peaceful its goals, to obtain funding from abroad. According to Memon, at present 90 percent of Muslims in Gujarat are living hand to mouth. He recollects that "Gandhi and Nehru promised Muslims in 1947 that they could live here independently, say their prayers and be free to live as their religion said—no one can interfere. But at present the situation is topsy turvy."[21] More than 50 percent of the subcontinent's Muslims still live in India because they can live better there than in Pakistan, Memon says. However, he notes also that the Muslim community in Gujarat lives under continuing threat. "When the Muslim community is stable, the majority rises up and tries to destroy them. Someone on top sees you coming up a few steps and throws you down. When we will come again, the same thing will happen again. Every ten years there are riots." Because serious anti-Muslim riots occurred in Gujarat in 1969, 1982, 1992, and 2002, Memon believes that the riots are preplanned to bankrupt Muslims.

The economic prosperity of some Muslims is apparently a thorn in the side of the Hindu nationalists. Before the 2002 riots, Muslims controlled the liquor trade in Gujarat. Now that very lucrative business is in the hands of Hindus. In addition, thousands of small businesses were destroyed by arson:

> Human Rights Watch viewed several police posts less than fifty feet from the site of burnt Muslim-owned restaurants, places of business, and hotels. Without exception the Hindu-owned establishments neighboring the destroyed structures were unscathed. The same pattern was observed by India's National Human Rights Commission during its fact-finding mission in March 2002.[22]

A weekly Indian news magazine, *The Week*, reported that 1,679 houses, 1,965 shops, and 21 *godowns* (warehouses) were burned, 204 shops were looted, and 76 shrines destroyed.[23] Yet, said Memon pointedly, "Our prophet is not giving us permission to hurt even one person in the world. What will happen we can't say, but now the going is not good." The

Sarvajanik Trust is currently inactive, but Memon still believes that "harmony will come if a ruler is just." Currently, however, the state government in Gujarat is saffron from top to bottom, which means that Muslims continue to live in fear.

## KAMDAR SWASTHY-SHARAKSHA MANDAL

The Kamdar Swasthy-Sharaksha Mandal (KSSM), a union of Ahmedabad's low-caste textile and sewerage workers, is essentially a Dalit organization covering 34 slums in five districts of Gujarat: Gandhinagar, Kheda, Vadodara, Surat, and Ahmedabad. As might be expected, KSSM fights for basic rights and dignity of workers, as well as countering exploitation and offering literacy and other educational opportunities. Although government schemes exist to aid low-income municipal workers, they don't get the intended benefits because they don't know about them. Sewerage workers face a number of occupational hazards, particularly manhole workers, who have no equipment, not even oxygen masks, yet must deal with poisonous gases. Recently, KSSM filed a successful petition on behalf of manhole workers and won their case before the High Court, so now the government must provide safety equipment and measure sewerage gases before workers enter.

At the time of the riots, even before the Gujarat Harmony Project was initiated, KSSM began work immediately in areas where both Hindus and Muslims were living, right in the middle of the violence. They first contacted all affected workers, both Hindus and Muslims, and established relief camps offering rehabilitation and restoration of livelihoods. Compensation did not come from the government until after six months. Although there had been riots previously in Ahmedabad, the psychic trauma was worse this time, so separate camps were established for Hindus and Muslims. The marginalized areas were affected most because there was no proper infrastructure there. Yet, KSSM challenged this ghettoization. When the riots stopped, the people did not return to their old neighborhoods, despite the fact that there might have been only one or two culprits out of 400 to 600 people. So KSSM, with the help of the Gujarat Harmony Project, established offices in both Hindu and Muslim areas and organized "corner meetings" in the neighborhood border areas. At first, no one wanted to come. Then 15 to 20 Muslim men began coming. Slowly they gained confidence and began to come and meet each other. Then 125 persons, both Hindus and Muslims, were coming to the meetings.[24]

The next step was for KSSM to link up with the city government, including the police and the collector, to provide security and rations for the low-income people living in these marginal neighborhoods. Finally cultural programs were organized, with the Islami Relief Committee taking responsibility for the east side of the city and KSSM working with the western sector. Hindus, both adults and children, were encouraged to join in the celebration

of the Muslim holiday of Eid. A Muslim clergyman spoke about his religion in a Hindu area. Hindus and Muslims together celebrated Diwali that year. Before the visit of K. P. S. Gill, Government of India Security Advisor, Hindus and Muslims both engaged in *shramdan* (work without pay) to clean up burned houses. At that time, KSSM organized one big rally and *bhojan* (group dinner) in the border area of Bapunagar. Misra's strategy was "to break the border": no police should come there except Gill's bodyguards. Four thousand gathered to hear Gill speak, and there were no incidents, only people weeping and remembering. Gill urged the assembled Hindus and Muslims to rebuild their shops, and after that day people began to talk with each other and gradually normal interaction began. Today, everything is stable in marginalized areas of the city.

Peace training for youth has been another KSSM project. Groups of Hindu and Muslim young people continue to meet monthly. A similar program of adult meetings has included speakers and dialogue about what caused the riots. Significant answers to that question included "anti-social elements," "crack-minded men," and "unemployment." At a Garbha for women, Hindus and Muslims together danced Gujarati folk dances. "Today, harmony is coming, but we want that harmony to stay for a long time," says H. P. Misra, general secretary of the union. From time to time, KSSM still tries to hold border meetings. The union also currently maintains 10 Peace Committees as well as savings groups for Hindu and Muslim women. In November 2006, Misra was able to say, "Now people are absolutely normal. They have forgotten the riots. No one should remind them."

## AWAG

The Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG), part of the Gujarat Harmony Project, actually began its work in dealing with riots as early as 1986–8, with workshops that encouraged both Hindus and Muslims to recognize that most riots are caused by politicos and *goondas* (thugs). Hindu Dalit women were taught to avoid riot violence by staying away from crowded places, keeping children in the house, and not passing on outrageous rumors. In 1992, however, more severe riots occurred and AWAG, which has 50 percent Muslims in its target groups, was able to gain entrance only into Muslim communities with their "Save Humanity" workshops. These had positive impact, as shown by the fact that in the Bapunagar area of Ahmedabad, there were no riots up to February 2002. Before, a little flare-up in the Old City would start a riot in Bapunagar, and several small flare-ups in the city occurred between 1992 and 2002.

When first contacted about the Gujarat Harmony Project, AWAG refused, insisting, "This kind of riot cannot be stopped." But when GHP came back again, AWAG reconsidered its position and said, "It's true that we can't make Ahmedabad riot-free, but we can at least try to bring smiles on the

faces of women and enable them to live in comparative peace." AWAG joined the Project and took on the job of income generation research and training. Workshops were done first with Hindus, then with Muslims, and then with mixed Hindu–Muslim groups. The trainers raised questions to make participants think about their poverty and gender: "As women, are you better off after these riots? Did religion touch your lives deeply?" More questions were raised: "Who is a good Hindu? Who is a good Muslim?"

After each workshop, a committee of 10 women, 5 Hindus and 5 Muslims, continued to meet once a month as leaders of their communities. Their job was to spread the message of harmony, as well as encourage women to get three kinds of help from local centers: legal aid, social counseling, and psychological counseling. The project has continued on in various ways with new groups of women and groups of girls. The emphasis now is on critical thinking and decision making through discussing hypothetical situations. Ila Pathak, AWAG director, states strongly that "Work itself is not the solution in a post-riot situation. Women who came back to work couldn't work as rapidly. They had lost their will, as well as their savings."[25] In many cases, trauma counseling and even periods of residence in mental hospitals or widows' homes were required before women recovered enough to work as efficiently as they once had. Yet, AWAG also offered training in export-quality stitching so that women could work at home, account for their own money, and avoid exploitation.

## SANCHETANA

Sanchetana was a natural choice for the Gujarat Harmony Project because it had been working since 1982 in the Millatnagar slum where its founder, Dr. Hanif Lakdawalla, first established a medical clinic for the urban poor. With the help of 11 women health workers recruited from the communities in which it was operating, Sanchetana has gradually observed a drop in infant and mother mortality rates, a lessening of domestic violence and sexual abuse of adolescent girls, and an improvement in hygiene and attendance of girls at schools. In its work with the poor, the organization grounds itself in social justice, gender equity, women's empowerment, and secularism. It is dedicated to making its target audience aware of the causes of poverty and to organizing them into cohesive groups, all the while honoring a commitment to rise above considerations of caste, creed, and gender to realize the right of the poor to live a dignified and humane life.[26]

Sanchetana's work with the Muslim community began in 1992 in the wake of riots that followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Members of Sanchetana reached refugee camps to offer medical help to the sick and wounded and to provide displaced men, women, and children with food and other necessary commodities. Muslim social organizations helped to organize services in the camps, so then Sanchetana turned its attention to

distribution of food grains among both Hindus and Muslims living in slums where normal life had been disrupted because of the violence.[27] In the aftermath of the Carnage, consultations with educated Muslims in the major cities of Gujarat produced the realization "that a vast majority of Muslims are poor and illiterate, making them vulnerable to the machinations of politicians and the clergy who have shown little interest in the welfare and uplift of common Muslims."[28]

To address this situation, Dr. Lakdawalla founded the Institute for Initiative in Education (IFIE) to tackle problems of education, employment, social reforms, and intercommunal relationships. This work continued in partnership with the Gujarat Harmony Project in three Muslim slum areas: Danilimda, Behrampura, and Jamalpura. With the influx of refugees into those areas, the population swelled and poverty became more acute. Today, IFIE sponsors a public library and computer classes, as well as leadership development camps and cultural programs for young people in 72 youth organizations. Attendance is encouraged at interreligious festivals; in addition, workshops and seminars are held to promote interfaith understanding. One of IFIE's most successful projects is low-cost coaching and tutorial classes for students, which are attended in equal number by Hindus and Muslims.[29]

Sanchetana continues to study and document the violations of rights that occur during and after riots, and to advocate for respect of rights as enshrined in the Indian Constitution, as well as in various international conventions and treaties. The organization also facilitates periodic meetings of a state-level network of NGOs and individuals willing to work for secularism and communal harmony.

## CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Headed by Rafi Malek, the Centre for Development (CD) worked in Abadnagar with Hindu Bhils, who were attacked in retaliation by Muslims, as well as with Muslims who suffered there at the hands of Dalits influenced by the Sangh Parivar. As part of the Gujarat Harmony Project, the CD started a dialogue with youth aggressors, many of whom had engaged in looting and burning. After three months, they began to come from both sides to a CD-established activity center with games and a library in a border area between Muslim and Hindu houses. In a project initiated by Malek's Hindu wife, Mira, 28 Hindu, Dalit, and Muslim youth were taken to a camp at Panchmari, a hill station in Madhya Pradesh, where they lived in tents, trekked, played cricket, and bathed in a water fall. The group bonded as they first asked, "Whose forest is this? Whose water is this?" and then progressed to harder questions. Both victims and aggressors got angry and talked about what they had suffered and what they had done to each other. As they exchanged allegations, myths and stereotypes emerged, as well as specific confessions and general admissions of guilt.

Another group of 32 youths without proper jobs were taken to Mount Abu for a discussion of how they have become soft targets for both Hindu and Muslim nationalist groups by accepting payment from them. By November 2006, CD had worked in some way with 436 more young people, involving them in day-to-day activities, study circles, lectures on current issues, and critical thinking with facilitators on sensitive topics. Other interventions include celebrating each other's festivals, all-religion prayers, and peace rallies. On Ganesh Chaturthi, Muslims joined in the Hindu procession to Kankaria Lake. On Muharram, Dalits joined the Shi'a procession with *tazias* and set up stands to distribute water and lemon juice. Because such sharing of festivals is counter to Sangh Parivar ideology, Hindu nationalists mounted resistance in the form of a Rath Yatra. Dalits, in turn, went door to door contacting people and asking them not to participate in it; no one did. Malek believes it is important to work with young people, for in every type of communal violence, youth play a destructive role. "The aim is to channel their energies in a positive direction."[30]

*Blood Under Saffron*, a study done by an Ahmedabad Dalit activist, showed that of 1,577 people arrested during the Carnage, 747 were Dalits and 797 were from other backward castes or were Muslims. Nearly all were used as militants by upper-caste instigators. Yet, these days, it is difficult to talk openly about these issues. "Any organization has to move strategically to do any community harmony work." The CD is encouraging two or three people, who can serve both Dalits and Muslims but are not connected to any political party, to run in the Ahmedabad municipal elections. "Without political intervention of the right sort, the sustainability of the harmony process in is question. Many organizations talk about justice and peace, but one must precede the other," says Malek. Smaller NGOs continually face a funding crisis, particularly those focused on peace and human rights. Although money is being drawn in the name of the community, it is not being given to smaller organizations. According to Malek, "The key is day-to-day activity over a long period which doesn't require a lot of funding."[31]

## TRIBHUVANDAS FOUNDATION

The Tribhuvandas Foundation, based in Anand between Vadodara and Ahmedabad, was brought into the Gujarat Harmony Project because it serves 590 villages connected through the Amul Dairy milk cooperative. Here was a ready-made network in an area where the VHP and Bajrang Dal have a presence, yet where every village also has a cooperative scheme in place. The Foundation had a reputation for being above religion and politics, and having the support of all communities. Hence, it was in a good position to take up the GHP work even though health was its major focus. As part of the GHP effort, leaders of village cooperatives participated in workshops and stated their positions directly. Harmony messages were

delivered effectively in live interactions. According to Dr. Viren P. Doshi, current director of the Foundation's health program, "It definitely calmed things down."[32]

After the GHP funding stopped, the Foundation did not continue with any additional harmony projects; nor is the Foundation connected with the current political situation. Dr. Doshi believes that the project did help to resolve the tensions in this town, which is 80–100 miles from Godhra along a direct railway line.

Reflecting on the current mood, Dr. Doshi commented:

> Now that fever is gone. It was a momentary, rash reaction. People have realized on both sides that violence is not the way out. Minor incidents do take place at times, but generally everything is OK. There seems to be a downscaling of terrorism everywhere. Recently it has declined, perhaps because funding has stopped. When terrorists come from outside, that has repercussions everywhere, but the separatist movements seems to have gone backstage. Generally, rural communities live peacefully unless instigating factors come from outside. Left to themselves, there are no issues. They know how to live with each other. But no one wants to leave them to themselves; that is the problem.[33]

Despite turbulent times, the Amul Dairy has recorded phenomenal growth in milk procurement, membership, upgrading of products, and introduction of new products. Muslims are equally represented in Amul, equally contribute to its growth, and equally receive benefits. Similarly, although employees of the Tribhuvandas Foundation are Christian, Hindu, and Muslim, no problems occur within the organization.

## ST. XAVIER'S SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY

Founded in 1976, St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS) has for 30 years reached out to the poor in Ahmedabad in matters of community health, disaster mitigation, and capacity building. Father Paul d'Souza describes his organization as peace-based and "engaged in healthy interaction between people of different castes and creeds."[34] Even before the Gujarat Harmony Project was initiated, SXSSS was taking an integrated approach to peace building through adult community organizations, health programs, and school curricula. St. Xavier's parochial School and College are both prestigious Ahmedabad institutions. In addition, the Society maintains a Centre for Orientation, Research and Documentation with materials in both Gujarati and English. Like other organizations, SXSSS actively mobilized resources to cope with the chain of disasters that struck Gujarat over a period of five years. Their efforts included both immediate relief activities

and long-term rehabilitation interventions. As an outgrowth of that work, the Society has developed a Rural Community Health Workers Training Program to broaden the knowledge and skills of rural women, to enable them to handle basic health needs, and to facilitate referral services.

After the initiation of the Gujarat Harmony Project, SXSSS focused on mixed communities, such as Jalampuri ni Chali (a tenement area). There, a Peace Committee was formed to deal with day-to-day problems. The Peace Committee cooperates with the police to ensure the security of the neighborhood. Inviting police inspectors to their functions and engaging the police in their activities helps to diminish fear of the police, as very few Muslims are policemen. To help people understand each other, SXSSS also organizes joint celebrations at the time of important religious festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi and Ratna (both Hindu) or Moharram (Shi'a Muslim). Women's self-help groups have been organized around savings and microcredit. From there, women are able to move on to livelihood and health issues; all groups are required to have both Hindu and Muslim members. Programs for teenage girls include sewing training and sexual health awareness. Boys' youth groups engage in sports tournaments and action projects. A citizens' association, the Sabermati Nagrik Manch, has been organized to include all the slums along the riverbank, so that Hindus and Muslims can find a common platform for their concerns, which include floods, rights, and development projects.

With its 25 core staff and 60 social workers, SXSSS is able to mount an extensive program to deal with health and the environment. Psychosocial care is a big part of that program, particularly in the wake of the 2002 Carnage. Therapy groups involving both Hindus and Muslims continue to meet, although participants are not told that it is a form of treatment. In addition to trainings and workshops, health camps for TB and AIDS patients are held frequently. The society's efforts are funded primarily by Caritas (a German organization), although some funds are also obtained locally. When asked whether the situation is now under control, "Father d'Souza replied, "Not so! Not so! Small interventions help a lot, but the mind of the community needs to be shaped for a long time. It is not so easy to heal the wounds."

Although NGO staff in both Ahmedabad and Vadodara themselves experience trauma from the work they do, they are better able to identify symptoms and to work at healing themselves. More worrisome are state efforts to crack down on NGOs pursuing a human rights agenda. In 2004, police began "visiting several NGOs including Christian and Muslim institutions across the state and making all kinds of enquiries about the receipt of foreign funds, activities of the organizations, etc. This, it is understood, is under the direct supervision of the State's Home Ministry."[35] Political parties holding extremist religious views find it in their interest to pit caste

and religious communities against each other. Yet, organizations involved in the Gujarat Harmony Project are determined to prevent such attacks from happening again. Although more than five years have passed since the 2002 riots, healing goes on against political odds.

In spring 2006, however, riots once again erupted in Vadodara in response to the provocative removal, by the BJP-dominated local government, of a Muslim *dargah* in the old city. State-sponsored violence is perhaps inevitable where the state government and local police together adhere to a nationalist Hindu agenda against Muslims as the demonized "Other." The Gujarat Carnage offered ample evidence of Hindutva strategies at work:

> Investigations by the Concerned Citizens' Tribunal, headed by former Indian Supreme Court judges, revealed that senior ministers from Gujarat Chief Minister Narenda Modi's cabinet organized a meeting in Lunawada village of Sabarkantha district just hours after the attack in Godhra on February 27, 2002. At the meeting a plan was drawn up and disseminated to the top fifty leaders of the BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal and VHP detailing the methods and strategies for the revenge killings that followed the Godhra massacre. The instructions were then methodically carried out by the police.[36]

Nor has the violence ended for other minority communities in Gujarat. Christians in Dangs district were told by Sangh Parivar members to "give up luring tribals,"[37] and VHP members attacked a health care center in Limbdi village on the opening day of the dispensary. "The attackers ransacked the building, tore down the boards that listed the names of the Christian donors, and wrote pro-Hindu slogans on the doors in red paint."[38] Attempts to "reconvert" tribals from Christianity to Hinduism have also occurred.[39]

Communalism in Gujarat evokes eerie echoes of fascism, disquieting to those who stubbornly adhere to the Nehruvian/Gandhian vision of a kinder, gentler India. But when the civic nationalism of Nehru's secular India and the egalitarian morality of Gandhi's Hindu India are both portrayed as unacceptable by those in power, communal harmony begins to seem like a remote possibility. Indeed, the truth of the matter is that NGOs committed to secular idealism and Hindu and Muslim organizations touting religious nationalism are locked in a mortal struggle for the soul of India:

> India's history has shown two broad possibilities of dealing with that diversity: a theoretically untidy improvising pluralist approach, or a neatly rationalist and purifying exclusivism. India's history has also,

> for the first time in all its millennial depth, given the present generation of Indians the responsibility to choose between them. They must decide what they wish to build out of the wreckage of Ayodhya's Babri Masjid.[40]

For the sake of the common good, and the constitutional guarantees promised members of minority religions (composing 19.5 percent of the Indian population), the better choice would be a monument to unity and reconciliation.

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# CHAPTER 10

# Recovering the Future

> Instead of trying to build religious tolerance on the good faith or conscience of a small group of de-ethnicised, middle-class politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals, a more serious venture would be to explore the philosophy, symbolism and theology of tolerance nascent in the faiths of citizens.
>
> —Ashis Nandy

In this final chapter, we will look at harmony-oriented programs mounted by eight other organizations, six local and two international, which have developed ongoing programs to build peaceful relations in Gujarat on a long-term basis: UNNATI, which works primarily with Dalits; Utthan, a development organization that works specifically in the coastal Bhal region of Gujarat; Jan Vikas, an organization dedicated to empowering Dalits; Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI), a women's collective working in three rural districts; SahrWaru, a women's action and resource unit; Prashant, a new center for human rights, justice, and peace; Oxfam, with ongoing violence mitigation work in Gujarat; and CARE, which continues projects to restore harmony in Gujarat. Finally, we will assess possibilities for restoring harmony and reclaiming the future in this western state of India.

## UNNATI

In 1989, Binoy Acharya came to UNNATI, an organization that serves Dalits and is founded according to the values of Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar.

Increasing communalization, Acharya believes, is a response to affluence. Ram Puniyani explains this statement: the ideology of the feudal classes has been passed on to affluent middle classes, petty industrialists, rich peasants and prosperous professionals—all of whom have gained maximum benefit from the "development" that has taken place during the last few decades. Wishing to perpetuate the present inequalities, these groups "have 'discovered' this ideology, activated it and are proceeding with aggression to stand by it with a full realization of its being the best option for them during the present time."[1] For such groups, combining economic goals with religious ideology has proved a short cut to political success.

In our interview, Acharya described four types of religious identity in India today: (1) triumphant religiosity (my god is better than your god), which celebrates by undermining others, as seen in the Bajrang Dal and communal politics; (2) ritual religiosity (follow your own way with no tolerance for deviation but blindness to others); (3) secular religiosity (my god is good and so is yours); and (4) reformist religiosity (reform within traditional praxis).[2] It is the first type that is causing all the trouble; the other three have been around for centuries. As a result of brainwashing by the Sangh, Adivasis and Dalits were involved as perpetrators of violence; because of Jamaat-e-Islami propaganda, Muslim youths retaliated.

Acharya speaks passionately of the need for marginalized groups to reinterpret texts and recreate their own identity. They must read and understand to have confidence in the face of hegemonic power and control of knowledge. Reinterpretation of Hindu epics has occurred, but Dalits and Adivasis still believe that all-India gods are superior to their own. Because it is truly inclusive, says Acharya, Dalit theology is actually superior to Sanatana Dharma because the latter is inclusive only within a narrow Brahmanical framework.[3]

UNNATI's major projects involve Vulnerability Reduction in regard to poverty, which stems both from discrimination and absence of democratic decentralization. With a goal of inclusion and empowerment, the organization works on issues of discrimination in three areas: (1) the most marginalized communities (Dalits); (2) women's empowerment; and (3) persons with disabilities. Acharya believes it is not enough to empower vulnerable people; it is also necessary to educate mainstream society. One avenue to that end is the Center for Civic Leadership and Governance, which provides large-scale training for those elected to *panchayats* (village government) and municipal councils.

By offering training during their first three months in office, through local facilitators at local sites, the cost is kept low as participants gain credibility and competence. UNNATI also works closely with state and central government to make reforms. "It's necessary to sit with them, talk with them, and call meetings," said Acharya, "and the people must be empowered to demand accountability."[4]

## UTTHAN

The Utthan Development Action Planning Team was founded in 1981 through the initiative of four professional women who preferred to work in the coastal Bhal region of Gujarat. This area suffers from a hostile geoclimatic environment, high salinity, shallow ground water, erratic monsoons, exploitation by higher castes, and distress migration.[5] By helping to create and empower a women's group, Mahiti, focused around the issue of access to safe and regular supply of drinking water, Utthan gave birth to a powerful local community organization. Mahiti, in turn, was able to undermine an oppressive money-lending system imposed by a dominant caste. In 1994, the parent organization withdrew from Bhal and began to work in two other coastal areas, as well as a tribal area (Amreli, Bhavnagar, and Dahod, also Patan). Today, Utthan serves 107 villages in four districts of Gujarat. An avowedly secular and Gandhian organization, Utthan is committed to ending caste, class, gender, and other forms of discrimination. The organization has "found strong validation of Gandhi's principles in the way women and members of the underprivileged communities of villages in the coastal and hilly regions of Gujarat have developed sustainable natural resources management systems, ensuring gender equity and justice."[6]

Utthan began its conflict resolution project just after the Carnage ended, in January 2003. With their concern for gender issues, team members focused on the widespread sexual violence that occurred with unusual brutality during the riots. Because women represent the honor of the community and Muslims are thought to be reproducing in large numbers, Muslim women were targeted. No one knows how many women were raped, for the families will not talk about it. Dominant Hindu castes imposed the condition of silence, although Muslim families also deal with the stigma of shame. The conflict between tribals and Muslims was exacerbated by Bharata Janiya Parishad (BJP) organizers telling the tribals that they are Hindus, not *Adivasis* (earth-dwellers), which is the usual term, but *vanvasis*, or forest-dwellers. This rhetoric particularly influenced the younger generation, who were then easily roused to turn against Muslims.[7] The conflict resolution project focused on transforming the conflict by encouraging the formation of mixed women's self-help groups.

Although certain activities had stopped after the conflict, women again began to participate together in interdining and visiting during festivals. The women, moreover, have found common vulnerabilities: many are widows, whereas all have livelihood issues. Legal rights of women are also a common concern. Domestic violence has increased in all communities, and women must address the issue of injustice in their own families. Tribal women traditionally had property rights, but now tribal land is being lost to corporations and privatization. The development process is leading to more landlessness; what is left is given only to men or sons. In Gujarat, 17 NGOs deal

exclusively with issues of women and land rights. In tribal areas, the sex ratio is not adverse, but in Gujarat as a whole, it is. Tribal women must deal with the erosion of their previously egalitarian culture. As they become more Hinduized, through the efforts of the Sangh Parivar organizations, tribal people pick up negative attitudes toward the girl child.[8] Because of son preference in Hindu communities, Gujarat has the fourth lowest sex ratio in India. Some localities in Ahmedad have only 650 girls for every 1,000 boys born, because of intensive practice of female feticide and selective medical care.[9]

In an effort to reestablish relations between tribal women and Muslim women, Utthan brought mixed groups to visit Hindu shrines and Sufi *darghas* and made public statements about their activities. In response, BJP politicians began contacting Muslim religious leaders and telling them that their women would be converted if they participated in the mixed self-help groups. However, by educating those groups about Sufism, the historical means of Muslim conversion in that area, as opposed to the sword, extremist Hindus have been kept out. One village has a mosque at the top of the hill and a Hindu temple at the bottom; villagers go to ceremonies in both places. In Piranna, however, a Sufi shrine has been taken over by the VHP, who insist that the Pir buried there is an incarnation of Krishna. Yet, the Hindu custodians are considered Guptis—they outwardly look as Hindus; in reality, they still follow Muslim customs of the Satpanth.[10] The VHP has also instituted a new gender division at the shrine: women can visit only in the morning. Although the village was originally given to the Pir, the Muslims living there now have no land. Because Sangh Parivar organizations receive direct support from the state government, it is difficult for NGOs to take a public stand on such issues.[11]

Situations such as that in Piranna, however, create fertile ground for Muslim extremists, who bring information about what is happening with Iraqis and Palestinians. Muslims must be encouraged to think critically about this information so as not to fall into an extremist position in response to the injustice they are experiencing. Utthan is supported by Cordaid, a Dutch organization that trains the team in participatory research and design of modules for community organizers and facilitators. Dr. Meera Velayudhan, coordinator for three districts in Gujarat, worked very closely with the Cordaid consultant in designing peace-building activities. Speaking in 2006 of her work with tribal and Muslim communities, Dr. Velayudhan said, "We've cried a lot. We shouted at each other a lot, especially in the beginning stages. But we've bonded and become very close. It's been a process of constant problem-solving, learning as we go."[12] Nafisa Barot, director of Utthan, describes three challenges facing NGOs in Gujarat: (1) human rights violations and the struggle for justice; (2) globalization and its impact on the environment (water, sanitation, Forest Act, Special Export Processing); and (3) hostile political environment. "We must continually ask the

government, 'What is our role in national development? What is your role in protecting us?'"[13]

## JAN VIKAS

Gagan Sethi of Jan Vikas (org. 1987), which was not involved in the Gujarat Harmony Project, directs an organization based on Gandhian and Freirian values and committed to Dalit empowerment. He comments that the NGOs were "taken off guard by the extent of communal violence in 2002" and very quickly realized the need for a long-term strategy. As a result, Jan Vikas has been working on a three-track approach with youth in the rural Panch Mahal district of Gujarat. Track One involves focusing on three *talukas* (subdivisions) where the most violence had occurred and in villages with a mixed population of Muslims, Adivasis, and Dalits. "If we could crack it there," says Sethi, "we would gain insights for elsewhere." In that area, the Bajrang Dal had been active in starting new schools and posting teachers of youth ages 18 to 25 who, although not fully trained as educators, were more than able to deliver the Sangh Parivar message in the classroom. As a countermeasure, Jan Vikas has started 40 schools offering a proactive diversity curriculum, as well as Muslim *makhtabs* offering religious education and life education; all are open to Dalits and Adivasi.

Track Two aims at offering youth identities other than religion by assisting groups taking up peace and conflict work as part of their agenda. Thus, Jan Vikas works with 15 smaller NGOs in Ahmedabad developing training programs to prepare Muslim and Dalit youth for development work with a harmony component. Several new initiatives have emerged from this training, including Dhristi-Media, an effort to recapture communalized media space, and Cricket for Peace, sports competitions that bring Hindus and Muslims to each other's communities. Track Three involves justice work with 5,000 families who were internally displaced as a result of the 2002 Carnage. All participants are living in new colonies and receiving compensation for food, security, and infrastructure, as well as livelihood training for two people in each family. "It's important to set a precedent," says Sethi, "to come out with a policy," despite some harassment at the local level. The biggest question for him is how NGOs can better work together on an ongoing basis—not only at times of crisis. Sethi is "very hopeful" that NGOs will succeed in creating new perspectives and new environments to be able to take on the forces that push "choiceless identities" for young people.

## AREA NETWORKING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI), a women's collective, was founded by four women who work specifically with rural and

tribal women in Panch Mahal, Dahod, and Rajkot (Saurashtra), according to feminist values. Their goal is to develop grassroots women's leadership in those three districts. At the time of the Carnage, poor tribal women in Panch Mahal brought news of how they tried to help fleeing Muslims by offering water and clothes and hiding their children. Thus, ANANDI does not agree with the analysis that Adivasis in general attacked Muslims in 2002; it is necessary to distinguish the upper-class tribal people involved with the VHP and BJP who thought themselves more likely to be accepted as Hindus. Lower-class Adivasis frequently do not understand VHP propaganda, such as a colorful poster in the house of one local leader of Osama bin Laden and a Christian priest being slaughtered by a Hindu warrior goddess. "The women didn't know what it was," says Jahnvi Andharia. "They believe in non-violence but are not making the connection. Some upper-class Adivasis, who are known as *bhagats,* have been wooed by VHP propaganda and try to influence other Adivasis. It is evident that men are already in the first rank of conversion to Hindu extremism."[14] ANANDI has been blamed by the VHP for converting Adivasis to Christianity, because of funding from Western organizations; but the real issue is that the women are challenging vested interests such as the *Sarpanch* (village headman) and bank credit through leadership development and savings groups.

ANANDI is remembered as the first Hindu organization that came to help at the Godhra Relief Camp. As the staff came to know Muslim women, their stories began coming out and the NGO helped to assure that the stories got reported to the media and linked with Citizen's Initiative, which also raised funds for houses and livelihood training. From this relief work, community leaders emerged, and it was possible to set up a low-cost English-medium school and to train women in marketable embroidery skills. As groups of women worked together, it then became possible to talk about peace and how it should be defined. Violence against women at home and community levels also emerged as a problem. ANANDI has developed a training module on peace and gender, which is used as a preemptive peace-building effort in previously violence-prone areas that did not experience violence in 2002. As women community leaders facilitate, they try to change the Gujarati mindset, which seems immune to the ways in which families and communities contribute to the communal divide. A huge question for Andharia is how intersecting identities are going to interplay with development: "It's been a struggle to arrive at this stage of clarity. . . . Are we only going to talk about disaster? How can we transcend the easy ways of describing difference?"[15]

## SAHR WARU

Sahr Waru, combining the words *sahr* (in Urdu meaning "morning") and *waru* (in Malayalam meaning "Welcome"), was conceived in 1999 and

registered in 2002. Working with women from socially excluded communities, the organization forms Women's Legal Aid Committees (Mahila Nyay Pachayats) in all of its field locations. By training those women in laws and rights from a constitutional perspective, as well as a feminist perspective, they work toward gender justice and ending violence against women. Sahr Waru also offers skills training and other types of informal education to youth groups from Muslim and Dalit Hindu communities, who have bonded well during training, as well as opportunities to attend outdoor camps and conventions. With both women and youth, advocacy is combined with efforts to minimize caste-based discrimination and religious intolerance.

During the Gujarat Carnage, Sahr Waru worked in six camps providing food, medication, kitchen items, and educational help, as well as doing fact-finding, photo documentation, and trauma counseling with a NIMHANS psychological team. It also supported the survivors of the Carnage before the National Human Rights Commission, Women's Cell (Home Department), National Commission for Women, National Minorities Commission, and the state-level G. T. Nanavati and K. G. Shah Commission. Much of what they accomplished aided in the healing and justice process. However, their documentation work and subsequent publication of their data has affected the organization's application for an essential foreign contributions number issued by the state. Such problems have not deterred the organization from continuing to work for social justice, women's empowerment, conflict reduction, and peace.

Sahr Waru continues post-2002 work with women and youth in Carnage-affected areas such as Naroda Patiya, in areas where displaced families have been rehabilitated such as Vatva and Bombay Hotel, and in conflict zones such as Gomtipur and Ramol where opposing communities live side by side. Current projects include sensitizing Dalit women's groups and youth about issues confronting Muslim women and especially widows. Under a gender justice program, Sahr Waru arranges for Hindu and Muslim women from Gomptipur to enjoy outings together and work toward reconciliation. Riot survivors managed to establish friendship connections, although Muslim women first had to express their anger and disappointment before they were able to sit comfortably with Hindu women, who had not experienced the same degree of loss. With the help of Sahr Waru, they still meet every so often to mentor each other; earlier on, they met daily.

Although the Muslim community continues to fight for justice, along with civic and basic rights, it is an ongoing struggle. Managing Trustee and Director Sheba George stated that although five years have passed, "Muslims still live in squalor, their socio-economic status has not been restored, and justice has not been substantiated."[16] She added further, "It is difficult to find people committed to peace and justice work these days. All of Gujarat has given consent to the BJP agenda."[17] Her observation was borne out by a sweeping BJP victory in state elections in the fall of 2007, when Prime

Minister Modi was reelected for another five-year term and the BJP retained control of the State Assembly.

## PRASHANT

Father Cedric Prakash, S.J. (former director of St. Xavier Social Service Society), founded and has directed, since 2001, Prashant (meaning "all-pervasive peace"), which he describes as "a center for human rights, justice and peace." As a spokesperson for the Gujarat United Christian Forum for Human Rights (consisting of both Catholics and Protestants), he avows that "Nothing can substitute for grass-roots initiatives and involvement, although people at the top can undo everything done at a grass-roots level."[18] Prashant has three main aims: (1) a documentation center that tracks violations of minority human rights in Gujarat, with facilities available to international researchers; (2) advocacy work involving NGOs, government officials, and media; and (3) legal battles against perpetrators of the Gujarat Carnage. Of this last effort, Father Prakash says, "Unless we can create a framework for and environment of justice, we will not have lasting peace."[19] Those who work for communal harmony continue to try to impact policy, to hold people accountable, and to ensure that there is political will for change. Yet, as they courageously carry on such work, they are harassed by the BJP-led Gujarat state government.

Father Prakash, who also teaches a summer course in the United States on "The Role of Religion in Conflict," has himself been interrogated by the Gujarat police several times. Why? Because he continues to question, among other things, how it is, in the wake of atrocities committed during the Gujarat Carnage, all of the 240 POTA (Prevention of Terrorist Activity) detainees are Muslims, held without trial. He also asks other questions that have no answers in a climate of state-controlled information. "Why did the Railway Ministry not initiate an immediate inquiry into the Godhra train burning? Why did only one car burn completely? Why did retaliation begin 24 hours later? Why were no preemptive anti-violence measures taken? Why didn't violence occur elsewhere in India?" Although bishops and his superiors in the Catholic Church hierarchy support Father Prakash, some local Christians oppose his harmony work, arguing that he is putting them under additional threat from Hindu nationalists by taking up the cause of Muslims. Father Prakash replies, "Jesus spent his life working for the oppressed, irrespective of religion, and therefore a true Christian must do likewise."[20]

## OXFAM WESTERN INDIA

Avinash Kumar had been with Oxfam in Western India as Program Coordinator for a year and a half when I interviewed him in November 2006, although he had worked earlier with other Oxfam branches. In this position,

he is responsible for three states: Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. In July 2006, Oxfam held a two-day meeting of some 30 to 40 organizations to learn about the experiences of those who had participated in programs with the Gujarat Harmony Project. What they learned was that riot victims are much worse off than they were before February 2002, as a result of forced migration, ruined businesses, and harassment by the state. In 7 percent of the camps, no one received any compensation, and those who got something received only a pittance of the amount they had lost. Unfortunately, the state development model is Hindu in concept and has cut Muslims out completely. In addition to destroyed business worth Rs. 300 crores, the lucrative illicit liquor trade, formerly in the hands of Muslims, has been completely taken over by the RSS/BJP. According to Kumar, most of the mainstream social service networks have been forced to do a "rethink" in the wake of the 2002 Carnage. "Unless they begin to address the economic issue, they can't get on with their work."[21] Oxfam's long-term Violence Mitigation and Peace Building program is to develop a model that could be replicable on a wider scale beyond Gujarat.

The first part of that model involved opening a Resource Center in Sabarkantha, a mixed area inhabited by Hindus, Muslims, and Adivasis. Called Energy House, the Center focuses on the local context and creates a space where people can come together. Through discussions about shared space and divided space, participants are encouraged to capture the layers of violence that happen around them. By sponsoring films, creative writing, and public wall paintings, center staff members try to make people think and also capture stories of communal unity. The second aspect of the model involves academic work aimed at middle-class Indians, who hold the most hardened position toward minorities. Oxfam has put together a Peace Studies curriculum to be used in training development sector workers at such academic institutions as the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the College of Social Work in Bombay. In addition, the course developed by the College of Social Work is proposed to be introduced as a foundation paper for the 400 colleges of Bombay University. Soon they hope to initiate a similar process with a few institutions in Gujarat.

The third part of Oxfam's model has to do with human resources. Part A involves a study at the national level—social conflict, development, and NGOs—concerning what grassroots NGOs are doing with conflict resolution and peace-building. How do they generate conflict sensitivity in their everyday work? Unless they can do that, said Kumar, they should not undertake any project. Part B has to do with updating the status of refugees in Gujarat. Compared with what happened concerning the anti-Sikh riots in 1984 when victims received a good compensation package, the situation in Gujarat is deplorable. Sixty to eighty camps still existed in 2006, unrecognized by the government and without water, electricity, or means of livelihood. Yet, 20 crores of relief money was returned to the central government by the state,

which said there was no need for it. Any criticism of such action results in the charge that one is trying to divide 500 million Gujaratis. Part C consists of a different kind of documentation, cases of hope, to be published as a book, in an effort to counter negative Hindu–minority relations in Gujarat. "It is essential to generate reading materials at the grass-root level," says Kumar, "including local histories and positive stories, so that people have a sense of shared community."[22]

## CARE

According to Subhendu Pratihari, program officer for urban-livelihood development, peace building has been integrated into all of CARE's programs. The organization has learned from the Gujarat Harmony Project that productive partnerships are the key to successful poverty reduction and attitude transformation. "If the partners are selected properly and you build projects carefully, then things will be quite effective."[23] A new project, with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as partner and additional funding from USAID and CHF International, involves slum development in 43 neighborhoods. Such a public/private partnership covers infrastructure, skills, and empowerment. Local NGOs have also been drawn into the project, such as the resource centers that SAATH is establishing in some of the poorest neighborhoods. CARE anticipates that, like the Gujarat Harmony Project, this public/private slum development project will be a model that can be replicated elsewhere.

Reflecting on the extent of poverty in Ahmedabad, Pratihari says, "Though the state bills itself as 'Vibrant Gujarat,' it is only the government that is vibrant." Thus, it falls to NGOs and international development organizations to create connections between communities and empower the poor so that they can stand up for their rights. Organizations vary greatly in their relationship with government. Some, like CARE, are willing to undertake government partnerships. Others, particularly local organizations, tend to come into conflict with state and local government over vital issues. A third group, including Oxfam, has no intentional interaction with any level of government. Funding, of course, is key to the stance that an organization can take. Pratihari believes that the FICC and the Chamber of Commerce, consisting of big industrialists, should have a commitment to poverty reduction. It should be a responsibility attached to the success of making a big profit.

Veena Padia, CARE project director in Ahmedabad, reports that CARE cooperates with the government at all three levels, thus allowing complete outreach. "But we are always asking questions," she said as we talked in her office. "Where are the gaps? Can we fill these up?"[24] Thus, CARE continually offers training, coordination, and tech support to help fill the gaps that they identify and achieve better quality programs. At the international level,

CARE's long-range strategic planning continues to wrestle with the thorny issue of how to work with national, state, and local governments. "It is essential, says Padia, to work strategically in such a way as not to come into conflict with government at any level." One must constantly question: "What are the issues? Who doesn't want to work with whom? And one has to be very clear about where money is coming from and what it is going to." CARE has had a good history with the government of India over the last 58 years. The organization began by providing welfare supplements such as powdered milk and food, but now the focus has shifted to development projects.

## GHETTOIZATION

The most noticeable consequence of the 2002 Carnage in Ahmedabad and Vadodara is increased ghettoization. In Ahmedabad, the segregation of land and housing markets is "brutally harsh and clear-cut. There are pockets of communities now that are waiting to erupt with violence at the trace of a rumour. All interfaces between the communities are fast obliterating."[25] Don Bosco, a Christian-run convent school, informed its Muslim students that it could not guarantee their safety. Their parents had no choice but to remove their children from the school, which formerly had 250 Muslim students.[26] Dr. Hanif Lakdawalla of Sanchetna was unable to rent a house in his own name but solved the problem by renting in the name of his NGO and putting up the name of one of his Hindu trustees.[27]

Muslim areas like Juhapura have become ghettos, housing 3 lakhs (300,000) people, yet there is not a single bank or middle-class shopping area there. Professionals, such as Sheba George of Saher Waru, were forced to move their offices as a result of complaints from Hindu neighbors who wanted nothing to do with a human rights organization run by a Kerala Christian and her Muslim husband.[28] Sophia Khan, a lawyer who has worked with AWAG as well as Social Action Forum against Repression (SAFAR), her own NGO, says that she "only became Muslim after 2002." That's when a police circular came round stating that there should be no Muslims in her building. With two days' notice, she was able to move her office into a Juhapura flat owned by a friend, but her two Hindu employees had to resign because the new location was not considered safe.[29]

Similar ghettoization has occurred in Vadodara, where the curfew lasted more than four months. Olakh, one of the Gujarat Harmony partners, surveyed three neighborhoods in 2004 and discovered that, for Hindus, fear of retaliation two years after the Carnage was still so high that going to the walled city was almost a forbidden thing. Because men had used Muslim women as objects of dishonor, they put tighter restrictions on their own women. Some parents worry about children going out alone, but Muslim parents are more concerned than those from the Hindu community.

Although ghettoization is the reality, Dipesh Chakrabarty reiterates the need for a positive sort of proximity, "in which difference is neither reified nor erased but negotiated."[30]

In studying Hindu and Muslim communities, Kakar points to social-psychological processes, a consequence of globalization, as the foundation on which new Hindu and Muslim identities are currently being built. Population movements, overcrowded living conditions, and rapid obsolescence of traditional roles and skills lead to loss of ancestral ideals and values.[31] Such dangers to material existence can be experienced as an identity-threat, which tends to bring forward certain aspects of group identity. Disregard of a group's interest by political authorities or disrespect for its cultural symbols may also create an identity threat.[32] Affiliation with a cultural-religious group may help to combat feelings of helplessness and loss. Communalism arises when the individual becomes fully aware of belonging to a religious community and asserts him/herself as a member of such a group, choosing that identity out of all the multiple identities possible. "The 'We-ness' of the community is here replaced by the 'We are' of communalism. This 'We are' must inevitably lead to intolerance of all those outside the boundaries of the group."[33] Only when such intolerance makes its appearance in the outer, public realm, however, does it become religious conflict.

When that happens, personal identity in a critical number of people is swamped by feelings of love for one's own group and hatred toward the out-group. Any sense of larger community or a common good is swallowed up by these intense emotions, which are further fueled by external events. As stated by Puniyani and others, the buildup to actual violence activates prejudices and stereotypes lying dormant in both communities. When a fear psychosis is created, people can be mobilized on communal grounds. When people feel insecure, they do not behave in a rational manner but will attack or retaliate.[34] Although people recover from violence, the entire society is affected by painful memories and perceptions: of betrayal, of trust no longer possible, of a flawed justice system. Even the perpetrators of violence are likely to suffer later from posttraumatic stress symptoms: nightmares, violent outbursts, intrusive imagery, and a sense of disintegration.[35]

Kakar notes, however, that in some individuals, personal identity is never overwhelmed by religious or cultural group identity, even in the face of violent conflict. Such persons are capable of acts of compassion and self-sacrifice and clearly exhibit a sense of selflessness in moments of personal danger.[36] He does not explain, however, *why* some people are overwhelmed by group identity and others are not. Gandhi, for instance, wrote, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I do not want to be blown off my feet by any."[37] Clearly, his vision of a larger community took precedence over his group identity as a Hindu. Moreover, he was often capable of acts of selflessness

on behalf of other groups, although not perhaps as consistently as he himself believed.

Hopeful stories also emerge from the 2002 Gujarat Carnage, which suggest the potential for peace-building not only in Gujarat but elsewhere. In Vadodara, some communities such as Kalyan Nagar, where Hindus and Muslims had lived together for many years, remained united because leaders resisted Bajrang Dal efforts to humiliate Hindu men by sending them bangles or provoking Muslim boys to retaliate. In one such community, 96.4 percent of the respondents indicated that they had helped to keep peace by means of night patrols, area meetings, and discouraging instigation by outsiders.[38] In Favel Nagar, inhabited by immigrant Hindus and Muslims from Uttar Pradesh, Hindu women took possession of Muslim homes from the mob and returned them later to families with whom a shared regional identity mattered more than religious propaganda.[39] In Maretha village, Dalits came to the rescue of Muslims. One upper-caste Hindu gave water to Muslims and himself suffered the cutting of electricity and water to his farm. Others took loot in order to safeguard it and return it later.[40] Rabaris in some villages of Panch Mahal actually prevented massacres, and Dalits in some rural areas sheltered Muslims for days, often at great risk to their own lives.[41]

From its survey, Olakh concluded that where the extent of violence was greater, participation in the peace process was less. Where the peace process was successful, the most significant factors were restarting work relations and participation in each other's festivals. Dalits, however, were sometimes unwilling to participate in the peace process, insisting that no one would listen to low castes or that "Muslims are dirty and non-vegetarian."[42] This last observation shows that low-caste people have absorbed the Sangh Parivar message all too well, applying to Muslims the same labels that previously had been pinned on untouchables. Human beings are easily conditioned to inflict negative behavior on "the Other," when persuaded that it is appropriate to do so. Muslims themselves contribute to an atmosphere of distrust, however, by celebrating Pakistani victories over India in cricket. Yet, Olakh's survey showed a perception that political leaders are most responsible for inciting violence, followed by antisocial elements and then police. Unfortunately, respondents seemed unaware of the media's role in distributing false information.[43] When people in the streets begin to understand how violence was orchestrated and how they have been manipulated, their awareness will go a long way toward preventing reoccurrence.

Sudhir Kakar, defining himself as an optimistic realist, suggests that India is moving toward a sort of multiculturalism, with majority and minority cultures, which will eventually protect the rights of all religious groups to be different. He notes, however, that such movement may well be long, drawn-out, and accompanied by violence. Yet, Kakar argues, "achieving the desired goal of a truly multicultural polity will ultimately generate much less tension than the permanent discord which is the probable consequence

of the nationalist vision."[44] His is a vision of a larger community, based on common interests, and therefore grounded in nonviolence. But the question is whether India can find a means worthy of that end.

Gerald Larson suggests that an option that mediates the extremes between secularism and religion nationalism might be to develop the Republic of India as a:

> multi-religious state. No one religious tradition would be favored or established, but all would be recognized (including secularist and agnostic traditions) and "enfranchised," as it were, in matters of public policy, especially in the areas of research, education and communication. . . . Instead of pretending that religion should have no place in public policy and public life, efforts could be directed to determine its reasonable and appropriate place.[45]

Larson understands that it would be "a difficult and complex undertaking, fraught with problems and dangers." He mentions safeguards for participating religious groups as well as protection against being co-opted by the authority of the state. This idea is not likely to find application in the near future, but it offers a possible long-range blueprint for "a remarkable experiment in interreligious 'community-ship.'" Larson also recognizes that "no state is better equipped in terms of long and enduring experience with cultural pluralism and toleration than is the civilization-state of India to undertake such a task."[46] Honoring India's history, its remarkable diversity of religious beliefs and practices, a multi-religious state would be far superior to what Rajagopalachari called "a super-imposed western institution staged in Indian dress."[47]

A third alternative calls for leadership from within the various religious communities working together to create a multi-religious state. Ashis Nandy observes that religion in South Asia has been split into "faith" and "ideology":

> By faith I mean religion as a way of life, a tradition which is definitionally non-monolithic and operationally plural. I say "definitionally" because, unless a religion is geographically and culturally confined to a small area, religion as a way of life has in effect to turn into a confederation of a number of ways of life, linked by a common faith and with some theological space for heterogeneity. By ideology I mean religion as a sub-national, national or cross-national identifier of populations contesting for or protecting non-religious, usually political or socioeconomic, interests. Such religions-as-ideologies usually get identified with one or more texts which, rather than the ways of life of believers, then become the final identifiers of the pure forms of the religions.[48]

Religious ideologies have primarily been responsible for communalism and negative propaganda against groups competing for political and socioeconomic interests. Religious faiths have traditionally offered space for celebrating weddings and religious holidays with one's neighbors or seeking help from the healing shrines of another belief system.

Secularism, both Marxism and humanism, has the disadvantage of having emerged from the West. Its position of equal respect for all religions, on which the Indian nation was founded, is certainly a praiseworthy ideal. The problem is that it isn't working very well in South Asia, which has traditionally been a deeply religious, albeit pluralistic, culture. As Nandy notes, "Much of the fanaticism and violence associated with religion comes today from a sense of defeat in the believers, from their feelings of impotence, and from their free-floating anger and self-hatred while facing a world which is increasingly secular and desacralized."[49] Gandhi, whose values are espoused by many of the NGOs described in this book, was tolerant of other religions because he understood Hinduism as a faith and operated from within that worldview.

It is perhaps inappropriate to think of those Gandhian or Ambedkar-based organizations as secular, for they operate very clearly within the theological space that traditional Indian religions leave open for heterogeneity. Although it is helpful to attach a secular label to organizational efforts in order to attract funding from a variety of donors, it does not correctly identify how these organizations think and what they do. Indeed, many programs within the Gujarat Harmony Project aimed at reviving the shared public celebrations and cross-religious sense of community that existed before 1982, 1992, and 2002. Such efforts go far beyond secular respect and tolerance for all religions; rather, they restore the deeper pluralistic aspects of South Asian religions, which fused in inextricable ways centuries ago.

Yet, neither can political and economic factors be ignored, either in the case of minority victims or of minority perpetrators. Khare has explored the cultural logic of Dalit leaders, who are questioning the dominance of Brahmins and high-caste Hindus as "politically unrepresentative, socially residual, and morally untenable" while at the same time trying to Sanskritize and free themselves from cultural oppression.[50] Muslims face an equally baffling paradox: to evolve an engaged social role, they "must neither dilute their religious identity nor give up on the generations-old social cooperation with local Hindus and all other Indian communities."[51] Yet when the Hindu community takes in its welcome mat, Muslims are hard pressed to respond amicably. Peace-building, however, requires forgiveness and reconciliation.

According to Martin Beck-Matuštik, violence at its existential roots is a sort of spiritual disorder. The problem in reestablishing spiritual order is that "no present validity domain knows how to secure redemption without

reproducing the attraction and terror of death-dealing violence."[52] But he suggests that the nonviolent core of all great spiritual traditions "leads by way of divestment, detachment, openness to the cosmos, acceptance of one's vocational place in the larger unknown of the mysterious universe, self-forgiveness of one's finitude and even mortality, yielding to the sources of unconditional love, and embracing the works of such love as a way to heal all that suffers."[53] How have these values been obscured by a scramble for the fruits of capitalism?

In response to globalization, people in India (and elsewhere) are hungry for meaning, values to hold on to, and inspired leadership. So long as these things do not come in a dynamic way from moderate leaders within their faiths, people will settle for the twisted logic of religious ideologies, which is the next best thing and which appeals as well to such pressing anxieties as lack of political representation or inadequate income. Presented in the form of *jihad* or mosque demolition, religious ideology is appealing to young people frustrated by an uncertain future, and to mature adults who have suffered as a result of a globalized economy or exclusion from caste-based reservations. The analogy with Nazi Germany is a useful one, in the sense that hunger for meaning and soul-stirring leadership will incline people to grasp whatever dynamic message comes along, even if it preaches superiority, hate, and violence, or a return to domination by upper-caste ideology.

Religious faith, with its traditional theological space for heterogeneity, must in the future have a recognized place in the public life of the Indian nation. It may be *faith,* rather than secularism, that is locked in a struggle with religious *ideology* for the soul of India. By rejecting the so-called secular label and bringing to the fore the core values of nonviolence, healing, and community found in every Indian religious tradition, NGOs and peace-builders should find a ready response from those who have been momentarily led astray through glitzy campaigns and high-powered organizing. Local heroes will arise when empowered to find courage, reach out to other communities, and embrace difference. Fortunately, India has always been good at generating local heroes. But moderate religious leaders and values-based NGOs must work with those heroes in celebrating their beliefs passionately and dramatically, using every sort of media available and appealing to the best in their constituents, to counter the negative propaganda of religious nationalism that is fracturing the nation of India.

Some of the most eloquent defenders of India's theological space, however, are those who speak not from an overtly religious perspective but from a deep inner spirituality that finds meaning by honoring the humanity in all people. Harsh Mander's resignation from a prestigious Indian Civil Service position, to protest the Indian government's failure to intervene in the Gujarat Carnage, struck a chord with all who aspire to a just and humane

world. In an interview with Dhristipat, Mander spoke about ways of preventing the rise of religion-based politics in South Asia:

> I think pseudo-religious fundamentalists are a threat to both peace and development in all countries of south Asia. There is a huge amount of work that needs to be done, which requires masses of us to devote time and energy for the rest of our lives. We need to be clear not only about what we are ideologically opposed to, but also about what we stand for. What is our alternative vision for our countries, region and the world, to ideologies based on hatred and division? We need to reclaim goals of equity, justice, peace, harmony, truth and humanism, not merely as statements of intent but in the way we live and work. We need to work particularly with children and young people, impact on the content of education and how it is transacted. We need to revive and strengthen all popular social and cultural forums and expressions that celebrate pluralism. The strongest bulwark against communal politics would be for engaging once again masses of people in constructive work and non-violent democratic mass struggles for justice. Politics of divide has to be opposed resolutely, and state complicity in communalism must not only be resisted but the guilty must be made accountable.[54]

Mander's call for "democratic mass struggles for justice" may seem like a tall order just now, but it is surely a vision worth pursuing if India is to rediscover its soul within the morass of so-called democratic politics, religious nationalism, and globalization.

In another vein, Arundhati Roy warns of the dangers of fascism in the guise of religious ideology and recommends ways of fighting it:

> Fascism is about the slow, steady infiltration of all the instruments of state power. It's about the slow erosion of civil liberties, about unspectacular day-to-day injustices. Fighting it does not mean asking for RSS *shakhas* and *madrassas* that are overtly communal to be banned. It means working toward the day when they're voluntarily abandoned as bad ideas. It means keeping an eagle eye on public institutions and demanding accountability. It means putting your ear to the ground and listening to the whispering of the truly powerless. It means giving a forum to the myriad voices from the hundreds of resistance movements across the country who are speaking about real issues—about mining, about bonded labor, marital rape, sexual preferences, women's wages, uranium dumping, weaver's woes, farmers' worries. It means fighting displacement and dispossession and the relentless, everyday violence of abject poverty.[55]

Hindus celebrate Uttarayan by flying kites from rooftops in an affluent area of Vadodara.

Healing on a massive scale is required in Gujarat. But such healing will not come from outside. India has had her fill of the West. Healing must come from within, from *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *zakat* (charity), righteousness, *caritas* (compassion), nonattachment, mindfulness—all of which coexist in India's theological space.

# APPENDIX

# South Asians in Adams County, Pennsylvania

## PURPOSE

Working with a small sample of South Asians in one rural Pennsylvania county, I administered a short questionnaire intended to discover their place of origin and lifestyle patterns. The purpose was to discover how many Gujaratis lived in Adams County and whether they could be identified as part of the international Sangh Parivar network. Although the sample was small, the huge number of Gujaratis known to be living in the United States indicates that the results of this survey could be replicated many times over in other counties all over the United States.

## METHODOLOGY

Some questionnaires were administered orally and others by mail. Initial questions determined when respondents had emigrated to the United States and with whom, and also inquired about their livelihood and citizenship status. Several questions, those dealing with donation patterns, temple affiliation, and whether India should be a Hindu nation, were designed to illuminate possible Sangh Parivar connections. The final question, asking about the biggest threat facing India today, produced a wide variety of answers and did not produce truly significant results.

## FINDINGS

My sample included a preponderance of Gujaratis (11 of 16 respondents), 10 of whom are involved in owning or managing hotels or motels. All but

one are permanent residents or citizens. Three of the questions produced results significant for the study at hand. Gujarati donation patterns, temple connections, and answers to the question, "Should India be a Hindu nation?" reflect probable contact with the Sangh Parivar. Of the 11 Gujaratis, 45 percent send money to religious organizations, which indicates that money is flowing from the United States to religious institutions here or in India. The nature of those institutions is apparent in self-identified temple connections (in Harrisburg, PA and Washington, DC), which include a Hari temple with Rama as prinicipal deity (45 percent) and the Swaminarayan temple (55 percent). Both of these temple affiliations are significant. *Hindutva* proponents celebrate Rama as the warrior who will restore Hindu rule to India, and Swaminarayan temples in Gujarat are closely identified with the Sangh Parivar. Even more telling is the fact that 6 of 11 Gujarati respondents believe that India should be a Hindu nation (55 percent), revealing strong identification with this major aspect of *hindutva* doctrine. Also disturbing is evidence that non-Gujaratis are also being exposed to *hindutva* through affiliation with the Hari temple.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where in India did you emigrate from? What is your first language?
2. When did you come to the United States and why? Are you a permanent resident?
3. How many members of your family came with you? Have any come since then?
4. What is your means of livelihood here?
5. If you send money back to India, do you send it to:

   family?
   organizations that alleviate poverty?
   religious organizations?

6. Are you affiliated with a temple here? If so, which one(s)? Location?
7. In what other ways do you stay in touch with Indians here in the United States?
8. Do you believe that India should be a Hindu nation? Why or why not?
9. What do you think is the biggest threat facing India today?

**A Comparison of Respondents Who Are and Are Not from Gujarat on Selected Questionnaire Items**

| Questionnaire Item | Not from Gujarat ($N = 5$) (%) | From Gujarat ($N = 11$) (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Percent Earning Livelihood from Hotel/Motel | 0 | 91 |
| Percent Contributing Money to Family | 80 | 45 |
| Percent Contributing Money to Poverty Organizations | 60 | 27 |
| Percent Contributing Money to Religious Organizations | 40 | 45 |
| Percent Affiliated with HARI Temple | 80 | 45 |
| Percent Affiliated with Swaminarayan Temple | 0 | 55 |
| Percent Affiliated with Siva Vishnu Temple | 40 | 0 |
| Percent Affiliated with Murugan Temple | 40 | 0 |
| Percent Who Agree India Should Be a Hindu Nation | 20 | 55 |
| Percent Identifying Terrorists as Threat | 40 | 27 |
| Percent Identifying Corruption as Threat | 60 | 27 |
| Percent Identifying HIV/AIDS as Threat | 0 | 9 |
| Percent Identifying Population as Threat | 40 | 36 |
| Percent Identifying Poverty as Threat | 20 | 27 |
| Percent Identifying Communalism as Threat | 0 | 9 |
| Percent Identifying Selfish Elites as Threat | 20 | 0 |
| Percent Identifying Natural Disasters as Threat | 0 | 18 |

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# NOTES

## CHAPTER 1

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

2. The Shah Bano case in 1978 raised questions about Muslim personal law, criminal law, and the lack of a uniform civil code. In this instance, involving an elderly Muslim woman abandoned by her husband, a Supreme Court decision pleasing to the Hindu community was supplanted by passage of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, which offended most Hindus and Muslim intelligentsia.

3. During the 1991 election campaign, BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani toured north India in a chariot-like vehicle symbolizing epic Hindu battles and focusing attention on Ayodhya; violence broke out wherever he traveled.

4. Sunil Khilnani, *Idea of India* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999), 150.

5. Martha Nussbaum, *The Clash Within* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2007), 178.

6. Dionne Bunsha, *Scarred: Experiments with Violence in Gujarat* (London: Penguin, 2006), 230.

7. Ram Puniyani, *Communal Politics: Facts vs. Myths* (New Delhi: Sage, 2003), 167.

8. VHP Web site: Ramjanbhoomi Temple (Archaeological Discoveries), http://www.VHP-america.org/

9. Nussbaum, 173.

10. Thor Heyerdahl, *Maldive Mystery* (Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler, 1986).

11. Richard Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2000), 104–05.

12. Ibid., 107.

13. Ibid., 112–13.

14. Ibid., 114–16.

15. Ibid., 121–2.

16. Ibid., 123.
17. Varadarajan, Siddarth, *Gujarat: the Making of a Tragedy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2002), 46–50.
18. The Nanavati Commission was set up by the federal government to investigate the burning of two passenger bogies at Godhra and the consequent death of 41 *kar sevaks* returning from Ayodhya and 18 other passengers.
19. Varadarajan, 54.
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22. Ibid., 60.
23. Anupama Rao, "Testifying to Violence: Gujarat as a State of Exception," in Elizabeth Castelli and Janet Jakosen, *Interventions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 156.
24. Ibid., 62.
25. Bunsha, 45.
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27. Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man!* (Albany: SUNY, 2005), 91–2.
28. Varadarajan, 79.
29. Harsh Mander, *Cry, My Beloved Country*: *Reflections on the Gujarat Carnage* (Delhi: Rainbow Publishers, 2004), 15.
30. "Compounding Injustice: the Government's Failure to Redress Massacres in Gujarat." *India* 15:3 (C). (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003), 4.
31. Harsh Mander, 26–7.
32. Ibid., 27.
33. Varadarajan, 137.
34. Ibid., 239.
35. Ibid., 139.
36. Ibid., 164–7.
37. Ibid., 155–8.
38. Ibid., 122.
39. Ibid., 38.
40. In the South Asian numbering system, one crore equals 10 million or 100 lakhs; one lakh equals 100,000 rupees.
41. P. G. J. Nampoothiri and Gagan Sethi, *Status Report on Rehabilitation of Victims of Communal Violence in Gujrat in the Year 2002* (Ahmedabad: Center for Social Justice, 2005), 3–4.
42. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam Today* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 209.
43. Bhabani Das, Manu Agarwal, and Rutul Joshi, *Impact of Communal Violence on the Livelihood of the Informal Sector* (Ahmedabad: Samerth, 2003), 3–4.
44. Ibid., 71–3.
45. Bunsha, 266–70.
46. Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian* (New York: Picador, 2005), 282.
47. Khushwant Singh, *End of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003), 90.

## CHAPTER 2

1. Manjulal R. Majumdar, *Cultural History of Gujarat from Early Times to the Pre-British Period* (Bombay: Popular Prakash, 1965), ix–x.

2. C. Colin Davies, *Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 16.
3. Buddhism was still strong in the region even in the seventh century when the Chinese traveler Hieun Tsang visited the renowned university at Valabhipura.
4. Ibid., x.
5. John Keay, *India: a History* (New York: Grove, 2000), 130.
6. Ibid., 160–67.
7. Ibid., 195–97.
8. K. M.Munshi, *Glory that was Gurjara Desa (550–1300)* (Bombay:Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1949), 96, 104–13.
9. A *chakravartin* is a Hindu universal emperor, for whom the wheel of the law turns.
10. Majumdar, xi, 205–06
11. Ibid., xi–xii.
12. Keay, 306.
13. Majumdar, xii–xiii.
14. Ibid., 304–07.
15. Ibid., 309–11.
16. Ibid., xiii.
17. Ibid., xiii–xiv.
18. Ibid., xiv.
19. R. Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Diaspora to India," in Jayasura and Pankhurst, *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001), 191, 203.
20. Sufi who performs feats of endurance or magic, but the term also refers to street beggars who recite holy names or verses from the Quran.
21. H. Basu, "Slave, Soldier, Trader, Faqir," in Jayasura and Pankhurst, 232, 224, 245.
22. Ibid xv–vi.
23. M. A. Saleem Khan, *Early Muslim Perception of India and Hinduism* (Denver: iAcademic Books, 1997), 169.
24. Ibid., 181.
25. M. Abdulla Chaghatai, *Muslim Monuments of Ahmedabad* (Poona: Deccan College Research Institute, 1942), 26.
26. Khan, 189–91.
27. Ibid., 221.
28. Majumdar, 39.
29. Keay, 209.
30. Monetary unit of unknown value used in the greater Muslim world during the early medieval period.
31. Ibid., 209–10.
32. Ibid., 234.
33. Ibid.,. 257.
34. Majumdar, 250.
35. Richard M. Eaton, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States," in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2000), 109.
36. Chaghatai, 27.
37. Eaton, 109.

38. Keay, 285.
39. Chaghatai, 16.
40. Ibid., 7, 14.
41. Ibid., 40.
42. Sarina Singh et al., *Lonely Planet Guide to India* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2005), 646.
43. Three inscriptions from step-wells in Vadodara state, "When Zafar Khan was ruler of Gujarat, his nobles had realized the needs of the people's welfare and as part of their duty to their subjects had managed to assure a copious water supply through means of these step-wells." Chagatai, 32.
44. A. Jackson, M. Tippetts, and R. E. Enthoven, *Folklore of Gujarat* (Gurgaon: Vintage Books, 1989 [1914], 96.
45. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) 89.
46. Majumdar, 250.
47. Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), xii.
48. Dominique-Sila Khan, "Diverting the Ganges: The Nizari Ismaili Model of Conversion in South Asia," in Robinson and Clarke, *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 30.
49. Khan, 32.
50. Khan, n. 4, 51.
51. Khan, 37–8.
52. Ibid., 44.
53. Ibid.
54. Eaton, 109.
55. Keay, 286–87.
56. K. M. Matthew, *Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat (1500–1520)* (Delhi: K. M. Mittal, 1986), 134–36.
57. Ibid., 137.
58. *Wanta* grants were a solution to the *zamindar* rebellion under Sultan Ahmad Gujarati: three parts of the land of each village was the property of the king; one part went to *zamindars*, engaged to furnish guards and protection to villages and to hold themselves in readiness for the king's service when called. M. Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat* (Ahmadabad: Saraswati Pustak Bhandar, 1987 [1931]), 131.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 142.
61. Ibid., 142–3.
62. Keay, 342.
63. Commissariat, 128.
64. Ibid., 129.
65. Ibid., 132.
66. Keay, 343–5.
67. Commissariat, 132.
68. Descendants of Keva Kanbi Hindus in Kutch who became Shi'as in the fifteenth century, they observe both Hindu and Muslim holidays, including Holi, Divaso, Divali, Ramzan, and Urs. Their seizure of Broach in 1685 was brutally crushed by

an imperial army, and many drowned themselves in the Narmada. Comissariat, 144, 148–9.

69. Commissariat, 139, 142.

70. Eaton, 109, 123.

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1. K. M. Matthew, *Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat (1500–1573)* (Delhi: K.M. Mitthal, 1986), 19.

2. M. S. Commissariat, *Studies in the History of Gujarat* (Ahmedabad: Saraswati Pustak Bhandar, 1987 [1931]), 106–07.

3. Ibid., viii–ix.

4. Ibid., 31–2.

5. Ibid., 38.

6. Ibid., 80–4.

7. Ibid., 89–90, 95–6.

8. Ibid., 116.

9. Ibid., 117.

10. Ibid., 118.

11. Ibid., 118,120–1.

12. T. Brekke, "Conversion in Buddhism?," in Robinson and Clarke, *Religious Conversion in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 182.

13. Ibid., 189.

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22. H. G. Rawlinson, ed., *Ras Mala or Hindoo Annals of Province of Gazerat in Western India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973 [1858]), 18–19.

23. John Keay, *India: A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 371.

24. Ibid., 375.

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26. E. Eastwick *Gujarat and the Gujaratis* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2000 [1880]), 49–54.

27. Ibid., 54–5.

28. Ibid., 55.

29. Ibid., 56–7.

30. Ibid., 63–5.

31. Ibid., 76–7.

32. Ibid., 81.

33. Ibid., 82.

34. Kenneth Ingham, *Reformers in India: 1793–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 17.
35. G. Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 89.
36. Ibid., 26, 29–30.
37. Ibid., 33.
38. Ibid., 98–9.
39. Ibid., 116.
40. Ibid., 59, 66–8, 95.
41. Sathianathan Clarke, "Conversion to Christianity in Tamil Nadu," in Robinson and Clarke, 342.
42. Ibid., 336.
43. Ibid., 338.
44. Ibid., 341–3.
45. John C. B. Webster, "Christian Conversion in the Punjab: What Has Changed?," in Robinson and Clarke, 369.
46. Ibid., 368.
47. *Times of India (Ahmedabad)*, January 14, 2008.
48. Ibid.
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50. R. Puniyani, *Communal Politics: Facts vs. Myth* (New Delhi: Sage, 2003) 174.
51. Siddarth Varadarajan, *Gujarat: The Making of a Tragedy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2002), 250–61.
52. Ian Talbot, *India and Pakistan* (London: Arnold, 2000), 14.
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55. Ibid., 50.
56. Gene R. Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India: 1923–28* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 115.
57. Ibid., 159.
58. "Montagu-Chelmsford Report," in T. W. Wallbank, *Partition of India: Causes and Responsibilities* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1966), 31.
59. Thursby, 174.

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2. Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961), 90:337. Similar reflections concerning nonviolence of the weak were made on other occasions as Partition approached (88:160, 300; 89:62).
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6. *CWMG,* 85:33, 79; 10:39.
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Campaign to Stop Funding Hate: http://stopfundinghate.org/
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Communalism Combat: http://www.sabrang.com/cc.htm
Counter Currents: http://www.countercurrents.org/
Dhristipat: http://www.drishtipat.org/
Friends of India Society International: http://www.fisiusa.org
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Prashant: http://www.humanrightsindia.in
SAATH: http://www.saath.org
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Samerth: http://www.samerth.org
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Utthan: http://www.Utthangujarat.org
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