CHAPTER II

CULTURAL INDIA UP TO THE PERIOD OF PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN

I wish to treat Prithviraj Chauhan as a milestone in the history of cultural India as well as Indian culture. For more than one reasons; in the strict sense of the term; Prithviraj Chauhan could be termed as the last Indian ruler of Delhi (India) before 15 August 1947. Though history treats Bahadur Shah Zafar as the last Indian King at Delhi; in the strict sense of the term Zafar is an outsider whose ancestors came to this Nation as invaders. Precisely for this reason I wish to treat ancient India up to the period of Prithviraj as one unit in my attempt to talk about cultural India. While speaking about cultural India one thing must be born in mind; it definitely is beyond the political boundaries of today's Indian Union. Ideally, cultural India includes many neighbouring countries of present day India; and this sometimes gets the popular name of Greater India.

India gets her very name India from the mighty river Sindhu (in Sanskrit) which is now in today's Pakistan. One could say that the Sindhu Valley is the very womb of Indian Civilisation. The early Āryan (the concept is disputed) settlers called the river Sindhu, which means a huge sheet of water. Sometimes the word Sindhu is also used as a synonym for ocean. The region is also known as Āryāvarta- to mean the area or
dwelling region of Aryans. The idea of Sindhu civilization gets disputed with the knowledge of the river Sarasvati. With the river Sindhu we find civilization only to the south and not to the north, which remained a puzzle. But with Sarasvati, we find the civilization evenly spread on either side and the entire length. So the view that Sarasvathra culture ought to be the name gets stronger.

It must be noted that the term Āryan ought to be used connotatively meaning the one with a given set of qualities. Some people treat it as a racial concept, or to identify a group of people speaking Aryan languages etc. To me it is more of a quality concept; that stands to mean group of people with given qualities.

The term "Āryan" needs some serious clarification at this point. This is one term that had been much misinterpreted and misrepresented. Western Historians like Max Muller etc. treats Āryan as a racial identity. Right through their writings of history, they treat the term Aryan to stand for race. The French thinker Michael Danino contradicts the theory of Max Muller in his book, 'The Invasion That Never Was'. From Max Muller it was a deliberate lie to treat Aryan as a race; because through such theories the Europeans could intellectually legitimise their colony rule in the east, particularly in India. Such attempts to intellectually legitimise domination is nothing new to history and Sir Francis Bacon speaks best about this in his book "Novum Organon...". Bacon speaks about very calculated ideological deception that craftily deceives people into
accepting the illegitimate domination of the dominator. Bacon identifies four idols as the agent of and for deception; and they are (1) idols of the cave (2) idols of the theatre (3) idols of the market place and (4) idols of the tribe. Later, we call such deceptions as 'ideology' 'hegemony' etc. In short, Max Muller's "Aryan race" theory was nothing more than yet another European pattern of deceiving the public to intellectually legitimise social domination. Max Muller's terming the term Aryan as a race is also such attempt to legitimise the domination of the Europeans over Asia, particularly India. A huge narration of this can be found in the autobiography of Adolf Hitler, Mein Keph. The theory in nut shell is this: 'Aryans are a superior race, gifted with great abilities to create culture and civilisation. The more pure is their blood and race, the greater is their capacity to create culture and civilisation. All great civilisation and culture in the entire world is created by Aryan race'.

However or whatever was such persons obsessions with their superiority, of race etc., they had to, they certainly couldn't help it; recognise the amazing greatness of the Indian culture and civilisation. And now they are out to establish that this culture and civilisation is a creation of the Aryans who had culturally invaded and conquered India. On the first place the Europeans claim that they are Aryans as they have blue eyes, golden hair etc. So it was their ancestors who came to the Indus valley in batches and settled, to create the mighty Indian culture and civilisation etc. But slowly the Aryans got mingled with the aborigins,
lost the purity of their blood, and became degenerated. Now again the Europeans are coming and making colonies. Naturally they are the only eligible ones to rule, so their domination is just a historical necessity. The popularisation of this theory was so effective that not only it convinced the Europeans, but also it convinced Indians to desperate helplessness. There were many Indians who were very sure that only the British are equipped with, as well as capable to rule India. To them, “home rule” was the biggest joke. Mahārāja Ranjēt Singh of Jamnagar is one such example, to speak of just one among many. Thus intellectual legitimisation of social domination was perfectly carried out, and even today, it continues. Let us make a small attempt to revisit the concept of Ārya or Āryan (more discussions on the Arian theory shall be carried later in the next chapter). Undoubtedly, it is originally a Sanskrit expression and term. Thus etymologically, the term Āryan originated in India and in Sanskrit language. So, if Āryan is a race, and they were coming in batches to India, that group came without any name, or such people became Aryan only after their reaching India. And who might have called them so? If they called themselves Āryans to distance themselves from the aborigins then they had done it so only after their learning Sanskrit so well. Now why should they adopt so precious a name in a newly learned foreign language? It could have been only natural for them to use an expression from their own language, about which, if they had any, we know nothing of.
Another argument could be that the Aryans came, settled, and then only the Sanskrit language had evolved. If this is so, then the aborigins active participation can’t be ruled out at all. If the original Aryan language is in any way responsible for creation of Sanskrit language then it would not have been so different from other European languages. Further, given their own theory, the original Aryans would have been ceased to be Aryans as they had already lost their racial purity by mixing with aborigins. In all, the Aryan invasion theory and the Aryan race theory is nothing other than a semblance of contradictions and tell tales.

Let us now see, what the term Arya really means in Sanskrit. The term Arya, Aryan could mean refined person, eminent person, perfect person, respected person etc. The term "Sreshta" could be a synonym for the term Aryan. As a corollary example to this let us see the meaning of the term Sanskrit itself. Sanskrit simply means refined, perfect etc. Sanskrit, Sanskara and the like terms are all offshoots from the basic concept of bettering, refining, perfecting etc.

We know that the languages Sanskrit, was used only by the learned ones. It was not the language of and for common folks. Only refined, perfected people-Aryans- used the Sanskrit language. In short Sanskrit was a language for the people with definite qualities.

The term ‘Aryan’ is just a quality concept. Any person with ideal sets of qualities gets called an Aryan. We know that the Sanskrit language is full
of such quality concepts. Unfortunately, some quality concepts degenerated and lost the connotation of qualities, they rather became denotative. Obviously they caused much social problems as well.

The "Varya" concepts are a real good example for quality concepts. The four Vargus, "Brähmāya", "Kṣatriya", "Vaiśya" and "Sūdra" are nearly quality concepts. The society is classified into four vargas, depending on the qualities of individual members. Sanskrit texts very clearly say who could be called a Brähmāya, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Sūdra etc. It is also stated in indubitable terms that nobody is born Brähmāya, the Brähmāyahood is only acquired or achieved by individuals. According to the abilities and capabilities of individuals, they finds themselves fitting into one or the other forms of Varya. Isn't this true of all societies, at all times? According to the abilities, capabilities and opportunities, a person becomes what he becomes.

The Caste System

When the Āryans (improperly so called) settled in India, there were different races under different stages of civilisation. The Āryan (improperly so called) attempt was to adjust and integrate the different elements of society. Perfect equality and perfect democracy were out of question at that time of human civilisation. In the context of heterogeneity of blood, colour and language, of custom and belief, the achievement of a homogenous social and political entity seemed almost impossible. The institution of caste was devised initially as the basis of division of labour and functions; but subsequently it degenerated and classified into a rigid
system. The fact that along with the inclusion of Drāvidian gods into the Āryan Pantheon, Drāvidian (linguistic identity) priests were also accepted as Brāhmīns in Hindu society is testimony to the elasticity of the system as well as the spirit of accommodation and adjustment.

The European colonisers in the eighteenth century were faced with similar problems in America, Australia and Africa. The Europeans solved the problem of racial diversity by exterminating the indigenous populations or enslaving them. On the other hand, the Āryans, (improperly so called) who settled on the soil solved the problem of racial diversity by the institution of the caste. Nobody would justify the undemocratic nature of the caste system prevalent of late, but it would be potently unfair to carry the scales of abstract justice to the remotest past in order to enforce democratic rights. From the point of view of historical perspective, there are considerations in favour of a system which sought to integrate different types of people into one social whole and find room for different stages of civilisation within one cultural unity. At least in origin the institution of caste was a device for social harmony.

As the present Hindus are the inheritors of the Āryan (connotative use) culture the question which naturally arises first when dealing with the structure of Āryan (connotative use) society is whether the caste system, which is the most prominent feature of the present day Hindu society, existed in any shape or from among the Vēdic Āryans or not.
The common notion that the Hindu society was originally divided into four ‘Varnās’ is extremely erroneous. The *Puruṣa Sūkta*, one of the latest of *Rg Vedic* hymns, no doubt mentions, *Bṛahmaṇa, Rājaṇyās, Vaiṣyās* and *Śūdras* but it does not say that there were four *Varnās*. Perhaps this classification of society into *Varnās* may be better interpreted as grading of society into broad groups on the basis of broad spectrum qualities. Individuals with high qualities were graded higher and those with lesser qualities low. Later this had become set hereditary, and changed into so called caste system. There is no legitimacy in calling caste as hereditary, given this view such division of society into groups of people according qualities are only a natural functional regeneration of any society. The Indian society began to comprise two varnas. The *Āryan* people came to constitute the *Ārya Varna*, and the *Dāsās* similarly constituted the *Dāsavarga*. The *Rg Veda* not only mentions the terms *Ārya Varna* and *Dāsa Varna* but at one place actually speaks of the great *Āryan Rṣi Agastya* as protecting both the *Varnās*. This leaves no room for doubt that in the Rg Vedic period there were only two *varṇās* in the Indian society the *Ārya* and the *Dāsa*.

“The non-Āryan Dāsās, when admitted into Āryan colonies, began to serve the Āryas, and the word Dāsa, therefore, acquired the meaning of servant or slave, just as ‘slave’ in the Teutonic language, was originally slave. Probably as a result of this meaning being given to the word, the non-Āryans gave up this name and began to be called Śūdras”.
Except for this change in the nomenclature of the *Dāsās*, the condition of the Indian society in the later Vedic period was not much different from that of the end of Rgvedic period. In the later Vedic literature we here of *Āryās* and *Śūdrās* as still forming the two sections of the Indian society.

The question naturally arises as to what sort of relations existed between the *Āryās* and *Śūdrās* in the later Vedic period, when they have settled peacefully side by side. In sacred matters the distinction between *Āryas* and *Śūdras* was quite marked. It is not amazing that the *Āryas* of the Rgvedic period condemned the *Dāsās* for being *'Anyāvarta'* (observing strange religious practices), in the later Vedic period the *Āryas* themselves discouraged the *Śūdras* from adopting the Vedic faith. The *Śūdra* was prohibited from milking the cow for the milk required at the *'Agnihotra'* and was excluded from a share in the *soma* draught. But though marriage between *Ārya* and *Śūdra* was not approved, in other aspects the *Śūdras* appear to have enjoyed a better position in society at this period than at any later period. There was not even a semblance of untouchability which disfigured the Hindu society of the later ages. The *Maitrayyāṇī Samhita* proves that some *Śūdras* were quite rich. Sin against *Ārya* and *Śūdra* has been shown as causing equal remorse.

"So far as the *Āryan* society of the Vedic age is concerned there is absolutely no trace of anything even approaching caste system."
The common Āryas were called vis, which simply meant people.\textsuperscript{10} The vis included men of all professions or ranks except the nobility and priesthood.

Above the common Ārya were two privileged orders. One of these orders comprised the rulers or Kṣatriyaṁ, a word formed from Kṣātra meaning dominion. Again the word Kṣatriya, like the word vis, did not mean any caste. Thus the great gods Mitra and Varuṇa are called Kṣatriyas i.e. rulers.\textsuperscript{11} No doubt Āryan (connotative use) kinship was hereditary and therefore the members of royal families were hereditary Kṣatriyas. But any Ārya not belonging to a royal family could be ennobled on becoming a ruler. Thus Purūravas was the son of the rsi or priest, but as he became a King he was recognised as a Kṣatriya and some of the most famous Kṣatriya families descended from him. The Priest Viḍūthīn Bharadvāja became a Kṣatriya as soon as he was adopted by King Bharata, and his descendants were well-known Bharata-Kṣatriyas.

The most privileged class comprised the Brāhmins or priests. Vedic priesthood had as little to do with caste system as nobility. It was open to every Ārya to enter the priestly order. The younger brothers of kings often entered the priestly order, and sometimes even a king would renounce his kingdom and become a Rṣi. The most noted example of a king who renounced his kingdom to enter the spiritual order is of course Viśwāmitra. If Viśwāmitra had lived when caste system had become established, he need not have renounced his kingdom to become a
Brāhmaṇ, because, being a Bharata and thus a descendant of Vidāthin ha Brādrāja, he would have been recognised a Brāhmaṇya by his very birth. But in the casteless Vedic society his descent from Vidāthin Bharadāja did not make him a Brāhmaṇ. He had to renounce his kingdom and lead a spiritual life in order to become a Brāhmaṇ. His family specialised in priesthood in the same way as other priestly families had done and thus gained the same status as enjoyed by them. The vīś or commoner similarly could become a Brāhmaṇ if he possessed sufficient spiritual merit. Thus Nabhāhaniṣṭha and his son and grandson Bālananda and Vatsapri who were vīś or Vaisya became Brāhmaṇs and were admitted into the Gāṇīṣṭhira family of the Ātreya.

The foregoing review thus clearly shows that the Āryan society of the Vedic age had no caste system but was divided into three classes of priests, rulers and commoners. This division was exactly identical with the three estates of European society, and even the order of precedence was same. Thus in England the three estates are clergy, barons and commons, those who prey, those who fight and those who work. The Iranian society also constituted the commoners and the two classes Athravās and Rathāsthana; priests and warriors.

With the passing of time, however, this classification became more and more rigid and the class division began to be regarded as something in the nature of divine dispensation.
Basham says:

"Culturally the period of later Vedic literature saw Indian life and thought take the direction which it has followed ever since. The end of this shadowy age, with its kings growing in power, its priests arrogating to themselves even greater privileges, and its religious outlook rapidly changing, marks the beginning of the great period of India's cultures in which the pattern of her society, religion, literature and art gradually assumed something of its present shape".\(^\text{13}\)

The very words *Brāhmaṇa* (descendant of *Brāhmaṇ* or priest), *Rājaṇya* (descendant of *Rājaṇ* or king), and *Vaiśya* (descendant of *Vīś* or commoner) show that these classes tended to become absolutely hereditary by the end of the Vedic age. In Europe also this tendency was clearly visible even as late as the time of French revolution as the following quotation from Haye's 'Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe' shows.

"Every individual was stillborn to a particular 'class' or as the current phrase went, to 'the station to which God had called him, and the questioning of the fundamental divine nature of class distinctions, if allowable to Rousseau or some other advanced intellectual, seemed a silly or downright blasphemous occupation for common people."\(^\text{14}\)

But in India the development in post-Vedic times was absolutely different. The Hindu society was divided into hundreds of castes. It is certain that the three classes of Aryan (connotative use) society could not develop into so many castes, so different from one another at different places. The conclusion is therefore irresistible that the caste system was
a gift from the non-Aryan people to the Hindu society. In all probability the
Dravidian (linguistic identity) people were divided into a number of
vocational castes as well as endogamous tribes even in the earliest times.
This had its influence on the Āryas also. Thus the Brāhmaṇas became
divided into ten main castes according to the part of the country they
inhabited. As for nobility, the terms Rājaśya and Kṣatriya by which it was
known seem to have acquired in later times the meanings of royal and
non-royal nobles respectively. This distinction resulted in the breaking up
of the nobility also at least into two castes now known as Rājputs
(Rajaputras or Rajaṇyaśa) and Khatris (Kṣatriyaśa). The Vysyāś or Āryan
(connotative use) commoners were naturally most influenced by the non-
Aryan caste system, and they seem to have divided into vocational castes
such as merchants, clerks and artisans practising the more respectable
arts. New castes were also formed by invading tribes such as Gurjaras.
Certain castes may also have been formed as a result of vargasanākara
caused by marriage between Āryas and non-Āryas. In this way the
Hindus became a ‘community of communities’.

Just as the concept of Varga, the concept of Āryan is also a quality
concept. By the term Āryan it is meant that he is a person with such and
such sets of qualities. Unfortunately Max Muller and Company had
mutilated it. Hitler look it to his head and warred to establish the
“legitimate rights” of the Aryans, which is to conquer and rule the world.
What was more, Hitler was thoroughly convinced that the Germans are the purest blooded Āryan race, especially the Nordic Āryans as he says.

The Persian emperor Darious conquered the Sindhu region in 518 B.C. In Frasi language Sindhu got pronounced as Hind (Daria Hind or Sindhu Nadi in Sanskrit). The land beyond river Hind and the Sūrasvattha culture gradually came to be known as 'Hindustan' and the people living there, their religion etc. as Hindus, Hinduism etc. With Alexander the Greek Invader, Sindhu river gets another name. They called Sindhu Nadi the River Indus. Thus India gets the name 'India'. The Greeks were the beginners of European civilisation. Most of the western world borrowed much from Greek culture and civilisation. The name India also got carried into western languages and this name became more popular. Since then most foreigners have referred to the entire landscape from Himalayas to Kanyakumari as India.

However within the sub-continent, the landscape was called 'Bhārata Varsha'. The name Bhārata came from the name Bharata, a famous king mentioned in early purāṇās. It is told that Bharata was not satisfied with his sons and therefore selected one among his subjects to be the next ruler. This incident amply supports the view that the king need not be necessarily son of the previous king. Any citizen who is fit can be made a king. Bharata Varsha is supposed to be the part of an island continent known as Jambudwīp (couldn't this be the one great land mass before the great continental drift?).
Political and Legal Institutions

According to some western writers and their eastern supporters, democratisation of the world is the 'white man's burden'. These writers argue that social and political developments in Afro-Asian countries owe much to the colonial rule of the European nations. Naturally, in the case of India also these writers are of the view that the development of political and legal institutions in India is the result of the colonial rule of the West, particularly the English.

However, in the case of India, her legal and political institutions are the product of the wisdom of the people who lived here thousands of years ago. The Rgveda and later Samhitas throw considerable light on the political and legal institutions of the Vedic age. They make it clear that the region occupied by the Āryan (connotative use) people was divided into a number of Kingdoms (Rashtra) each of which was ruled by a king (Rājan). The kingdoms were usually small in extent but the terms Samrāj, Ekraj, and Adhirāj found in the Rgveda and later Samhitas suggest that sometimes a king carved out a fairly large kingdom and assumed grandiloquent titles showing his superiority over other kings.

The lines of kingly succession found in the Rgveda and later literature show that kingship was hereditary and the law of primogeniture was normally followed. On the other hand a verse of the Rgveda clearly says that the king was elected by the people (visah). A song blessing the king at the time of his coronation occurs both in the Rgveda and Atharvaveda with slight variations.
The last verse of this song as found in the *Atharvaveda* where it consists of two hymns seems to suggest that the election of the king took place in the *samiti*. These statements, however, are not really inconsistent with hereditary succession, for as Glonder holds.

"The election by the people was in reality only their formal sanction of a fait accompli. However, even this formal sanction shows that the voice of the people carried weight in the matter of succession to the royal throne."  

Another essential feature of the government which provided the people with some measure of check on the king was the existence of two popular assemblies known as *Sabha* and *Samiti*. The *Sabha* is often mentioned in the *Rgveda* and denotes both an Assembly of the people and the hall where the people assembled. The *samiti* too is mentioned frequently in *Rgveda* and the later vedic works. According to Ludwig the *Sabha* was an assembly not of all people but of the *Brahmans* and *Maghavans* (rich patrons) while *samiti* included all the people (visah). The view of Ludwig is supported by the fact that to be a *Sabhaya* (a member of Sabha) was considered a coveted honour. The king was expected to be present in the sessions of the *samiti* as the more representative body and probably presided over its deliberations. Although the functions of the *Sabha* and *Samiti* cannot be precisely defined, the passages referring to them clearly indicate that both these bodies exercised considerable authority. A famous hymn occurring both in the *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda* lays great stress on the spirit of co-operation and unity in this national
assembly. The words of this hymn which have resounded through the ages are as follows.

"Assemble, speak in harmony, Let your minds be one accord; As your glorious ancestors enjoyed their due shares with full accord. May your aim be common, your assembly common, common your mind, united your thoughts. A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your common oblation."  

The importance of these two assemblies in public affairs is indicated by the fact that they in the *Atharvaveda* are called the twin daughters of the *Prajapati*, the creator. The *Maitrayani Samhita* informs us that women did not attend the *Sabha* which is but natural when we remember that women did not take part in political activity. The same *Samhita* mentions *Sabha* in the sense of the court of the village judge, the *Gr ayant din*. The *Vajasageyi Samhita* mentions *sabhacara* as one who is dedicated to *dharma* and *justice*. From this it appears that he was a member of the *Sabha* as a law court. It is thus certain that *Sabha* met not only for political discussions but also for the administration of justice.

**Unity in Diversity**

"Historically India has been one of the greatest confluences of cultural strands, a laboratory of racial intermixing, of cross fertilisation of religious ideas and secular thought, of coexistence of languages and dialects, indeed a veritable microcosm of the globe"  

India comprises myriad streams of cultures, about 16 major languages, between 250 to 2000 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, 7
religious communities fragmented into many sects, castes and sub-
castes, that inhabit its 68 socio-cultural sub-regions, which, within the
frame work of 7 natural geographic regions, exhibit distinct internal
homogeneity and external identity.

Within India's micro-continental spread is thus subsumed,
regionally varied but specific social formations, economic relations,
cultural patterns and value structures, that give an impression of a vivid
and vibrant scheme of unity in diversity. India's ongoing socio-cultural
federalism is thus sui-generis. Its continental dimension, survival and
continuity for more than 3000 years of recorded history (and possibly
1000 to 2000 years of prehistory), together with social complexity and
diversities, makes it the world's oldest, largest and most tenacious plural
society, the like of which human history has seldom known.

It is interesting to note that even in the hoary past India's federal
social-cultural pattern was recorded with amazing clarity in Vāyu Purāṇa.
However, today little is known about the janapadās of Bhāratavarsha—the
territorial communities identified by an admixture of ethnicity, dialect, social
customs geographical location and political characteristics. The Puruṣās
(particularly Vishṇu and Vāyu) throw light on this primordial mosaic of our
socio-cultural diversity. Bhārata Varṣa (covering the territory today
comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afganistan etc.) is reputed to
have had in its fold 165 janapadās of which probably 120 may have been
located within the confines of the present day Republic of India.
In the words of Rabindranat Tagore

"Here the Āryans, the non-Āryans, the Drāvidians, and the Chinese, the tribes of Scythians and Huns, the Afghans and the Mughals have all merged into one body".34

Our culture is like a mighty river fed with many tributaries, and the main stream flows on and on. The Hindustani expression for fusion, 'Ganga-Jamuni' comes from this concept of unity. Our culture is also compared to a great cauldron to which different ingredients have been added from time to time to produce a lustrous compound; above all, the seething cauldron has never cooled and is always ready to accept new ideas without loosing its pristine identity.

There are scholars who are of the opinion that the civilisation of Egypt and Babylonia are the oldest. Bal Gangadhar Tilak brought evidence to show that the Vedas of the Hindus existed in the present form at least 5000 years before the Christian era.35 The key to India's ancient civilisation is to be found in the four fold goals of life: (Purushārthas) (1) Dharma or absolute righteousness; (2) Artha or Material possession; (3) Kāma or fulfilment of desires; (4) Mokṣa or liberation. Dharma is expressed in Mahābhārata as that which protects or preserves.

"It is the divine and transcendental Justice, Truth and Law which upholds Universe, mind and people"36

The arts of India, like here philosophy in general, and sculpture in particular, also show a mythical and metaphysical order. Reference may
be made to the Indus valley seals from Kisa (2700 BC). Pottery jar with Sumero-Babylonian inscription from Harappa and Mohenjodaro (2500 BC) and rock-cut caves at Elephanta (Eight century A.D). The art and culture of ancient India indicate a continuous loyalty to certain universal norms that have come down from time immemorial. It is this loyalty which is the secret of India's dynamic power to unify diversity. This power to unite diversity is an index of Indian civilisation.

This extraordinary characteristics of Indian thought and culture is spelt out in the great classics, the *Upanishads*, the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, including *Bhagavat Gīta* and the teachings of historic personalities like Mahāvīra, Budha and Ashoka and so on.

Despite the tremendous popularity of Buddhism in and outside India, Vedic culture was not materially affected in as much as the teachings of Buddha were not hostile to the essence of *Dharma* of the Vedic Religion. Budha wanted to establish *Saṅgha*, a casteless unified society on the basis of ethical principles such as non-violence, truthfulness, abstinence, forgiveness, compassion, goodwill etc. Buddhism did not accept the rigidity of the brahminical rituals or animal slaughter or *varṇaśārama*. The influence of Budhism and Jainism had a natural impact on the prevailing Indian thought, but such influence only enriched the traditional Indian culture, instead of destroying or destabilising, which indeed speaks much about the nature of Indians and Indianness.
As far as one can make out, a near uniformity in material culture was achieved in various parts of the country by the middle of the first millennium BC. It is in this millennium that we find the first emergence of a unified India under Ashoka in the third century BC. From about third century BC to about the fifth century AD several waves of people from the north-west invaded the Indian sub-continent. The Greeks, the Scythians, the Kushans the Huns etc. were some among them. However in course of time they all lost their individuality in the vast cultural ocean that was in existence in India at that time. During what is known as the medieval period of Indian History the position was slightly different. The incomers tried to retain their identity, yet they gave and took in ample measure to and from the earlier inhabitants. However, since the newcomers did not look back to their native countries as evergreen sources of inspiration, but adopted the new country as their own, a new cultural ethos developed which became an ethos of unity in diversity.

Of late, the notion of unity in diversity is much in the limelight. The general feeling is that, inspite of apparent differences, India is quite united. There are many reasons for this attitude. In this context India is also called 'The Epitome of the World'.

In the words of Jawarhal Nehru

"In the North-West Frontier province there is already the breath of Central Asia, and many a custom there as in Kashmir, reminds one of the countries on the other side of the Himalayas. Pathan popular dances are
singly like Cossak dancing. Yet with all these differences there is no mistaking the impress of India on the Pathans as this is obvious on the Tamil.37

It must be repeatedly pointed out that almost all writers of the past and even of present treat Aryan concept as a race. Naturally Jawaharlal Nehru also was no exception to this. Pathans are a language group; similarly the Tamils too are a language group. In reality it will not be proper to read the racial connotation into such language groupings. Unfortunately the term 'race' gets easily passed for everything and anything.

First of all, all major religions of the world co-exist in India in amazing harmony. It must be noted that different religious people differ only in so far as their differences in religion, religious faith as well as the religious practices. We must understand religions as a carrier of culture. Religion carries culture and transmits it from generation to generation. But then culture is really not essential to religion in the sense that, it always carry the culture of its place of origin. A religion originated in another country shuns the culture of the land when it enters into a different country, different society to pick up culture of the new land. This way, religions becomes localised, because the people who receive new religion are locals. Thereby all religions that came to India from foreign countries are no more foreign religions. They are all Indian religions culturally. Culture belong to the people, society and land. No matter what are the differences in faith, practice and religion, they
all became culturally Indian religions. Thus it is the invincible strength of Indian culture that transcends all so called differences in the religion race or language.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore,

"Throughout her history one notices an attempt above all else, to establish unity in diversity, to approach truth by different paths and to realise in complete faith the one in the many as the inmost reality-not destroying superficial differences but discovering their underlying correspondence........ The alliance which European civilisation have achieved are based on negotiation; the oneness on which Indian civilisation is based is a sense of harmony........ The discovery of identity, the achievement of Unity and the creation of stability and peace in society conducive to spiritual fulfilment and liberation, that was India’s ideal".38

According to Sir, Herbert Risley,

"Beneath the manyfold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Capcamorine. There is in fact, an Indian character, a general Indian personality, which we cannot resolve into its component elements".39

The ideal of unity

Despite the above mentioned diversities, India has never lost the ideal of unity. It is wrong to suppose that the unity of India is the gift of the British rule. Culturally India was always one. The golden thread of Indian culture that runs through and through every Indian is a formidable force of unity and it is this golden thread that still keeps and would always keep
India as one formidable nation of integrity. It must be specifically noted that what keeps India as one is not its political unity or the strength of the ruling power; even without any such artificial unifying force, the nation can’t be anything but a unified whole so long as the culture remains strong. Hence the requirement of upholding culture needs hardly an emphasise.

The religion Hinduism, which is often called "Sanātana Dharma" had a powerful unifying effect. Hinduism is no religion in the Semitic sense of the term; that is, if the paradigm of West Asian belief systems, the Judaic-Christian-Islamic combine is acknowledged as the normative form. Hinduism is something more and different than religion. It is a mix of customs, traditions, social behaviour, rituals, metaphysical speculations, cultural and value orientations. There is no duality of orthodoxy and heresy in Hinduism, because there is no defined and closed faith, no established church based on the foundations of a divine scripture revealed by a divine being to divinely ordained prophet/prophets. Hinduism has a flexibility and resilience and a traditional base wide enough to cover the syndrome of Indian culture. That is why sometimes the revivalism of Hinduism takes the form of revivalism of ancient culture, symbols, values, idiom and traditional pattern of living. It does not take the particular form of the revival of a faith because there is no such ordained, integral and defined faith to be revived. Hinduism’s religious content has been generally referred to as Brāhmīsm, while term Hindu (adopted from
Sindhu, i.e., the inhabitants in, around and beyond to the east of the river Indus/Sindhu), which was used by ancient Persians, Greeks, and later by Arabs and central Asian People, referred essentially to the ethnic geographic identity of the inhabitants. In this sense, irrespective of belief and religion, language or culture, every Indian is considered Hindu by the Arabs, the Iranians and the Turks and most other foreigners even now.

'An apt quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru will throw light on this aspect. In the 'Discovery of India' he writes

"The Word 'Hindu' does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference to it in an Indian book is, I am told, is in a Tāntrik work of the eighth century AD, where 'Hindu' means a people and not the followers of a particular religions. But it is clear that the word is a very old one as it occurs in the Avesta and in old Persian. It was used then and for thousand years or more later by the peoples of western and central Asia for India, or rather for the people living on the other side of the Indus river. The word is clearly derived from the word Sindhu, the old as well as the present Indian name for the Indus. From this Sindhu came the word Hindu and Hindustan as well as Indos and India. The famous Chinese pilgrim Itsing, who came to India in the seventh century AD writes in his record of travels that the 'northern tribes', that is the people of Central Asia, called India Hindu (Hsin-tu) but, he adds, 'this is not at all a common name...... and the most suitable name for India is the Noble Land (Āryadēsh). The use of the word 'Hindu' in connection with a particular religion is of very later occurrence. The old inclusive terms for religion in India was Ārya Dharma. Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together. It is the inmost constitutions of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities. Ārya Dharma would include all the faiths (vedic and non-vedic) that originated in India; it was used by Buddhists and Jains as
well as by those who accepted the Vedas. Budha always called his way to
calvation as the 'Arya Path'.

According to some scholars like S. Radhakrishnan and Tara Chand,
the philosophy of Hinduism has developed in the last 4000 years, in six
well-known recognized periods of time; (i) 2500 to 600 BC- the Vedic
Period; (ii) 600/500 BC to AD 200-the Epic Period; (iii) AD 200 to 800—the
Sutra Period; (iv) AD 800 to 1300-the Scholastic Period; (v) AD 1300 to
1700-the period of Great Bhakti Saints, and (vi) AD 1800 to 1950-the
period of Reform Movements and Philosophical Revivalism. However, at
present the age of Vedic period suggested by European Indologists like
Max Muller are challenged by Indian Indologists and scholars.

Ours is perhaps the oldest civilisation of the world with an
uninterrupted history (with the possible exception of China). Most of the
civilisations are dead and gone. We have not only survived the
vicissitudes of time but maintained, developed and enriched a continuous
culture. "In the words of Iqbal,

"Yunan-O-Misc-O-Roma, sab mit gaye jehan se Ab tak magar hai baqi nam-
O-nishan hamara." [Greece, Egypt, Rome all have vanished from the world/But our name and
symbol still exist]. Further Iqbal says, there is 'something' which
precludes our existence from getting effaced"

"Kuch bat hai ke hasti, mit-ti nahin hamari."
This something is everything. This is the secret of our vitality and wisdom. The history of Indian civilisation and culture is a story of unity and synthesis, of adaptation and development, of fusion of old traditions with new values.

It must be emphasized that Hinduism is both a way of life and a highly organized social and religious system, and it is quite free from any dogmatic assertions concerning the nature of God. The core of religion is never left to depend on the existence or non-existence of God, or on whether there is one God or many. It is perfectly possible to be a good Hindu whether one's personal view incline towards monotheism or polytheism or even atheism. The classical Hindus did not think of religious truth in dogmatic terms: dogmas cannot be eternal but only transitory, the truth transcends dogmas and all verbal definitions. The unity of religious outlook in India is based on a philosophic spirit which recognises the value of both form and spirit, of outward ritual and inner essence. Al-beruni who came to India in the eleventh century observed.

"On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics amongst themselves (the Hindus); at the most, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or property on religious controversy."44

Absence of religious persecution is the inevitable concomitant to the absence of dogma in classical Hinduism. The doctrine of transmigration of soul or rebirth is the central core of the Hindu religion
and practically all sects and philosophical systems. All accept this, not so much as a revealed but as a self-evident fact of existence. The doctrine itself presupposes the further doctrine that the condition into which the individual soul is reborn is itself the result of good or bad actions performed in former lives. This leads to the law of *karma* as well as the caste system of ancient India.

Unlike all other religions in the history of mankind, the Hindu religion has an amalgamating character, all encompassing character. The Hindu religion itself is a plurality of faith. We saw other religions disintegrating into various sects: take the example of various forms of Christianity, Shia, Sunni, Ahmediya etc. among Muslims, Śrāvastīans and Digambaras among Jains, Hinayāna and Mahāyāna among Budhists etc. Quite contrary to this, the Hindu religion behaved in an exact opposite way. Predominantly there are three primary forms of worship in India, namely, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktheism. Apart from these, there were also many other forms of worship of natural forces or local folk deities. As time went by, all these became amalgamated under one umbrella of what is called today, 'The Hindu Religion'. All different sects also came to accept the authority of *Veda*, which is the identifying factor of Hindu religion. It is also precisely for this reason that we find it difficult to call Hinduism a religion in the same sense of the term as we call other religions religion. By unifying various sects and forms of worship into the unity of Hinduism, the religion had actually unified the sub-continent. Vaishnavism of the North,
Saivism of the South and Saktaism of the East became one, and thereby, North, South, East as well as west of India were also made one, namely Bhārata Varṣha. Unfortunately, this great contribution of Vedic Hinduism is little understood, or even miserably overlooked. It will not be out of place to say that Bhārata Varṣha is a contribution of the Hindu religion.

Yet another aspect of unity was law. India followed one kind of law or ordinances throughout. Apart from these, there were various factors such as Śruties and Smritis regulating the duties of citizens of different strata. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru,

"Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilisation. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardisation of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged".

Thus, it was wrong to suppose that the unity of India is the gift of the British rule. The British had brought India under one political administration, but they disintegrated India through their divide and rule policy. They created differences among different religions. They also created differences among different castes among Hindus. They alienated brahmins from others, divided castes etc.
According to *Viśnu Purāṇa*,

"Uttaram Yatsamudrasya

Himādeshchaiva dakshinaṁ

Varṣamad Bhāratam nama

Bharati Yatra Santati"

(The country bounded by the seas on the south and the Himalayas on the North is called Bharatam. There live the progeny of Bharata)

What more is further required to understand that right from time immemorial India was seen as a complete whole?

The great epics also played very important role in building a common heritage for all Indians. They stand for truth, wisdom, right and wrong as well as *Dharma* which is common for all Indians.

The Sanskrit language also fostered the unity of the country. The very meaning of the term ‘Sanskrit’ implies refinement as against for example, “Prakrit” which means “crude” “raw” or unrefined. Sanskrit was a language of the refined people as well as cultured and educated. Sanskrit then was like English today, the language of the educated. Prakrit, Pali, etc. were languages spoken by common folks. This led to a classification throughout the nation as intellectuals and commoners and the intellectuals spoke the common language Sanskrit throughout the nation. Common people spoke varieties of languages, varying regionally. Sanskrit was the language of the educated people throughout the nation. It was only natural
for the intellectuals to interact with one another and knowledge became enriched. Sanskrit was the lingua franca of ancient India, cutting across all regional barriers. In short, educated Indian was the same person whether in Gandhara, Simhapura (Singapore) or in Kanyakumari. Sānśkāra (culture) and Sanskrit language had such tremendous unifying effect on the subcontinent. Sanskrit was the language in which the sacred hymns and invocations to deities were composed. These hymns were sung and chanted all over India. The classical texts of medicine, metallurgy, architecture, astronomy, mathematics, diplomacy, erotics and poetics were composed in Sanskrit language. These were the source materials for master-craftsmen, professionals, priests and others all over India. Buddhism in its early phase preferred 'Pali' to Sanskrit. But with the emergence of Mahayana, the Buddhist scholars and teachers switched back to Sanskrit from Pali. Jainism also followed the same pattern. The earliest Jaina texts were in the Ardhamagadhi dialect. But most of the important philosophical and religious texts of the Jains were later written in Sanskrit. It is erroneous to assume, as many western writers have done, that Sanskrit became a dead language after the emergence of regional languages. Regional languages/dialects were always there, and Sanskrit- was the scholar's language. It continued to be a cementing and unifying force, and has retained its vitality even in modern times. It was no longer the primary medium of expression for poets and story tellers but it continued to be the main language of the religious study and ritual. Further, Sanskrit is regarded as the mother of modern Indian languages. 60 to 70 percent of
words in many Indian languages are originally Sanskrit words. Sanskrit Grammar (Paniniyarn by Panini) is one of the most ancient grammar. Most Indian languages follow this as their root text.

Mythology also played an important role in the cultural unification of India.

"In the west, just as Latin lost its position of pre-eminence at the end of the middle ages, so also did mythology as it ceased to have a living relationship with the actual process of living. In India, on the contrary, mythology has always been close to the life of the people. It has served as a bridge between the abstract ideas and values of the philosopher and the moralist and the concrete application of these concepts and values in practice. Indian mythology reflects in a very interesting manner the two principles of continuity in the midst of change and unity underlying diversity."  

The basic ideas and symbols of Indian mythology have retained their continuity across the centuries. The churning of the ocean of milk (Kṣheerābdhi or Kṣheerasagar) in search of the nectar of immortality; the descent of the holy river Ganga from heaven to earth; the struggle between Budha and Mara; the cycles of evolution and dissolution of the universe (Srishti and Pralaya); the wars between gods and demons; the attempts of celestial nymphs to tempt renowned sages and disturb their meditation; these and other myths as well as episodes from the ‘Rāmāyaṇa’ and ‘Mahābhārata’ have retained their basic forms and have continued to influence the minds and hearts of the Indian people inspite of the social and political upheavals.
Mythology has contributed, sometimes in subtle and unobstructive ways, to the cultural unity of India. Myths, about gods and goddesses, heroes and sages and devotees, have brought people close to each other emotionally and spiritually, inspite of differences of language, vocation, lifestyle, spiritual affiliations and regional traditions. This closeness is demonstrated vividly when people from different parts of India come together at places of pilgrimage, or at fairs and festivals such as Kumbh Mela at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna at Prayag every twelve years, the Ramlila which is celebrated throughout North India, and the festival of Krishna Janmashtami which draws thousands of people to Vrindavan on the bank of the Yamuna river.

At the same time, this unity has not been achieved at the expenses of diversity. Through music, dance, poetry and ritual, the same myth is commemorated in infinitely varied ways. Festivals connected with the same deity are celebrated in different ways in different regions. Even the names of deity vary. For instance the, the monkey-hero who plays such an important part in Rāmāyana is known as Hanuman in Northern India but is usually referred to as Maruti in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The God who is popularly known as Karthikeya or Skand in Northern India is usually addressed as Subrahmanya or Muruka in Southern India. There are distinct traditions regarding the worship of Saraswati and Durga in Bengal, of Lakshmi and Ganesha in Maharashtra and Lord Jagannath in Orissa.
The myth makers of ancient India seem to have been unusually farsighted and were evidently aware of the important part which mythology can play in promoting national integration and in preventing unity shrinking into uniformity. Two examples of their foresight may be sighted here. In the descriptions of gods and goddesses in the Purāṇas, one is struck by the fact that the gods are usually praised for their dark complexion while most of the goddesses are fair, especially if they are spouses of dark skinned Gods. Thus Rama is dark while Sita is fair, Shiva is dark while his spouse, Pārvathi, is also known as Gauri, the 'Fair One', Vishṇu is described as 'Meghavān'ī, 'dark as a cloud', while his wife, Lakṣṇī is fair. This is a wonderfully effective way of appealing to the sentiments of the dark skinned as well as fair-complexioned people.

Another example of the wisdom displayed by ancient myth-makers is the manner in which sacredness was attributed to places scattered all over the vast Indian sub continent-places associated with particular deities, saints, heroes or episodes from mythical stories. Worshipers of Siva, for instance, if they are to perform a complete pilgrimage are required to visit places on the eastern and western sea coast, in the upper Himalayas, and at the southern most tip of India. They must thus necessarily pass through regions vastly different from each other in life, culture, landscape, art-styles. While the purpose is to take the pilgrim through the various stages of a traditional ritual, the incidental result is that the traveller become familiar
through first hand experience, with the immense diversity of India and the subtle thread of unity which runs through that diversity.

The maps of India as revealed by "Kautilya's Arthasastra" and as known to early Greeks' have clearly demonstrated that even without being politically consolidated, there was hardly any ambiguity or doubt about the identity or boundaries of India.\textsuperscript{48}
According to Radha Kamal Mukherjee,

"The fundamental unity of Bhāratavāsha is installed in the Indian mind by the ancient Purāṇas, Dharmasastras, temples, pageants and pilgrimages. This Bhāratavāsha is not a mere geographical integration. She is a historic cultural synthesis."^49

Thus, it had been amply demonstrated through varying records of both history and tradition that ancient India was much integrated and unified.
The many number of princely states, the many languages, the differences in appearances, geography, food, dress, local customs etc had only strengthened the unity and integrity of India by adding much variety to the mainstream of Indianness. The Western writers of history and their eastern counterparts usually treat unity as political unity. So the politically many states, within India, confused them when it came to unity and integrity. What they failed to notice was the unifying and integrating aspect of India, which was Indian culture.

Till such time outsiders came to India to rule, the integrity and unity of India was a most natural and spontaneous phenomenon. Alexander, son of Philip of Macedonia invaded India, but did not stay here to rule. In all respects, the Greeks could be called as the most noble among those who came here with army.

The rise and spread of Islam by the first quarter of the seventh century AD is much connected to the series of invasions that India had to face for a long time, that ultimately resulted in the long Muslim rule over India. After the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D, the task of spreading Islam by all means and any means became the work of Khalifas. From 632 to 749 A.D, the Omayyads were at the helm of affairs, but from 749 to 1256 A.D the Abbasids were the holders of Khalifat. The Abbasids changed their capital from Damascus to Baghdad and thus the Arab element was punched to the background. In the beginning of 8th century A.D, Muslim invaders began to attack our country. They succeeded in
conquering Sindh and Multan, but could not penetrate deeper into India. At the first quarter of 8th century A.D, Mohammad-bin-Quasim conquered Sindh and Multan. He conquered Debal defeating King Dahir. captured the towns of Nureau, Sehemen and Sisam. On 20th June 712 A.D, King Dahir was killed in the battle of Rawar. Ravi Bhai, Dahir’s widow resisted the siege of the fort of Rawar, but finally she along with other women performed the traditional Jauhar or Sati. Dahir’s son, Jai Singh fought the Arabs at Brahmanabad, but lost the battle and Mohammed-bin-Quasim occupied Brahmanabad. At Aloar, the capital of Sindh, Fugi, the son of Dahir was defeated. Thus the conquest of Sindh was complete. In 713 A.D, Quasim won an easily victory over Multan by cutting off the water supply to Multan. Further, when he was preparing to attack Kanuj, Quasim died, and this put a full stop to the Arab invasion.

Once in rule, Quasim divided Sindh into number of divisions under Arab officials. The Arabs forced conversion into Islam upon the Hindus and those who resisted this were either killed or treated miserably. They further illtreated the low class people, thus widening the gap between different sects among Hindus. There were no law and order, the Arab’s words were law.

After the Arabs, the Muslim Turks carried on the Muslim Indian invasion. The rulers of Ghazni, both Alaptgin (962-63) and Sabuktgin (977-97) started Indian invasion. Jaipal was the king of Hindushahi; Sabuktgin defeated Jaipal at Langhan. Jaipal’s life was spared on
condition that he would pay annual ransom. When Jaipal returned to Lahore, he refused to pay ransom. Sabuktgin attacked Jaipal and conquered Hindushahi. At Peshawar (Purushapuran), he appointed one Muslim Turkish Governor to look after things.

In 998 A.D., Sabuktgin died. He had nominated his younger son Ismail to the throne. But Sabuktgin's elder son, Mahmood of Ghazni killed his younger brother Ismail and became the ruler. He invaded India seventeen times. Here is the list

1) **First invasion** (1000 A.D). He captured frontier forts and Khyber pass.

2) **Second invasion** (1001-2 A.D). He defeated Jaipal, the ruler of Hindushahi kingdom. Jaipal jumped into a funeral pyre and committed suicide to save the honour of the Hindus.

3) **Third Invasion** (1003 AD). He defeated Bijai Rai, the Bhatiya King. Before falling in the hands of the enemy, he stabbed himself and committed suicide.

4) **Fourth invasion** (1006 A.D). He defeated the ruler of Multan, Dand, who was an Arab. Dand was (Abul-Fateh-Dand) a Karmithrion, and Mahmood was a Sunni Muslim.

5) **Fifth Invasion**, (1007 A.D). After conquering Multan, he appointed Nawsa Shah as the Governor and returned to Ghazni. But Nawsa
Shah renounced Islam religion and proclaimed independence. Mahmood returned and defeated him.

6) **Sixth Invasion** (1008-9 AD). He defeated Ananth Pal and allies at the battle of Wabrid.

7) **Seventh Invasion** (1009 AD) He conquered Nagarkot and looted vast amount of riches.

8, 9, 10, 11) **Eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh Invasions** (1009-18). Conquered Kashmir and Thaneshwar.

12) **Twelfth Invasion** (1018-19). He defeated Rajyapal of Kanuj. He destroyed Mathura, Brindavan, and reached Kanauj. Enroute, he destroyed many temples.

13) **Thirteenth Invasion** (1070 A.D). Defeated the Chandela King of Kalinjar.

14, 15) **Fourteenth and Fifteenth Invasion** (1021-23). These were against Gwalior and Kalinjar.

16) **Sixteenth Invasion** (1025). Attacked Somanatha Temple. At Annhilmarra he defeated the King Raja Bhim Dev in January 1025. Then he reached Sōmanath and destroyed the deity and temple. More than 50000 Hindus were slaughtered.

17) **Seventeenth and last Invasion** (1020-27). He attacked Jats and put many of them to death.
Mahmood of Ghazni died in 1030 A.D. After the death of Mahmood his two sons quarrelled for power. Masaud and Mohammad quarrelled, and Masaud blinted Mohammad and jailed. Masaud also continued invasions on India and captured Hansi and Sonepat.

After the fall of the Ghasnavides, Meniz-Ud-Din, Mohammad-bin’s Son, popularly known as Shahab-ud-Din Mohammad Ghori established his own rule in Ghazni. After establishing himself, he started invading India. It shall be proper to call him the true and real founder of Muslim rule in India.

In 1175-6A.D. Ghori conquered Multan and Ucch. In 1178 A.D he attacked Annhilwara, but was miserably defeated by Bhim Dev. For another twenty years Ghori did not dare attack Gujrat again. In 1179 to 86 A.D, he captured Peshawar. In 1185, he occupied Sialkot. In 1192, he cheated Khushro Malik and killed him. Then he captured Sirhind and Bhatinda. In the first battle of Tarin in 1191 A.D, Ghori was defeated by Prithviraj Chauhan (Raja Pethura)) of Delhi. But in the second battle of Tarin, in 1192, Mohammad Ghori defeated Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi. After the victory Ghori appointed Qutab-Ud-Din-Aibak as his Viceroy at Delhi. Aibak captured Bulandshahar from Dev Rajputs by cheating. He also conquered Meerut and Koli (Aligarh). Thus Qutab established a formidable Muslim rule in India. Then came the Slave Dynasty from 1206 A.D to 1290 A.D. Further came the Khilji Dynasty from 1290 to 1320 A.D.

In 1320 A.D, Ghazi Malik murdered Khusro Khan and assumed power in
the name of Gias-Ud-Din-Tuglak. For about one hundred years, the Tuglaks ruled Delhi. Towards the end of the 14th century, Amir Timur, who had conquered the bulk of central Asia undertook the invasion of India. Then the Tuglak dynasty came to an end, and Timur’s deputy, Khizr Khan established his own Sayyid dynasty. In forty years of time, the Lodis became the rulers. The last Lodi, Ibrahim was defeated by Babur, who established the Mughal empire in India. Thus came to an end the Delhi Sultanate, which ruled us for over three hundred years. From the Mughals India went into the hands of the Europeans, primarily the British.

Thus, from 8th century A.D to the 20th century, Indias was constantly invaded by outsiders in various ways. Sindh, Multan, Peshwar, Afganistan, Baluchistan etc. had totally became Muslim states. Punjab and Bengal got divided by the British as Hindus and Muslims in the long run.

The rise and spread of Islam, their adherence to violent means, their opposition to idol worship, their strong missionary zeal to spread Islam even forcibly, the greed of invaders towards India’s wealth, the lack of co-operation of Indian Princesses etc. caused series of invasions and plunder of India by first Arab Muslims and then by Turkish Muslims. Four hundred years later, when Prithviraj Chauhan became defeated, the series of Muslim invasion came to the inevitable state, that they became the rulers of India. Their assuming power was by no way spontaneous, and the rule itself was filled with upheavals of infighting for power, as well
as fights among various tribes and sects among Muslims themselves.
The slave dynasty get replaced by the Khiljis which became replaced by
the Tuglaks, then the Sayyids, the Lodis and finally the Mughals, till India
became a colony of Britain.

The long 1200 years of foreign element in India had devastated the
nation in all respects. It had created serious cultural alienation to the
people, even for those who remained staunch Hindus. An examination of
simple social life of an average Indian before and after Prithviraj Chauhan
can amply demonstrate this. On the economic front, India became a
pauper literally. Education was lost. Hindu religion and spirituality went in
hiding. Temples were destroyed. Women were pushed back into the
harem, and they simply became luxuries as commodities. Lawlessness
prevailed. In a word, Indian's were alienated from their essence and
denatured, estranged. Naturally, all high offices were in the hands of
foreigners, and even their language became official. The Muslims ruled
India with their Kinsman and the Hindus were only second grade citizens,
desperately side lined.

In the hands of the British, India continued to suffer. In their greed
to exploit the Nation to the maximum, they adopted the famous theory of
'divide and rule'. Hindus and Muslims were made enemies-which was
easy for them. Further they turned the history to suit their convenience.
During the age of Swami Vivekananda, this was the India in front of him.
The objective and effort of Swami Vivekananda, if could be summed up in
one sentence, was to “de-alienate Indians”. It was to restore the essence of being an Indian to every Indian. That is why he called Indians to ‘rise and awake... ’, the famous preaching of “Uttishtatha jāgrata prāpyavarāṇini-bōdha” from Swamiji. Indians were alienated, denatured and estranged from their real essence of existence, which is Indianess.

Some people wrongly think that to attempt to restore estranged glory is an attempt to go back in time. This is a very mundane view of things. Swāmi Vivekānanda or any autoctone of culture is not wishing for a reversal of history; we are not deliberately wanting to go back in time to suffer obseletion; and it is certainly not the case that one is adopting rusted and out dated or useless categories.

Quiet the contrary to this, the path shown by great Indians like Swami Vivekananda is a very authentic effort to re-discover the true Indian in each one of us. Our real selves and true nature are not revealed to us; and this makes us suffer obseletion through great chaos and confusions within. Such confusions take away our vitality in our “Struggle for existence”, and in the “Natural Selection” of things, we become obsolete in the arising new world order of things.

An authentic Indian can’t be anything other than cultural Indian. It is this Indianness that constituted real India. This can only be achieved through a rigorous dealination of each Indian and then the whole of Indian Nation. This only can vitalize us and give us strength. Any attempt to
this, which is sincere and fruit bearing shall only be the most righteous one. Swami Vivekananda's was only such an attempt; and greatly he succeeded, though the real success shall be only when we carry on his work from generation to generation.

Reference

1. *Rg Veda* X, 90, 12.


3. *RV* II, 12, 4.


6. Even as late as the Sūtra period the Śūdrās used to cook food for Brāhmaṇīs and other Āryas as one passage of the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra clearly shows. According to this passage, either Āryas, having became pure by bathing etc; should cook for the Vaisvadēva sacrifice or Śūdras should be the cooks under the supervision of the Āryas. (Āpastamba Dharmasūtra II, 3, 1-4).


10. e.g, *RV* I, 25, 1.

11. *RV* VIII, 25, 8. In VIII, 67, 1 the Adityās are called Ksatriyās.


14. Haye’s, *Political and cultural History of Modern Europe*, Chapter XII, p-578

15. The *Smṛtis*, such as that of Yajñavalkya mention the rise of castes even as a result of marriages between Āryas of different classes, but these castes are absolutely theoretical.


17. RV III, 55, 7, etc.

18. RV VIII, 37, 3; AV III, 4, 1.

19. RV X, 128, 9; AV VI, 98, 1; IX, 10, 24.

20. RV X, 124, 8


22. Quoted by Bhargava P L from *Vēdische Studies. India in the Vēdic Age*, p 257.

23. RV VI, 28,6; VIII, 4, 9; X, 34, 6.

24. RV IX, 92, 6; X, 97, 6.

25. Translation of the *Ṛg Vēda*, 3, 253-256.


27. RV IX, 92, 6; X, 97, 6.

28. RV X, 191, AV, VI, 64, 1.

29. AV VII, 12, 1.


31. *Maitrāyāṇī Samhita* II, 2, 1; *Taittirīya Samhita* II, 3, 1; *Kathaka Samhita* XI, 4.
32. Vajasaṃghīyā Samhitā XXX, 6.


39. Risley Herbert, People of India, p. 299.

40. Nehru Jawaharlal, The Discovery of India, p 74.


42. Quoted by Mohiuddin, M, 'The Elements of Composite Culture', Composite Culture of India and National Integration, ed. By Rasheeduddin Khan, p. 84.

43. Ibid, p. 84.

44. Ibid, p. 90.

45. Nehru Jawaharlal, The Discovery of India, p62.

46. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, II, 3.
