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**The GDP (Geo-Politics, Democracy and Peace)  
of the 21st Century**

by

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## **The GDP (Geo-Politics, Democracy and Peace) of the 21st Century\***

### **Introduction**

Unexpected happenings do take place in relation to a new publication. My previous book *Bahudha and the Post-9/11 World* was published by Oxford University Press (OUP) in April 2008. The book release function was organised by OUP, New York in the magnificent hall of the Indian Consulate there. I warmly accepted the invitation to join in it. Meanwhile, I received a mail from Niko Pfund, the head of OUP, New York stating that a friend of his is deeply impressed with *Bahudha*. He is a manufacturer of chocolates and would like his new chocolate to be named *Bahudha* chocolate. And he wanted to have my approval and also the amount of royalty that he should pay to me. I told him no royalty is required except that he may give two pieces of Bahudha chocolate to everyone joining the book launch event. This was done. After the event I was worried as to whether the *Bahudha* chocolate would eclipse the *Bahudha* approach that I have propounded after four years of research and contemplation! Thankfully, the *Bahudha* approach has been receiving global appreciation since then.<sup>1</sup>

In India during 2017, the fall in growth of G.D.P (Gross Domestic Product) became the topic of public discourse. However, during 2015-16 when I was finalising the manuscript of *The 21st Century: Geo-politics, Democracy and Peace*, I had discussed the importance of GDP as a barometer of national progress. I devoted 11 paragraphs in the book highlighting its inadequacies as well as its importance together with the concept of GNH (Gross National Happiness), proposed by the former King of Bhutan in 1970. It may be mentioned that the invention of GDP is one of the significant achievements of the 20th century that went to provide monetary measures of the market value of all goods and services produced in a quarterly as well as annual time frame. This came into currency in 1944 at the Britton Woods conference that had led to the establishment of the IMF and the World Bank.

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\*Speech of Shri B.P.Singh on the occasion of the release of his book *The 21st Century: Geo-politics, Democracy and Peace* on 30th October, 2017 at India International Centre, New Delhi.

GDP and productivity growth are indeed important, but it does not however take much imagination to realise that they do not encapsulate within themselves several facets of the evolution in human nature nor do they manifest the full range of human aspirations. Robert Kennedy conveyed poetically the idea that there is far more to life than what GDP on its own can ever measure. He wrote: ‘The Gross Domestic Product does not include the beauty of our poetry or the intelligence of our public debate. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.’<sup>2</sup> There is considerable merit in this observation. I am, however, certain that the burial ceremony of GDP will not take place in the 21st century. Even if we no longer use GDP exclusively for measuring development, it would not mean that it must be gotten rid of.

The other day Srijan Pal Singh, a brilliant scholar and a close associate of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, mentioned to me that it is easy to remember the book as GDP of the 21st Century. This observation set me thinking as to whether this book could be the G.D.P of the 21st century? GDP is being treated as a grade in the government’s report card. Will this book be graded in terms of its GDP norms or in the wider context of human and civilisational values? Could this book be a change agent?

It is true that geo-politics, democracy and peace are subjects that have fascinated me most as a student of political science and continue to do so. But I never thought about these implications while formulating the title of the Book. I really do not know the answer to these. It is for scholars to ponder over and take a view. For I firmly believe in the Sanskrit saying:

कविह करोति काव्यानी  
रसं जानाति पंडिताह।<sup>3</sup>

(The writer only writes it is for the learned to unravel its essence).

It is evident that we live in a world of transition. The international arrangements, the power structures and the generally accepted norms of conduct between nations--a kind of system that emerged after the

Second World War—is eroding. Yet despair would be a kind of self-indulgence. I am conscious of the need to devise new strategies and to look for new approaches.

In the book, I have tried to address issues of geo-politics, peace, democracy, ecology, education and values, good governance and the interplay of ideas, including science, spirituality and meaningful ways of living. I believe that these subjects are interlinked and their analyses alone will help appreciate the challenges that we face and are going to encounter if we want to make this earth a liveable planet. I have sought to unravel the truth in the light of ground realities, analyses available in records (including books and journals), and my own experience as an administrator.

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These subjects and concerns have been addressed in seven chapters of the book: (1) Building Peace: The *Bahudha* Approach; (2) Interplay of Ideas: The Indian Story; (3) Ecological Issues in the Himalayan Region; (4) Science, Spirituality and Ways of Living: A Plea for Integrated Education; (5) Democracy and its Consequences; (6) Good Governance: A Narrative from Democratic India; and (7) The Emerging World: Challenges and Possibilities.

In my view, the book *The 21st century* seeks to provide an answer to the problems that we face in tackling issues of environment and climate change; of arms control, of geography and faith related contentions among nation states and communities; of the need for combining science, spirituality and ways of living through educational programming; of strengthening of institutions within nation states and at international levels, both dealing with political and economic problems and more. I merely want to stimulate people to engage themselves with challenges facing us. Solutions will come through dialogic process. The issues of geo-politics and peace are closely inter-linked and so are questions pertaining to democracy and dignity of life.

## **Geo-politics**

It is true that when geo-politics dominate the regional or global scene; state systems, democratic or authoritarian, come under severe stress and peace is threatened. The geopolitical scene in the world has been often complicated by the interplay of historical legacies, radical views and religions. Three events of the second decade of the twenty-first century in particular establish the changing realities of geography and nationalism and the complexities of religious phenomena. First, the merger of Crimea into Russia in March 2014 generated fears about peace and tranquillity in Europe and beyond. Second, China's claims over the South China Sea as well as islands that Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam consider their own are also developments reminiscent of the games of geopolitics of the preceding century. Third, the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash-sham (ISIS), a jihadi militia of Sunni Muslim groups in Syria set up in June 2014, conquered large parts of territory in Syria and across northern and western Iraq. It is clear that Iraq and Syria by themselves cannot contain ISIS as military conflicts between Sunni and Shia sects as well as Christians and Muslims have spread to several countries in the Arab world and North Africa.

Fresh conflicts have emerged in the Korean peninsula threatening use of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. The spat between North Korea and USA has reached a new low and witnessed use of foul language from both sides. In fact, in the closing months of 2017, North Korea, South Korea and the United States face a catastrophic war that none of them want and the rest of the world totally abhors the prospect of nuclear conflict. It needs to be appreciated that there is no military solution to the problem. It is imperative to energetically pursue diplomatic efforts. The United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea have a special responsibility in this behalf and it is expected from them to be patient as well as vigilant. These countries are required to act in unison in order to diffuse the present imbroglio through dialogue. This crisis is causing severe strain on the UN capacity to maintain peace in the world. India too should render such assistance that the United Nations would need in the matter.

## **The Emerging World: Advent of New Centres of Power**

Looking at the emerging world in terms of major civilisations it seems that four: the Western, the Chinese, the Indian, and the Islamic, will continue to influence global geo-politics and culture. Notwithstanding some signs of decline, western civilisation, the originator of major innovations for the past three centuries, will probably continue to play an important role in global affairs. The Chinese and the Indian civilisations have had a very rich past and they are major demographic centres in the world. The shift of economic and political power from the West to the East would largely be towards China and India. The three Asian giants—China, India and Japan—will make manifold contributions to the global society as time passes.

Things have changed in the 21st century as many new centres of power have emerged, particularly China. In a media interview, China's President Xi Jinping had observed that the Chinese people love peace. It is not in the genes of the Chinese nation to invade other countries or seek world hegemony. He has repeated it several times. Notwithstanding declaration of peaceful behaviour by the Chinese leadership, there is reason to worry with regard to its territorial goals. In recent years, Vietnam, India, Japan, and the Philippines have all complained about Chinese incursions into disputed areas. Beijing is engaged in 'land reclamation' projects across the South China Sea, creating full-fledged islands that are likely to be equipped with military facilities to reinforce its claims of territorial waters far from the Chinese mainland.

Many observers fear that China will alter the international order. Is this fear misplaced? As I see it, China desires to have a lead role, but it would also like to operate within existing norms and will not lay down its own

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rules. It may be mentioned that China has been a permanent member of the Security Council for several years. Like USA and other major powers it has exercised the veto power to protect its strategic interests and to help its allies. It is natural to expect that like any other great power, China will use these institutions in future as well to promote its geo-political objectives. Some other observers also entertain the hope that in the long run China will adopt some liberal policy and that would create comfort in China's neighbourhood including in India, Japan, Vietnam, and in South-East Asia.

In the second decade of the 21st century, Japan has amended its Constitution that enables the Government to use its military power outside the country. The new stance of Japan will be an important factor in geo-politics. It is perceived that *in terms of power-politics it will help ensure that no one power dominates Asia in the coming decades.*

It may be mentioned that China and India were civilisation-states in the past. Confucius advocated that the rulers must be benevolent. India has a long tradition of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy which advocates peace and primacy of dharma over military force. India has never gone to another country bearing arms in its ageless history. As Michael Wood has said: 'History is full of Empires of the Sword, but India alone created an Empire of the Spirit'.<sup>4</sup>

In coming years, Asia's three biggest economies--China, India, and Japan are likely to present new growth models under three strong leaders: China's Xi Jinping; India's Narendra Modi; and Japan's Shinzo Abe. The reformation in the economy and technological progress that the trio seeks to accomplish in their respective countries, could be a growth driver of the world's economy, a hope that is supported by the poor and the unemployed in these countries and other parts of the world.

The pace of democratisation of technology and information has come to mean that anyone can get his or her hands on anything that would help him innovate and become a centre of power and influence. Notwithstanding this phenomenon, one can still reasonably hold the view that the United

States would continue to play a major role in the 21st century as well as in several fields including the world economy; science and technology; culture; and the democratic way of life. However, the 21st century would be different from the 20th century as the United States would be increasingly required to share global influence with many other countries.

The USA, China, India, Japan, Russia, Germany, Brazil, South Africa and Iran are going to play a dominant role in world affairs in the 21st century. The increase in the share of world trade of these countries and augmentation of their military strength would enable them to have a greater say in political as well as economic organs of global governance. In fact, these major powers would dominate the global institutions as well as the market in the coming decades of the 21st century.

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) has started showing some signs of promise as the heads of governments of its member nations have broadly agreed on the 3Cs—common vision, coordination, and cooperation. A development bank to meet developmental requirements of nation-states has been set-up with headquarters at Shanghai. China also took a lead role in establishing an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with headquarters at Beijing. These new institutions could become significant additions to the global economic architecture.

Geo-political plates are moving. Many believe that the 21st century will belong to Asia and that power will shift from the West to the East. While it is logical to hold that economic power would shift to Asia in the twenty first century, geo-political problems have in fact preceded it. In the emerging world of the 21st century, there will be multiple centres of power. All the nation-states are not going to be equal, and great powers are going to still exist. The geo-politics in the era of globalisation has clearly established that the only global order that has any chance of keeping peace is a pluralist one which accepts that there are open and closed societies, free and authoritarian ones. The acceptance of this reality would lead to changes in the international political and economic architecture.

The fond hope of liberal thinkers that the coming of the internet would usher in a shared global commons of information and that in turn it would deal effectively with hostility that was characteristic of the Cold War era too has come to naught. Today there is authoritarian rule, which is capitalist in economics and nationalist in ideology, in Russia, China, and a number of other countries. Capitalism can integrate easily with both liberal democracy and authoritarian regimes. However, there is one hopeful sign; no country wants to return to the Cold War era. But this by itself does not put an end to nationalist aspirations.

### **The Rise of China: Would Thucydides Trap be obviated in the 21st Century?**

The Greek general, strategic thinker and historian Thucydides (441–BC) reflecting upon the causes of the Peloponnesian war wrote: ‘What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta’.<sup>5</sup> This analysis has been called as ‘Thucydides Trap’ which refers to a situation when a rising power causes fear in an established power and that escalates towards war. In today’s context, the question is: Would the rise of China as an economic and military power challenge the supremacy of the sole super power, the United States and lead to War?

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For seven decades, since World War II, a rules based framework popularly known as the Washington Consensus defined world order. It has ensured a world without war among great powers. Today, several scholars think that increasingly powerful China is questioning this order, throwing into question the peace generations have taken for granted.

In a recent book titled *Destined For War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap*, Graham Allison asserts that ‘China and the United States are currently on a collision course for war--unless both

parties take difficult and painful actions to avert it'.<sup>6</sup> It is worth recalling that in the last century, a rising Germany had rattled Britain's established position on the top and that resulted in the World War.

In the present day world, Xi Jinping of China and Donald Trump of the United States personify their country's aspirations of greatness. Allison asks: 'Will Presidents Trump and Xi, or their successors, follow in the tragic footsteps of the leaders of Athens and Sparta or Britain and Germany? Or will they find a way to avoid war as effectively as Britain and the US did a century ago or the US and the Soviet Union did through four decades of Cold War? Obviously, no one knows. We can be certain, however, that the dynamic Thucydides identified will intensify in the years ahead'.<sup>7</sup>

There are contrary views as well. For example, Howard French in his book *Everything Under The Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China's Push for Global Power* holds that the primary target of Chinese muscle-flexing and ambition is not, in fact, the US, but Japan. 'As China's self regard has swollen, along with its new found power, Japan has returned to the center of the Chinese gaze in the form of a Bull's eye.'<sup>8</sup>

Amidst these assertions, the growth of China's economic and military strength under an authoritarian-capitalist system theoretically wedded to communist ideology makes interesting reading. Since 1980, China has made phenomenal progress, both as an economic and military power. China took full advantage of the growing potential of unrestricted global commerce to emerge as the number one trading nation and the second-largest economy in the world. In fact, China has attained this new position of economic powerhouse while complying with the rules of the World Trade Organization, which it joined in 2001. China has built a powerful military. China's military budget has risen from \$17 billion in 1990 to \$152 billion in 2017—a 900 percent increase during 25 years.

In 1946, China christened itself as People's Republic of China and adopted the authoritarian model of polity management under the Communist Party of China (CPC). The Chinese State since then has continued to control

its economy and has succeeded to expand the market share of Chinese enterprises, both in China and abroad. The United States and Western countries had, however, visualised that trade and technology support to China on liberal commercial terms would eventually turn China into a Western-style market economy. This did not happen. Instead, China has continued as an authoritarian, one-party state. The two institutions which control and back the Chinese nation-state are: the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

China is a permanent member of the Security Council with veto power. It has used this position to promote its strategic interests. Already China is exercising considerable political influence in Asia thanks to its enormous powerful economic clout. Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam have upgraded diplomatic and military relations with China. The phenomenal rise of China as a global power has forced Japan to come out of the dilemma of continuing the post-Second World War policy of dependence on the United States for its security. It is considering rearming itself more heavily, perhaps even with nuclear weapons. China's rise is weighing heavily on the ASEAN too. Beijing's pressure has tilted states like Cambodia towards China, and weakened US ties with the Philippines and Thailand. China is confronted with a string of American allies and partners: South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.

The Communist Party's *raison d'être* and source of legitimacy since the beginning of market reforms in the late 1970s have been successful economic modernisation and the maintenance of social stability during that process.

In 2013, China announced One Belt One Road (OBOR) infrastructure initiative that will have ports, railways, roads, and airfields linking China to Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. It would be a kind of new Silk Road that, when it materialises either fully or in parts will greatly expand China's economic and diplomatic influence. Sixty-four countries have joined this initiative. Besides setting up manufacturing units and defence modernisation, China has also invested

very significantly in upgrading its infrastructure, including in areas of health care and education.

Many believe that the 21st century will belong to Asia and that power will shift from the west to the east. While it is logical to hold that economic power would shift to Asia in the twenty first century, geopolitical problems have in fact preceded it. China thus presents a new, historically unprecedented combination: a non-democratic global-power that is both big and capitalist.

Lee Kuan Yew described the future of Asia with considerable insight and justification in his characteristic style:

‘...the 21st century will see Asia recover its place in the world. Their progress in the last 30 years entitles East Asians including the Chinese to be optimistic about their future. Short of some major unforeseeable disaster which brings chaos or breaks up China once again into so many warlord fiefdoms, it is only a question of time before the Chinese people reorganize, re-educate, and train themselves to take full advantage of modern science and technology.’<sup>9</sup>

China would remain an authoritarian country, and its success would encourage other authoritarian regimes to resist pressures to change. The political and economic architecture created after World War II and the present day global trading system have facilitated China enormously. The Chinese youth educated in Chinese universities as well as abroad understand the significance of peace, stability and development in Asia and the World. Above all, China’s age old tradition of ‘civilisation state’, and the prevalence of Buddhist philosophy in several parts of the country give one hope that China will not cause any major conflict in the coming decades of the 21st century. Looking at the history of China since 1946, one cannot rule out border skirmishes between China and its neighbours. I do not however see a full-fledged war between China and the United States or with its neighbours in the 21st century that the ‘Thucydides Trap’ envisages. ‘Thucydides Trap’, however, would continue to be a lively metaphor in academic discourse.

### **South Asia: Would the region move to a new era of amity obviating partition pains?**

On 15 August 1947, India attained freedom but it was an India divided into India and Pakistan. The British proposal to 'cut and quit' India was an elite project of the British administrators and their political masters as well as leaders of the Muslim League. The partition was accepted by the Congress Party after some initial opposition.

The British withdrew hastily. Winston Churchill, no friend of Indian independence, termed it as a 'shameful flight.' This partition was accompanied by unprecedented violence with more than one million dead. It created more than 11 million refugees. This was followed by the Pakistani attempt to capture the state of Jammu and Kashmir forcibly. Pakistan continues to be in control of a large tract of the states. Finally in 1971, Pakistan lost its control over its eastern half known before partition as East Bengal, which is now Bangladesh. The civil war that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh witnessed the Pakistani army killing over half a million of its fellow Muslim citizens in the East. There are a number of territorial disputes and also cross border terrorism from Pakistan. The consequences of these continue to make impact on other neighbouring countries particularly Afghanistan and China.

Partition, a decision taken in haste by a handful of men, has proved a monumental failure. The people of the region, where millions are still living below poverty line are in dire need of improvement in their economic conditions. Was the partition of India merely a division of one Nation into two? Or the breaking of a civilisational ethos that held good for centuries? How long would the youth of the region tolerate it under the fear of vested interests and the radical mullahs?

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I have always viewed that Partition was both a political failure as well as a civilisational one.

Should the youth of South Asia not ponder over their contemporary history and focus on how they might co-operate in building a better future?

It may be mentioned that the primordial loyalties of religion and ethnicity, caste and sects were aroused and dominated social and political discourse in South Asia alongside the movement for freedom from the British rule in the 20th century. It also saw the spread of modern education and fresh insights into India's civilisational attainments recorded in several languages: Sanskrit, Tamil, Pali and in several others.

The Partition created unprecedented crisis and continues to do so. In particular, the Partition raised mind-walls and spread hatred. Today, the situation in India's neighbourhood is not conducive to peace, as Pakistan not only provides safe havens to terrorist outfits, but uses terrorism as an instrument of state policy. All these are directly related to Partition. The Pakistan Army, the Mullahs among others have developed vested interests to persist with these divides. It has caused armed conflicts between India and Pakistan (in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999). In 1971, Pakistan was divided into Pakistan and Bangladesh on grounds of language. The inept and callous military and political leadership accelerated the process.

Thankfully a new wind has started blowing in the 21st century. People are looking at their past afresh and entertaining new ambitions fuelled by forces generated by information technology and, from the movement of capital and technology. Would globalisation and its twin sisters: technology and capital supported by new innovations in education, create a new set of social relations, and a fresh approach towards unity and harmony in society, polity and economy in South Asia? Would the new elite of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan overcome the partition crisis in the 21st century?

Since the inauguration of the democratic Republic, faith in India's rise at the global level has gained strength and today it looks a clear possibility. There is little doubt that India, with strong and sensible political leadership both at the Centre and in the States, can accelerate the pace of its economic and industrial progress.

Of course, India's immense diversity—multiplicity of religions, languages, castes and belief patterns—presents enormous challenges as it makes decision-making processes slow—the difficulty of arriving at a unity of approach necessary for implementation. This results, at times, in delaying concerted action on important national issues. However, this plurality is not such a disadvantage. The various cultural traits and practices as well as religious beliefs that have poured into India throughout the ages have created a kind of synthesis, which needs to be accommodated when political and administrative decisions are taken. If well-handled by well-meaning leaders, the presence of diversity in our society can be utilised to bring about a rich and harmonious way of life.

India's march towards progress and celebration of diversity has been guaranteed by democracy and the rule of law. In fact, India's political stability can be strengthened by a strong and decisive political leadership through its democratic institutions, and pluralist ethos. Creative leadership igniting the minds of youth can accelerate both the pace of progress and the construction of an inclusive society in India.

India has been a civilisation state since the beginning of the state formation processes. To many it seems unlikely that the Republic would recapture the territory that made Mughal or British India a confederation of nation-states along India's historic boundaries during the 21st century. Towards the end of the 20th century, we saw how the energy of the country's youth, and the dynamism of its entrepreneurs were released. The aspirational class of young men and women in Bangladesh and Pakistan may support the idea of a confederation as a way of conciliation. At a deeper level, there may be a positive response to the call that civilisational oneness makes as against religion and ethnicity, and recently created political boundaries (1947 and 1971), and the will of the armed forces.

If we look at the global scene, we find that in this part of the world, interplay of ideas (a subject that has been extensively covered in Chapter 2 of this book), religion and culture, and scientific advancement gives India and the neighbouring states a unique position. India has been home

to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism and others for several centuries. In its neighbourhood, the people of Nepal profess Hinduism. Bhutan is a Buddhist State, so to a large extent are Sri Lanka and Myanmar. An overwhelming majority of people of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan are believers in Islam. All these nation-states have a history of civilisational unity, within their geography and among them. During the last seven decades, the working of democracy in India has imparted new meaning and content to harmonious living among people of different faiths and ethnicities.

Even after seven decades, the wounds of Partition are alive. No wonder, any aggressive assertion of faith-based identity provokes fears in the society. It is therefore essential to fashion our political discourse, and think in larger terms of citizenship and fundamental rights, which duly take into account and protect the religious and cultural rights of every person and community. All over the world, minorities have benefited substantially by articulating their concerns in the framework of citizenship and basic rights rather than demanding special and exclusive treatment.

The Constitution of India confers equal rights on all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion. It however expects from its citizens loyalty to India. This has been eloquently expressed by the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution B.R Ambedkar as follows; 'I am of the opinion that the most vital need of the day is to create among the mass of the people the sense of a common nationality the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mohamedans or Sindhis and Kanarese afterwards but that they are Indians first and Indians last.'<sup>10</sup>

I am fully aware that all big countries have problems with their smaller neighbours on account of fears that disparity in size and power generate among the latter. This gets accentuated when there are common cultural and civilisational values. This applies to India and her neighbours as well. The situation has been complicated because of geo-political ambitions of China in South Asia. It is true that some of India's neighbours look towards China to balance India's dominance. At present Pakistan's

endemic hostility towards India has severely restricted the growth of harmony and unity in South Asia. Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives too at times play the China card. However, China's policy in respect of East China, and South China Seas is gradually making them look towards India. Such situations always call for imaginative policies and deft handling through diplomacy.

It is worth recalling that Hindus and Muslims had developed friendly relations as a result of the common life of centuries. It was therefore no wonder that the people of India participated in the first war of independence in 1857 as a united community. In fact, prior to 1857, there is no record of even a single incident of conflict or clash on a religious basis. After 1857, the British deliberately promoted the division among Hindus and Muslims through a series of measures like the re-organisation of the army and introduction of the concept of martial and non-martial races. The civil population was also subjected to a general policy which gradually turned Hindus against Muslims, and Muslims against Hindus. Maulana Azad in his presidential address of the Congress in 1940 put it eloquently when he said: 'it was India's historic destiny that many human races and cultures should flow to her, finding a home in her hospitable soil, and that many a caravan should find rest here .... Eleven hundred years of common history (of Islam and Hinduism) have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour..... These thousand years of our joint life have moulded us into a common nationality..... Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible. No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity.'<sup>11</sup>

It is necessary to have public discourse, particularly among the youth and the political leaders on these aspects of the erstwhile British policy of division among communities in South Asia, and its unfortunate continuities. It is my belief that people of the South Asian countries view such divisions as enemies of their rapid economic development.

In fact, democratic governance helps develop its own 'soft power'. This is distinct from the 'hard power' of the military (including the use of or threat to use force) and trade (including trade embargo). The 'soft power' today is the power of example, and it constitutes the finest component of a people's culture like its institutions, customs, values, beliefs, ideas and reputation. For example, in India, democracy has also developed its own folklores and folktales, as also institutions of independent judiciary, media and other organisations of governance that go to ensure rule of law.

Alongside the wave of democracy, we have the growing number of university graduates proficient in different subjects trained in India and in other neighbouring countries, as also at the centres of excellence in the USA, the UK and others. This is a new class. These young men and women have the ability to create new waves of harmony and convergence among different sections of their society and its leaders in terms of their civilisational prowess.

Harmony between these newly acquired attributes of 'soft power' that democracy and modern education have given us with the traditional ones like arts, music, dance, drama, painting, sculpture, yoga and the philosophical quest would go a long way in building common secular beliefs among people. If India's civilisational heritage and secular ethos, as also of other countries, succeed to a large extent, it may provide a new way of living for the people of this region and may also be of considerable relevance to the Middle-East, Europe, and USA. I call this *Bahudha* (a subject that has been dealt with in Chapter 1 of the Book). Would we have a renaissance in this region? Would this renaissance encompass political arena as well and tame forces of vested interests and narrow nationalism? Would all these lead to cooperation among nation-states outlined above culminating into a loose union of states? I attach considerable power to civilisational forces, as also to democracy. There can, however, be no definite answer at this stage. Much would depend upon how things take shape in the coming decades. But to me it is not utopian.

## **Democracy and its consequences**

All those who aspire to rule or govern with the consent of the people recognise democracy as the principal guarantor of political legitimacy. Democracy is desirable because it nurtures development and is mindful of justice. We have people who believe and practice the notion that markets and commercial pursuits are better secured in a democratic system. They also swear that democracy alone provides a credible covenant for an egalitarian and inclusive social order. There are others who claim that democracy fosters '*democratic peace*' and helps reduce the risk of war, particularly among democratically ruled states.

As I see, where the will of the people reigns supreme, the democratic systems can help generate social forces as well as political accountability mechanisms to secure peace, development and dignity of life. Although the United Nations Charter makes no specific mention of the word 'democracy', the opening words of the Charter, however, declares 'We the Peoples', reflect the fundamental principle of democracy that the will of the people is the source of legitimacy of sovereign states and therefore of the United Nations as a whole. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, clearly projected the concept of democracy by stating 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government'. Guided by these ideals in 2005, the U.N. had organised the World Summit at which the world leaders reaffirmed 'that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social, and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.' It was brought out that there is no single model of democracy and that 'democracy does not belong to any country or region. Indeed, the ideal of democracy is rooted in philosophies and traditions from many parts of the world.'

Democracy as a set of values retains strong appeal worldwide, despite occasional setbacks and stagnation. When we look at the systems of governance, we find that out of 7 billion people on the earth, 2 billion

people are living under autocratic regimes of one kind or the other, and the rest under different types of democracies.

In recent times, besides the 9/11 catastrophe, four other events of the 21st Century, popularly known as--the Arab Spring, India against Corruption, Occupy Wall Street, and Pro-Democracy movement in Hong Kong became important parts of public discourse. I am of the opinion that the Arab Spring might have come earlier if military intervention in the Arab world after 9/11 had not destroyed institutions of governance in Iraq, Syria, Libya and in other countries. One wonders as to whether the outcome of such an Arab Spring would have been different?

These events accompanied by mass protests in established democracies highlighted the malfunctioning of democratic institutions. It addressed questions of authoritarian and arbitrary use of power, grave inequality and wide-spread corruption. Leaders of democratic countries often make extravagant promises, particularly at the time of elections, than they actually can deliver. Can democracies transform themselves to address these questions? The success and spread of democracy in the twenty-first century is linked to the provision of a corruption-free administrative, business and political environment. In the democratic universe, India is not only the largest democracy, but also the most vibrant.

Democracy created a new nation-state of equal citizens in India. The Indian system of parliamentary democracy soon became a model for Asian and African countries newly emerged from colonial rule. It must be said to the credit of the Indian people and their freedom leaders that they not only established democracy in a plural and poor society, but also made it successful and stable, vibrant and result oriented. Several questions come to mind.

Perry Anderson, the political essayist and historian, admires Hindu secularism and hails it as the most important factor in the success story of Indian democracy. ‘The-Hindu value system was a prophylactic against—military dictatorship, since warriors lacked moral authority. It

Is the stability and success of Indian democracy a sui-generis phenomenon reflecting the plural character and age-old values of Indian culture and heritage? Could it be ascribed to the calibre of India's freedom leaders? Is this solely due to the constitution that India has? Was this success not on account of the leaders of the Indian government as well as of states?

was enough to consider Pakistan or Bangladesh to see, by contrast, the legacy of martial ideals in Islam.<sup>712</sup>

Is the stability and success of Indian democracy a sui-generis phenomenon reflecting the plural character and age-old values of Indian culture and heritage? Could it be ascribed to the calibre of India's freedom leaders? Is this solely due to the constitution that India has? Was this success not on account of the leaders of the Indian government as

well as of states? In my opinion, all these factors have contributed to both the stability and success of Indian democracy. In fact the civilisational strength of India, that has over the millennia accorded tolerance and gives consideration to different points of view, provided fertile ground for secular democratic institutions to take root.

Public goods and quality delivery of services are at the heart of success of democracy. People must send able and compassionate persons to public offices so that they could formulate policies and programmes for the good of people with clarity. At the same time, common people are required to build strong pressures on the political class and the executive.

### **Is Democracy destined to last for ever?**

Is democracy destined to be universal, or will it fade away and be substituted by another ideal? Will it be able to succeed in the 21st century? Will it triumph over the forces of religious fundamentalism and authoritarian rule?

Several questions come to one's mind while talking about the evolution of democracy in the 21st century. One thing is certain that democracy will be defined and re-defined, and its descriptions would continue to be updated not only by scholars, but also by ordinary citizens. Democracy as one of the finest expressions of human genius is attractive, but it can never be taken for granted. To design sound policies, one needs the efforts, not only of the politicians, but also of scientists, economists, teachers,

and technologists, and the best knowledge that is available. However, the successful implementation of even the best policies requires the total commitment of political leaders and the full support of the voting public. In fact, the success and spread of democracy in the 21st century will depend upon the delivery of quality services to the people, and provision of a corruption-free political, administrative, and business environment. We do believe that politicians, civil servants, and business leaders have the ability to learn, and it is certainly not impossible that they will start listening to ideas formulated by enlightened citizens.

Can we presume that the future of democracy will automatically be bright? One is not very sure. For the sustenance of a democratic system, it is essential to have an alert citizenry. The citizens have to be mentally prepared to engage with issues, even join civil disobedience movements if necessary to keep democratic institutions functioning in terms of the ideals of democracy. It is important to have multiple articulate voices; citizens, media, and NGOs must all have their say. The key institutions of democracy—the judiciary, the media, the Election Commission, the audit organisation, and the Public Service Commission— need to remain independent. The civil servants must have freedom to work for securing the public good. Every citizen must accept that various communities living in democracies must be entitled to follow their own religion, speak their own language and celebrate their own festivals.

On other occasions, I have entertained the idea as to whether human ingenuity would devise a better alternative to what we have and call it by another name. No definite answer has come to me, or probably to any other person. This, however, does not mean that alternatives are not already present deep down in the human consciousness. It may perhaps take considerable time for them to emerge. Till then, democracy would prevail.

The time has, however, come for political leaders, jurists, enlightened citizens, and others who are concerned about the future of democracy to look closely at the challenges facing their countries, and devise ways and means to remedy the short-comings in the working and structure of democratic governments.

There is no question of abandoning democracy to opt for monarchy, autocracy or dictatorship of the proletariat. The new democracy whenever and wherever it emerges will be an improvement—a more responsive and answerable governance system.

Today the threat to democracy from ideals of communism and other forms of authoritarian rules are almost non-existent. It emanates instead from high unemployment, soaring inequality, financial and economic instability, and the poor quality of services of the state even in key areas of security and justice. Good governance is the principal issue.

I am a passionate believer in and an advocate of democracy. The lustre of democracy, its folklores and folktales, and quality and intelligence displayed in several of its dialogues and debates have always fascinated me. May be this is on account of my family background as my father and grandfather actively participated in the struggle for freedom and my personal faith in democracy that I have acquired over the years. At the same time I am acutely aware of deficiencies in the delivery of quality services in democracy, and the inefficiencies of its administrative and justice systems.

### **Peace, Ways of Living and the Bahudha Approach**

Peace and democracy are not given constructs. Both institutions of peace and democracy have to be carefully raised and nourished. This requires patience and perseverance. The leadership of nation states as well as institutions of governance, local, regional and global, play important roles.

The fundamental issue of the 21st century is how to promote an environment that is conducive to maintenance of peace and harmony. Peace is not simply the absence of war or cessation of conflicts among nation-states. Peace is an essential quality that should characterise human activities as the world faces several issues: political, religious, economic and cultural. Peace can be secured firmly only in a wider environment where injustice, inequality and exploitation are tackled effectively and there is freedom of expression and dignity of human life.

To my mind, the future of peace and harmony in the 21st century would be directly linked to issues concerning (i) poverty and increasing inequality; (ii) ecology, global warming and climate change; (iii) nuclear weapons, emerging technology of warfare and continuing arms race among nation-states; (iv) geopolitics and nationalism; and (v) religious extremism.

Poverty and inequality are major threats to peace and social harmony across the globe. Poverty in particular curbs human development. Fortunately, extreme poverty is being eradicated from all over the world including Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The process of poverty eradication must be accelerated to strengthen the peace process. Inequality despite rapid economic development in both developed and developing countries is on the rise. The inequality of income, inherited wealth and power creates divisions among people. The urge for equality is innate among human beings. Today people no longer blame fate for either their poverty or the huge inequality in society. The trickle down approach hitherto followed will not serve the purpose. It is being said that the best policy is to tax the rich and give good education and skills to the poor, but this area is not receiving the required attention.

The ecological crisis facing humanity is frightening. There is a credible threat to human survival from global warming and climate change with the potential to damage the lives and habitats of billions of people in different parts of the world. Rapid modernisation processes leading to the construction of dams, hydroelectric power stations, roads, the movement of security forces and the migration of people disturb the ecosystem and lead to disequilibrium. The threat to South Asia is especially tangible both in the Himalayan region and in the Western Ghats of India. Climate change too has to be viewed in the context of enormous disturbances to the ecosystem.

### **Bahudha Approach**

Since the concluding decades of the 20th century, global politics has been rapidly changing both in its character and content. The moot question is: How should we live?'. How do we control human nature that involves

violent conflict and threatens peace? How do we subordinate sectarian and ethnic loyalties to work for harmony among people? How can love and compassion be made to prevail over oppression and exploitation? How do we get engaged in a dialogue on a constant basis? Is the military alone capable of securing peace and calming the passion fuelled by the mix of geo-politics and religion? Haven't we entered into an era of revenge and vengeance as this new 'type of war' continues on?

All these unprecedented challenges call for a new, bold and imaginative statecraft from world leaders. I have propounded the *Bahudha* approach in this behalf. I take this opportunity to share this concept with you.

The *Bahudha* approach has interesting origins. At the time of the 9/11 catastrophe in the USA, I was Executive Director of the World Bank, at Washington DC. In the aftermath of the tragedy, it became fashionable for every think-tank to discuss two questions: '*What went wrong?*' and '*Why people hate us (Americans)?*' I happened to attend one such meeting during September itself. The gathering was impressive; I was seated almost opposite the chairperson. The guest speaker had concluded on the sombre note of the need for building a coalition of nations against terrorism. He also spoke of the radicalisation of Islam, values of religious pluralism, and the need for tolerance. The presentation over, the chairperson asked for comments and looked at me. She said that India may have the answer in view of its heritage of pluralism and originality of mind, and gave me the floor. I was not prepared. I recall having said then that '*while India may have the answer, I do not*' and went on to narrate my experiences in handling terrorism in India. I was aware of the inadequacy of my response. For the real question was: What could we do to achieve harmony in a world so globalised, yet with nations so unequal, living in mutual distrust, fear and worse terror?

Since then I was contemplating this theme with a view to exploring an enduring framework for a global public policy—a policy for harmony among different peoples and societies in the post 9/11 world as seen through the lens of the Indian civilisational experience.

I would like to call the approach I am suggesting *Bahudhâ*. This comes from my personal attachment to an attitude that has greatly contributed to the enrichment of harmonious life in India: ‘respect for another person’s view of truth with hope and belief that he or she may be right’. This is best expressed in the Rigvedic hymn that enjoined more than three millennia ago.

*Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudhâ Vadanti*

(The Real is one, the learned speak of it variously)<sup>13</sup>

Pluralism is the closest equivalent of *Bahudha* in English. But *Bahudha* denotes much more than pluralism as dharma conveys more than religion.

The *Bahudhâ* approach recognises that there is a distinction between plural societies and pluralism. Pluralism is an inevitable ingredient of democratic societies. The role of religion, language, and ethnicity is very significant in plural societies. Pluralism in this context is an imperative for both developed and developing societies.

Pluralist societies are necessarily multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multilingual societies. In such societies, there are various boundaries: racial, linguistic, religious, and at times even ideological. The *Bahudhâ* approach does not believe in annexation or transgression of boundaries or assimilation of identities and propagation of a simplistic world view. It merely facilitates dialogue and thereby promotes understanding of the collective good. The realisation of one’s own identity may sustain boundaries and yet, at the same time, understanding of other identities may help formulate a public policy of harmony. The *Bahudhâ* approach is conscious of the fact that societies without boundaries are not possible.

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The culture of *Bahudhâ* is deeply rooted in the inculcation of a special attitude from an early age. Dialogue requires a state of mind where one can strongly believe in one's own way of looking at issues while simultaneously accommodating another's point of view. It is this mental discipline that makes one willing to consider the validity of the other person's view point.

In short, the *Bahudhâ* approach is both a celebration of diversity and an attitude of mind that respects another person's point of view. Democracy and dialogue are central to this approach.

Diversity celebrates different religions, gods and goddesses and belief systems. It also promotes a feeling that the world would be a dull and uniform place if there was only one religion, one god, one language, one folklore and one folktale. The human species cannot be all of one belief or faith or system—humanity is diversity—something we too often forget.

As I view it, the problem lies in over-emphasising the commonly shared belief among believers of various religions that there is only '*one truth*'. There may not be any problem in supporting this view so long as it relates to the quest for truth. However, problems arise in its practice. Most of the religions have a single 'god' and a single 'scripture'. The believer of such a religion thinks that their 'god' is supreme and that their 'scripture' contains all the truth. The fundamentalist groups go on to insist on scrupulous adherence to every tenet of the scriptures notwithstanding enormous changes in ground realities based on new discoveries negating age-old beliefs and prescriptions. A scripture is a man-made document formulated by a saint in his state of enlightened consciousness. Such a document cannot be applicable to all times and to all people. It may not contain answers to all human problems of an inter-dependent world.

It is for us to move towards a clash of civilisations or harmony among them; to indulge in wanton destruction of forests *or* to conserve them; to permit oligarchs to control the destiny of future generations or to give people a say in the formulation of policies which affect their lives; *to* allow killing of innocents at the hands of terrorists or to control it firmly; to teach hatred *or* love; and so on.

In this matrix, our perception as well as our approach needs to change radically to avoid collapse of the existing international order. This is both for self-preservation and collective survival. The emotional frontier is becoming as important as our geographical frontiers. A tolerant world calls for appreciation of differences and similarities of others with one's values and belief systems. Keeping all these in view, I have propounded the *Bahudha* approach. The *Bahudha* approach is both a celebration of diversity and an attitude of mind that respects another person's point of view. This approach could be secured particularly through (1) religious harmony; (2) educational programming; (3) strengthening of international political architecture: the United Nations; and (4) the use of military power in terms of the UN Charter.

The great human achievements of technology need to be fused with enhanced powers of humane, compassionate, and moral judgment. The challenge is clearly before all of us and we have to harness spiritual energy to make the world a better place to live. Towards these, all I seek is to re-engage my readers with their own humanity in that spirit.

### **Future Perspectives: Peace, Ecology and Dignity of life.**

World leaders are well aware of and concerned about peace, ecology and dignity of life and are making efforts towards finding solutions. Concerted efforts are being made to achieve the targets defined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) adopted in 2000. In the year 2015, world leaders assembled again at the United Nations and resolved to further the development agenda and adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. This was emotively titled 'Transforming Our World–2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

It now seems quite probable that nation-states will not pursue military conquest to become rich because trade, technology, and the market are providing less costly and more durable means of achieving prosperity. At the same time, they will probably pursue their strategic interests and continue acquiring new military technologies and equipment. As I see it, globalisation and economic progress are rapidly altering the hierarchy

of nation-states. New powerful nation-states will demand a greater say in the international political structure. While I do not see weapons of mass destruction being eliminated in the 21st century, there could be greater balance between nations. The global political architecture may undergo changes. The UN system will need to be strengthened in order to secure global peace and order. Markets will dominate economic thought-processes and innovations particularly in technology. There is a growing, yet still inadequate, awareness of the important role which religions could and should play in international relations. Notwithstanding these policy deficits, politicised religion will continue to make an impact on global affairs.

The 21st century will see major reforms in the U.N. However, as I see it, the UNO will not be able to graduate to a level of either a world order or a world government in the 21st century. The nation-states are deeply attached to their sovereign power over their territory and people are not willing to dilute it.

The ecological crisis would continue to generate fear and to acquire greater urgency and complexity in the 21st century, notwithstanding positive steps which have already been initiated in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Beyond the greenhouse gas emission problem, major problems will emerge in the areas of water and food scarcity.

It seems clear, however, that the 21st century will be dominated by a pluralist ethos: multiple nation-states; multiple centres of power; multiple faiths; multiple cultures; multiple economies; and multiple languages. It also seems self-evident that the coming decades will be witness to phenomenal changes on account of fresh innovations in technology, religious conflicts, and robust demands for human dignity. Terrorism and climate change would continue to throw serious challenges to the objectives of securing human welfare and a peaceful world. Religion and culture will be widely used to make fresh claims for economic and political rights, as well as for liberty, equality, and democracy. Some of

these would be unprecedented opportunities in disguise and will call upon political and spiritual leaders, as well as the institutions of governance, to make choices which would not be easy tasks.

The challenges before us are colossal, by any reckoning. Politics is the most formidable driver of change as well as harmony. It is my hope that the 21st century shall have better drivers than what we had in the previous one. Would that happen?

Leaders endowed with spiritual resources can strengthen the cause of peace and people's welfare. They can think outside the traditional boxes of faiths and scriptures, paradigms of democracy and dictatorship and so on by invoking the paramount need of the people to live in peace. Such leaders can make a positive influence in society and polity management. In such a situation love and compassion, non-violence, and respect for the other person's point of view shall prevail and guide human affairs. Let us combine statesmanship and good governance with the wisdom of the world's faiths and the principles of spiritual practice. Virtues such as honesty, generosity, courage, fortitude and empathy are core strengths or capacities that are needed in order for a social system to function well and result in political, social, and economic development.

Would the 21st century have enough leaders in different walks of life to take our people to follow the right path? Or would the world be guided by demagogues and fascists, a phenomenon that we witnessed in the 20th century? The challenge is clearly before all of us and we have to harness spiritual energy to make the world a better place to live. The achievements of technology must be fused with enhanced powers of humane, transcendent, and moral judgment.

How do we move towards a better world? One is aware that the 21st century will not succeed in replacing the love of power by the power of love, notwithstanding the fact that the power of love has enormous power and that the world needs it. We must not get disenchanted or be filled with despair in the face of the enormity of the challenge. Optimism is crucial.

I am aware that there are people who think hope is irrational. They would like to submit to the movement of time, and accept whatever turn it takes. I have been in administration all my life and have known public leaders of both kinds: those who work to promote their conviction and a larger number of others who see the opportunity of holding public office as a means of self-aggrandisement and worse. This could be changed only when the best move to public office with full conviction and the capability to act and the ability to do so.

I believe that both institutions and individuals are important. Institutions mould character and individuals provide resilience and flexibility to institutions. For to preserve and strengthen, hope calls upon our wisdom and our energy. The need is to nurture the moral strength of men and women and their leaders to live with compassion and to spend their energies working for peace and genuine development.

One positive trend is that the present generation of people think about the future. And the more we think about the future, the more we expand our outlook of what we should do to save it. I am not visualising a 'borderless world'. All I am advocating is that we bring down mind walls that divide people and create hatred. This seems to be an achievable target provided we work in that direction. I am aware of citizens in different parts of the globe who at the psychological level believe and practice for the welfare of everyone. It is my belief that the dogs of war and conflict will bark and may occasionally bite in the 21st century as well, but will not prevail as they did in the preceding century.

I strongly feel that strengthening of open societies where dialogue has primacy and where the spirit of understanding another's point of view is cultivated leads to a better world. Fundamentalism or that a particular view of the world must prevail is the worst of all ideologies and must be discarded. The need is to resolve that as a people we will not allow our respective faiths to be used as instruments of violence. We must have the moral strength to live in accordance with the teachings of compassion and spend all our energies working for peace and development.

## Conclusion

Geo-politics, Democracy and Peace and interplay of ideas and approaches among these will dominate the 21st Century. I, however, do not know whether my book would be called GDP of the 21st century. This is for scholars and students to reflect upon. In my perception, the usefulness of the book should be judged as to whether it speaks in times of crisis when consulted, or becomes an ornament on a bookshelf. As the eminent Hindi poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar wrote:

रचना तो पुरी हुई, जान भी है इसमें ?  
पूछूँ जो कोई बात, मूर्ति बतलायेगी ?  
लग जाय आग यदि किसी रोज देवालय में,  
चौंकेगी या यह खड़ी-खड़ी जल जायेगी।???

Creation is complete,  
But does it have life?  
If I interrogate it,  
Will the idol reply?  
If one day fire erupts,  
In the temple's heart.  
Will the idol speak,  
Or remain still in strife?<sup>14</sup>

I submit my book titled *The 21st Century: Geo-politics, Democracy and Peace* to such a test.

## Notes

1. See Balmiki Prasad Singh.2008. 'Bahudha and the Post-9/11 World'. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. for detailed analysis.
2. See Robert F. Kennedy Speeches Remarks at the University of Kansas, March 18, 1968.
3. Floating Verse. (Authorship not known).
4. See <https://www.psychedelicaventure.net/2011/06/india-empire-of-spirit-documentary-film.html>.
5. See Graham Allison.2017. 'Destined For War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?' Houghton Mifflin Harcourt..... Preface of the book.
6. Ibid (Preface).
7. Ibid (Preface).
8. See Howard French. 'Everything Under The Heavens: How the Past helps Shape China's Push for Global Power' (Scribe: 2017).....See *Financial Times* London 1st/2nd April 2017).
9. See Lee Kuan Yew. 2013. *The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World, Interviews and Selections* by Graham Allison and Robert D. Blackwill with Ali Wyne. Belfer Center Studies in International Security. Cambridge: The MIT Press. P. 16.
10. See *Ambedkar and Social Justice*. Volume I (Publications Division, Government of India, 1992) (Opening page).
11. See *Congress Presidential Addresses, Volume Five: 1940-1985*. edited by A.M. Zaidi.Indian Institute of Applied Political Research. New Delhi. 1985. pp. 17-38.
12. See Perry Anderson's article 'One Exceptional Figure Stood Out', (London Review of Books, 30 July 2015).

13. See *Rig Veda* (I, 164-46)-the earliest among the four Vedas – composed in 1500 BC or even earlier.
14. See Ramdhari Singh Dinkar. ‘Chakrawal’. (Udiyachal – 2005). P – 69 (English version is of the author).

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Balmiki Prasad Singh is a distinguished scholar, thinker and public servant. Balmiki Prasad Singh is former Governor of Sikkim. Earlier, he was Culture Secretary and Home Secretary, Government of India; and Executive Director and Ambassador at the World Bank, Washington, DC. B. P. Singh was born on January 1, 1942 in Bihar. He was educated in a village school and subsequently at the Universities of Patna and Oxford. He became lecturer in the post graduate department of Political Science of Patna University at the age of nineteen. B. P. Singh was appointed to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1964. He has been the recipient of several fellowships and awards. Singh has written six books. His latest book is titled : *The 21st Century: Geo-politics, Democracy and Peace* (Routledge: New York-London 2017). B. P. Singh is currently working on the promotion of Peace, Science and Culture through his association with several organisations and by writings and speeches. B.P. Singh is well-known as the author of *Bahudha* approach, which outlines the path towards a harmonious world as against the clash of civilisations. B. P. Singh is an eminent public speaker in English and Hindi and has delivered memorial lectures and speeches at national and global levels.