South Asia’s Cultural Mosaic

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Prologue
The Author, who has got a wide experience in diplomacy, has written a very perceptive Article on South Asia’s cultural mosaic. Diversity with unity is mirrored equally on the South-Asian cultural canvas. He exhorts the countries of South Asia to hark back to their own heritage and convert their region into an ideal global village in the modern context.

A very thought-provoking Article indeed, especially in view of the prevailing situation in the region.

- Editor

Dissimilarities within Physical Unity

History and geography blend magnificently in South Asia. The countries of South Asia share a land mass which forms a remarkably self-contained geographical region despite its great diversity. In physiographical terms, South Asia presents a vast mosaic of snowcapped mountains and arid deserts, fertile plains and river valleys, dense jungles, river sodden delta and island chains. These dissimilarities, lying within a physical unity from the Himalayas in the North to the Indian Ocean in the South, typify the character of South Asia – diversity within a greater unity. The unity in the midst of great diversity is mirrored equally on the South Asian cultural canvass. While viewing its cultural mosaic, one is struck by the commonalities of ethnic backgrounds, culture and tradition which give the South Asian synthesis a living splendour and a glow that is quite its own.

South Asia falls into three major geological regions with quite different origins. The north is enclosed by the great arc of the Himalayas. The mountains that extend west from the Himalayas proper into the Hindu Kush, enclose the low-lands of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Himalayan range also dominates the two Himalayan states of Nepal and Bhutan apart from the whole of northern India. To the south of these ranges lie the alluvial plains of the Indus, the Ganga, and the Brahmaputra embracing the most fertile region of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. It is home to more than half of South Asia’s population. To the South of
these plains lies the Peninsula, of a vintage that goes back to three billion years, extending right up to Sri Lanka. The latter, known as the ‘Pearl of the Indian Ocean’, is separated from India by the 30 km wide peninsular shallows called the Adam’s bridge. In contrast to Sri Lanka, the island chains of the Laccadives and Minicoy in India, as well as those of the Maldives, are coral atolls.

Climatically also the region offers a great variety. In the Himalayan regions of South Asia, we have a climate which is as rigorous as that of the greater part of Europe. Then there are dry sandy deserts in parts of India and Pakistan which vie with the deserts of Arabia. These display extremes of cold and heat in certain seasons of the year and do not have any appreciable rainfall. These areas breed a type of people who would naturally be quite different from those who live in the moist terrains, where plains and riverine tracts stretch for hundreds and hundreds of miles. These latter are exceedingly fertile and they largely contribute to the wealth of the region that is primarily based on agriculture. In the high plateau and their wooded hills the ethnic type varies again marked by a different style of living. Similarly, in the coastal lands, people are attracted to maritime adventuring.

Thus the variations in climate and land structure in South Asia help to bring about a most remarkable variation in the structure of life. History adds yet another dimension to the variety born out of geography. The great fact remains that people of diverse origins came to this vast subcontinent at different times and they settled down beside one another. Entering into a sort of great understanding or comprehension (Sammati) amongst themselves, they jointly built a composite culture we are so accustomed to associate with South Asia. Out of a welter of race movements, ideological underpinnings and intellectual ferments, we can vividly discern the piecemeal emergence of a way of thought and a way of life that became associated with the entire South Asian region, notwithstanding the distinct flavour of its geographical, political, ethnic and social entities.

The Indus Valley Civilization

From the earliest of times, when man moved from being a mere food gatherer to the stage of being a food producer and developed the first trappings of a culture, South Asia witnessed the sprouting and flowering of one of the greatest civilizations known to history, i.e., the Indus Valley Civilization. Settled agriculture in South Asia goes back to at least 10,000 years, when the first village communities grew on the arid western fringes of the Indus Plains in to-day’s Pakistan. For generations together, successive waves of settlers moved across the Indus into other parts of our subcontinent – sometimes bringing goods for trade, sometimes armies to conquer territory, and sometimes nothing more than domesticated animals and families in search of land to cultivate food, and enjoy a peaceful mode of existence. They left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of the peoples of South Asia. The remains of the Indus Valley Civilization are found in Mohenjodaro, Harappa and many other sites in Pakistan as well as in western India, from Lothar to Rupar. They constitute the fountain springs of what grew into a distinctively South Asian culture. The metropolitan centres of this civilization represented the acme of a long period of development within the region, extending from Kandahar in Afghanistan and Baluchistan in Pakistan, well into parts of
India’s west and creating patterns of life, which have impacted on the South Asian subcontinent for centuries. The early Indus period typified by some artifacts from Baluchistan, is in every way part of the growing continuum, generically styled as “Indian” civilization but which truly belongs to the whole subcontinent. The Indus Valley Civilization, occupies a position of enormous significance and scholarly fascination with respect to the development of ideas, philosophies and cultural modes as part of the history of South Asia.

The remains of the Indus Valley Civilization from its various centres show great cultural uniformity, notably in styles of pottery and the common worship of bull as deity. An interesting feature of the civilization is the absence of any evidence of warfare until a warring tribe from outside brought a devastating end to it. The existence of a specifically non-violent creed was the unifying force, which led the civilization to evolve and prosper so successfully for a thousand years. In its peaceful environs what evolved and flourished were powerful symbols of culture such as yoga evidenced by the figure of Pashupati Siva seated in Yogic posture and surrounded by animals. Similarly, the figure of the dancing girl in bronze epitomizes the early dawn of fine arts in the subcontinent. Many other powerful strands of the civilization of South Asia owe their origins to the culture of the Indus Valley and they have been responsible for a continuity lasting several millennia in the midst of change. In the words of Nehru, “The Indus Valley Civilization represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment that can only have resulted from years of patient efforts. And it has endured; it is specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian culture.”

From time to time the region witnessed the emergence of heterodox spiritual trends. In the early period, particularly noteworthy is the Sramanic tradition. In contrast to the Brahmanical elite, which legitimised the power of the ruling classes during the Vedic Period, the Sramanas were ascetics who moved in the interstices of rural settlements and offered to the rich and poor alike a world view, which differed radically from that of the Brahmanas. The Sramanic tradition produced several Upanishadic teachers and a number of other spiritual leaders: the two best known among them being the Jain preceptor, Mahavira Digambar, and Gautam, the Buddha, founder of Buddhism.

By the middle of the first millennium B.C., the agricultural revolution had radically transformed the valley of the Ganga and other parts of South Asia. The social life of the time was marked by unprecedented material wealth, rigid caste divisions, affluent and indulgent life styles, a general deterioration in moral standards, and a turning away from the age-old spiritual values. At such a time of dramatic change in the material and spiritual moorings of the region, the Buddha heralded the world’s first revolution against prevalent social inequalities and injustice. The Buddha’s message of universal brotherhood emphasized the value of tolerance and compassion and went a long way in creating a region-wide caring and sharing society, distinguished by its deep humanitarian concerns. The Buddha’s world view and his teachings, which exercised a profound influence on the communities of South Asia from Afghanistan down to Sri Lanka in the days of yore, continue to provide moral sustenance to large sections of the population within and beyond South Asia to this day. In the world torn asunder by self interest, passion and hatred, Buddhism offers a unique vista of world peace, in the way it propounds the elimination of suffering, by following a purely ethical eightfold path.
Buddhism’s Sweep

South Asia has sites of great significance for Buddhists around the world—Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha in the foothills of Nepal near the border with India; Bodh Gaya where he attained supreme enlightenment; the deer park at Sarnath, where he preached his first sermon and Kushinara, where he passed into Nirvana.

In addition, there are remarkable monuments of Buddhist art spread all over the subcontinent from Bamiyan in Afghanistan to Taxila and the Swat valley in Pakistan, Swayambhunath in Nepal to Sanchi, and Amaravati in Central India, Ajanta in western India to Nagarjunakonda in eastern India, and Anuradhapur to Kandy in Sri Lanka. Ancient ruins have also yielded evidence of highly developed centres of Buddhist learning such as the one in Taxila, Pakistan and two others in Nalanda and Vikramasheela in eastern India from where the message of the Buddha radiated to the far corners of Central, East and South-East Asia. Harbouring some of the most ancient universities of the world, they were noted for their scholarly studies and attracted scholars from all over, including renowned travelers like Fa Hian and Huen Tsang from China. Dharmarajika in Taxila was one of the eight major stupas built by Ashoka across his kingdom, lending a sense of both political and cultural unity to the subcontinent. One of the world’s greatest rulers, Ashoka converted, in his own words, ‘the drums of war into the drums of peace’ throughout his kingdom, which he ruled from Pataliputra, today’s Patna, in the heart of India’s Gangetic plains. His famous Rock Edicts have been found throughout the subcontinent from Shahabazgarhi in the north, to Brahmagiri in the South. He spread his powerful message of peaceful and righteous living largely based on the word of the Buddha, not only to the far ends of the subcontinent, including Sri Lanka but also as far as Greece in Europe, Egypt in the Middle East, and Suvarnabhumi (Myanmar and Thailand) in South East Asia. Anuradhapuram in Sri Lanka is an outstanding example of Buddhism’s cultural outreach very early in its history. Even in the Maldives, the first settlers were probably Buddhists from Sri Lanka from around 500 A.D., though by the 12th century, Islam became the dominant religion there.

Buddhism’s wide sweep notwithstanding, the most striking religious feature of the region in the ancient past, was the absence of a single or dominant spiritual path, organized around a unitary text or a single religious figure and exclusively claiming to embody the spiritual truth in its ultimate expression. A tolerant and liberal spiritual outlook prevailed across the length and breadth of South Asia based on the Vedantic principle of the unity of all things in the universe, which had profound consequences for the region’s subsequent development and its commitment to religious tolerance and to secular values.

Migrants from Central Asia and the Middle-East

From the dawn of history, the region witnessed successive tides of migrants from Central Asia and the Middle-East. These migrants entered from the North-Western passes that have always been South Asia’s Achilles heel. The civilization of this subcontinent, thus came to be characterized by a plurality of faiths, cultures and peoples who intermingled freely and borrowed liberally from each other and yet remained distinctive. The spirit of
tolerance was best demonstrated in the third century B.C. by Ashoka, the Great Mauryan King, and in the 16th century by Akbar, the Great Mughal Emperor. After announcing his renunciation of war in favour of the conquest of human hearts by the laws of duty and piety, Ashoka says in an edict: “Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His Sacred Majesty looks kindly and he seeks to make them think aright. For, His Sacred Majesty desires that all living folks should have security, self-control, peace of mind and joyousness.”

Another Ashokan edict proclaims: “All sects deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect and at the same time does service to the sects of other people.” Of Ashoka’s reign of some forty years, H.G. Wells says in his Outline of History: “Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history .... the name of Ashoka shines and shines almost alone like a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still revered.” Apart from Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Cambodia in close proximity to India, his memory is fervently preserved in far-off areas of China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan and Russia.

Akbar, the greatest of the Mughal kings, was a conscious synthesizer of diverse faiths and founder of a syncretistic creed, which he called Din Ilahi, Divine Faith. Jawaharlal Nehru says of him, “As a warrior he conquered large parts of India, but his eyes were set on another and more enduring conquest, the conquests of the hearts and minds of the people. In him the old dream of an united India took shape, united not only politically in one State, but organically fused into one people.”

Ethnicity

The continuous subjection of the region to successive religious and cultural waves from outside produced, in course of time, a synthesis in the fields of religion, philosophy, fine arts and linguistics, which is unique in the annals of human history. The region of South Asia has embraced, since pre-historic times, various races and cultures both autochthonous and immigrant, from the Old Stone Age cultures to Austric, Dravidian, Aryan, Mongoloid and the Turko-Iranian. In India, the Aryan element is predominant in the north and the Dravidian in the south. In the Himalayan states of India, and in Nepal and Bhutan, there is plenty of evidence of people belonging to the Mongoloid race. Pakistan is predominantly Aryan, while Bangladesh is Dravidian Mongoloid. In Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese who are of Aryan descent, constitute the majority of the population, while its Tamil speaking population is largely of Dravidian descent. It must be understood particularly in the context of South Asia, that there is no such thing as a pure racial type. Intermixture of races and cultures has been characteristic of South Asia through most of its history. The overwhelming majority of South Asians today are of the Mediterranean stock. Early Mediterranean groups formed the core of the Dravidian people in South India and in Northeastern Sri Lanka. Some Tamil scholars have suggested that the Shiva cult in the South as well as their language and script go back in their origins to Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Later, Mediterranean types also seem to have come from the North West and down the Indus Valley. Subsequently, the Indo-Aryans migrated from the steppes of Central Asia from around 2000 B.C. into the northern parts of the subcontinent. From about the fifth century B.C., incoming stocks included the
Indo-Greeks, Parthians, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Mongols and Arabs. In a number of capital cities of South Asia an Aryan language belonging to the Indo-European family is prominent. Pushto and some other Afghan languages spoken in Kabul, Urdu and Panjabi in Islamabad, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu in Delhi, Bengali in Dhaka, Nepali in Kathmandu and Sinhalese in Colombo are all Indo-Aryan in their origins. Even Divehi (a Vedic term meaning divine) spoken in the Maldives is an Indo-Aryan language. Even the syntax and script of Bhutanese are of Sanskrit and Brahmi origins respectively.

All the modern vernaculars of Northern, Western and Eastern India, as well as those of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, owe their origins to the blending of the Indo-Aryan core with other linguistic streams. Pakistan’s national language, Urdu, for example, is a fine product of the syncretic process, which combines three classical traditions, viz. Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and which grew around Lucknow and prospered around Hyderabad. It is a most striking example of the confluence of cultures in the subcontinent, a totally new language, evolved from the combination of Hindi syntax with Persian and Arabic vocabulary. At the eastern end of the Gangetic plain, another Indo-Aryan language, Bangla or Bengali is spoken by over 150 million people in Bangladesh and India’s state of West Bengal. There are also two “outliers” of Indo-Aryan languages in the form of Sinhala in Sri Lanka and Divehi in the Maldives. Both owe their origin to the southward movement of Buddhist missionaries from Northern India. Pali, which they took with them, exercised a major influence on the development of the Sinhala culture and tradition in Sri Lanka. Bhojpuri, so commonly used in Mauritius also belongs to the same stock.

Art and Architecture

Art and architecture have developed in South Asia with a remarkable streak of continuity in patterns and traditions through successive generations for over 4000 years. Hinduism and its offshoots like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, all of which believe in the theory of Karma and the reincarnation of the soul, kept evolving further with the passage of time, but without striking at their roots. The Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture exercised a profound influence, not only in South Asia but in other parts of Asia, from Bukhara in Uzbekistan to Kyoto in Japan and from Angkorwat in Cambodia to Borobudur in Indonesia. The traditional Indian belief, that the temple is the replica of the cosmos, runs through them all. The Buddhist and Hindu architecture in India began with wooden buildings. The rock carved and cave temples of ancient India show clear evidence of copying wooden styles. The tradition of art manifest from the 3rd and 2nd century B.C. in Buddhist caves in Ajanta was followed in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. by free standing rock cut temples such as those at Mamallapuram. The ‘Gompas’ and “Chortens” like those in Ladakh, Zanskar, Lahul and Spiti in India and their counterparts abroad derive their inspiration from the art and architecture of Sanchi, Sarnath, Nalanda and Bodhgaya. Artisans and craftsmen on these sites employed styles, which showed extensive contacts with the institutions of the past. The unique wood-carvings, in the royal palaces in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Pattan, reveal a mixture of Buddhist, Hindu and early animist influences. Sri Lankan architecture has many features in common with both Buddhist and Hindu Indian traditions. Stupas were the most striking feature of Buddhist architecture in India exemplified by the one at Sanchi and Buddhist stupas all over Asia have sought their inspiration from them.
Islam came to India first with Arab merchants and then with Muslim conquerors. However, Indian Islam, particularly in the states of Gujarat, Malwa, Jaunpur and Bengal gradually acquired a fusion of Islamic and Hindu features. The greatest flowering of Islamic architecture the world ever saw took place under the Mughals in India.

The Mughal art was not simply a transplant from another country or region into India. In Jaunpur the mosques and palaces of Muslim rulers displayed a happy blend of the Hindu and Muslim architectural styles. Within the four walls of the Red Forts of Delhi and Agra, the temple and the mosque stand side by side. The Taj Mahal contains a very fine amalgam of the Hindu and Muslim forms of architecture. It is a monument to South Asia’s spirit of synthesis which could weave two completely distinct and proud strands of culture into a homogeneous whole so magnificently. The Mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandara is a unique monument in many ways. The whole structure is inspired by the Buddhist Vihara, which speaks volumes of the transformation Islamic art patterns underwent on the Indian soil.

Music

Thus the essence of South Asian civilization and culture has been its spirit of assimilation and synthesis. No where is this more clearly manifest than in music. Amir Khusro is its most illustrious symbol. Aiman, Tarana, Qol, Suhla and several other tunes sung and celebrated by millions in the subcontinent are a living testament to the genius of this great musician and his power to homogenize diverse strands into a single new pattern. In the field of instrumental music, it was he who invented the Sitar. Sultan Hussain Sharqu, King of Jaunpur, was a great lover of music, and it was he, who introduced the khayal style in Indian music. ‘The co-operation of Hindus and Muslims, for almost a thousand years has brought about a consummation that has perhaps no equal in the world,’ said Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Classical music with its roots going back to more than a millennium and, equally, cherished in the countries of South Asia, has been a major source as well as symbol of the cultural unity of the entire region. For hundreds of years, most of the words and themes of the Indian classical music have been derived from Hindu mythology but some of the greatest masters of this music have been Muslim. It is interesting to mention here the Kitab-i-Nauras, a collection of songs in praise of Hindu deities and Muslim saints, which was written by a 17th century ruler, Ibrahim Adil Shah II. Through the common idiom of music and dance, the people of this subcontinent have expressed their joys and sorrows, their struggles and aspirations, and a myriad of emotions for centuries together. Through their hours of work and leisure, they have danced, sung and played to this music. Areas around temples and mosques, monasteries and churches, have all reverberated with music, which has achieved a subcontinental flavour after assimilating diverse streams from different climes.

Religion and Philosophy: The Spirit of Universalism

Various systems of thought, belief, faith and worship have developed in South Asia through the scrutiny of the self, what the Buddha called atma paryavekshana, deep reflections over the origins of man and the universe around. Although at first sight this amorphous
mass appears to be more an encyclopedia of varying philosophies and sects than a continuous and uninterrupted development of one system, a closer analysis reveals a pervading unity, which binds together the bizarre multiplicity of these beliefs and practices.

Through the vistas of the past and through many centuries, the voice of saints and sages from the Himalayas and recluses from forests and sacred river banks has run like a stream – the voice that spoke to us through the figure of Pashupati-Shiva in the Indus valley period, and later through Vedic Rishis and Upanishadic Saints, through the Buddha and Mahavira, through the prophets and holy men and women of numerous faiths along the corridors of time right up to Mahatma Gandhi. They all had one essential message to give to mankind, the one of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, of the world entire being a family, of universal peace and brotherhood. As Swami Vivekananda said “There are differences in non-essentials in religion, but in essentials they are all one. The Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Christians, Muslims are one on the question of God and soul.” Unity in variety is the plan of the universe, religion is meant to unite rather than divide people. Ultimately, every faith must contribute to the spiritual and material well-being of humanity, as proclaimed by the Vedas ages ago: Yatobhyudaya Nishreyas Siddhī Sa Dharmah. The emphasis was on everyone being happy, healthy, all engaged in the observance of the good. The Buddha propounded the golden rule for all: “Do not do to others what ye do not wish done to yourself, and wish for others too what ye desire and long for yourself. This is the whole of Dharma, heed it well.” Jesus Christ enjoined upon his followers to observe the same principle very succinctly: “Whosoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them”, and this he characterizes as ‘the whole of the law of the prophets.’ Some six hundred years later Prophet Mohammad instructed his followers thus: Thou shouldst like for others what thou likes for thyself.” (Hadis). The Bhagavad Gita, in essence, expresses the same sentiment by impressing upon us the Vedantic principle of the unity of all things and saying that those who see their self in others and others equally within themselves are the real Yogis.

Gandhiji believed in the soul of all religions to be one but encased in a multitude of forms. Placing ethics above everything else, Gandhiji echoed his understanding of religion in the following words: “Cooperation with forces of good and non-cooperation with forces of evil are the two things we need for a good and pure life, whether it is called Hindu, Muslim or Christian”.

However, despite the shared commonalities in history, religion, philosophy, language, script, art and culture, and great achievements to its credit including in fields of science, mathematics and astronomy, and even in the economic realm so as to deserve, being described as a bird of gold, the region of South Asia became a pool of abysmal poverty and backwardness under its centuries of colonial rule. The countries within it are struggling to emerge out of that legacy even after several decades of independence. As a matter of fact, under British hegemony, the economies of the region remained predominantly rural and agricultural. At the end of the colonial era, each of them was confronted by the hydra of underdevelopment – a rapidly growing population, low standards of living and lack of health, hygiene and literacy, and above all capital. Inevitably, the region continues to be heavily dependent on foreign investment and aid. Nonetheless, these latter have brought in their wake new ideas, cultural
patterns and modern technology, helping our ancient cultures to evolve a new synthesis – not based on the fear of the new, but on the confident strength of the old, preserving what they must and shedding what they should. The process of that transformation has been slow, even grudging, but certain.

It would be seen from the above that in every sphere the South Asian region has had a certain, amorphous individuality and unity in its long history. Even today, the people of nations comprising South Asia have memories, deep down in their consciousness, dim or vivid, of a certain affinity and association with each other, within a larger sphere of existence. South Asia might not have had the religious unity of Christendom that might have beckoned the Europeans to a co-operative union. But then, it also did not experience bitter and protracted religious and ideological conflicts like the Crusades.

In the many splendored history of South Asia, notwithstanding some gruesome instances of conflict and blood-letting, the great religions of the world such as Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam and numerous denominations springing from them have co-existed in broad tolerance. Through constant interaction between them, there arose certain common patterns of living, a composite culture, elements of which could be detected in every country of the region today. Inheritors of rich and varied strands of culture, Dravidian and Aryan, Hellenistic and Persian, Judaic, Christian and Islamic, to mention just a few, all churned into the cauldron of history, the nations and peoples of South Asia are emerging today into a new dawn of modernity through individual and joint efforts as nations of SAARC.

The universalism of all religions is nowhere so well manifested as in the diverse lands of South Asia. There might have been clashes of ideology here and there, and on the plane of material interests amongst them, but in the world of the spirit, in the realm of art, philosophy, literature and fundamental values, the humanity of South Asia has had a unique sense of continuity and community throughout history.

The cultural bond between the countries of South Asia is indeed so strong that even when Indo-Pak relations had touched the nadir on account of differences on the Kashmir issue in recent years, what kept them together was an exchange of artists, musicians, poets and academics between them. The two countries are not only historically, geographically and culturally linked, they also share three of their major languages Urdu, Punjabi and Sindhi and they must learn to move forward with their commonalties rather than harp on their differences in their mutual interest, and that of the entire South Asian region.

To sum up, one might say that through long centuries, people living in this great subcontinent have intermingled with one another and made the mosaic of South Asia ever richer through that process philosophically, culturally and materially. The Dravidian, the Aryan, the Greek, the Scythian, the Central Asian, the Mongol, the Persian, the Arabic, the European and many more ethnic and cultural streams have all joined to fill up the mighty sea of the South Asian civilization. Nowhere else in the world have so many cultures met and coalesced with each other through the corridors of time as well as in this subcontinent. Here,
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we do not find the uniformity of a particular dogma being imposed or insisted upon but full scope being provided for a harmonious blending of a variety of beliefs and cultural patterns into a symphony of spiritual striving and quest.

As a matter of fact, the culture of the subcontinent is not of one country but of the whole South Asian region – a synthesis of not only blood and race but also of thought and speech and cultural manifestations that allows for a constant flowering of the essence of culture through changing times. No where else can one see the universalism of the human spirit, so powerfully pronounced, as in this part of the world. No where else has one noted better that all religions teach more or less the same moral code, and all of mankind is but one family. Now that the entire world is moving towards the concept of a global village, can the countries of South Asia hark back to their own heritage and convert their region into an ideal global village? That should certainly not be more difficult than throwing away the foreign yoke by non-violent means half a century ago.

Bibliography


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