

Some Paths to Forgiveness: Religious Conflict and Shared Living in Indiaⁱ

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People of diverse faiths and cultures have lived together with peace and goodwill for millennia in India. However, when India won freedom in 1947, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were embroiled in a feverish bloodbath. This left the country torn into two; a million people were killed, and ten times that number permanently uprooted from the land of their birth.

The people of free India adopted a Constitution which guaranteed to it minorities religious freedom, and equal protection under the law. The experience in six decades of freedom has been of a sometimes bitterly contested but still and enduring authentic secular democracy.

However, since Independence there also have been thousands of ‘communal riots’ⁱⁱ, or episodes of mass clashes between people of Hindu and Muslim faith, and pogroms, resulting in the recorded loss, according to one painstaking estimate, of at least 25628 lives (including 1005 in police firings)ⁱ. In my interviews with hundreds of survivors of communal violence of the minority Muslim faith, I learn that the families of most had not suffered for the first time. Each had many agonising tales of losing loved ones, and the looting and torching of their homes in several successive riots. In fact, the saga of their lives seemed like the spaces *between various communal riots*, often starting with the cataclysmic upheavals of 1947. These spaces were almost stolen, tragically fragile, insecure interludes, during which they struggled to lead full and happy lives before being overtaken and destroyed once again by the politics of hate.

ⁱ Many parts of this essay have appeared in my book ‘Fear and Forgiveness: The Aftermath of Massacre’ (Penguin India, 2009)

ⁱⁱ The term ‘communal riot’ connotes in India mass violence between religious communities. Communalism is the ideology that people of different faiths have divergent and conflicting interests.

Whenever they reflect on and talk of their futures, riots continue to dominate their mindscape. They speak repeatedly of their plans of what they would do for the protection of their families, not *if* a communal riot breaks out again, but *when* it does. (Their plans were usually of finding safety by shifting to Muslim ghettos and sometimes by arming themselves and very occasionally in fantasies of bloody retributive violence). On such tragic and hopeless certainties of recurrence of the trauma of periodically repeated profound loss and suffering in violent communal upheavals, no enduring peaceful future can be built. The ideas of forgiveness and reconciliation that this essay explores are a response to the sporadic but repeated hostilities and this perceived certainty of recurrence.

It is remarkable that despite this recurring communal bloodletting during and after the traumatic Partition of the country, there has been no systematic structured official (or even significant non-official) processes of 'truth and reconciliation', to help perpetrators and survivors of hate violence come together; to see and speak to each other; acknowledge their crimes and failings, their hate and fear, their grievances and suspicions; to seek and offer forgiveness, trust and goodwill; and ultimately help bring closure and eventual healing.

Part of the problem is that the threats and grave peril, both of on-going communal violence and of subversion of justice to minorities, are not sufficiently acknowledged by the State, political parties and civil society organisations. Even where relations between communities deteriorate, and States are partisan on communal lines - and soft on organisations that are committed to destroy the secular democratic foundations of the nation - many continue to live in dogged denial. Secondly, much of the violence and injustice is not overt, it rages unseen in the hearts and minds of people. We attend to it only when violence actually spills on to the streets, when the dust and dirt of our pavements are soaked in human blood, when the bodies of girls and women are violated, and when the smoke of fires of homes and shops rises to the skies, leaving behind the burned rubble of vandalised hopes and dreams. We deliberately overlook the

covert violence of the everyday. Thirdly, governments, political parties and social organizations in India are today most frequently equivocal, unsteady and reluctant in dealing with the intensely sensitive and potentially divisive issues raised by communalism. They no longer are prepared to stand up to be counted.

However, the Indian people have arguably had more experience than most through centuries of living with diversityⁱⁱ, therefore even without organised processes of reconciliation, there are usually natural spontaneous processes of reaching out and healing that follow bouts of sectarian violence. In many communal conflagrations that I have witnessed and handled (as a former head of district governments), I have observed that within days of such mass sectarian upheavals, persons of goodwill and compassion reach out from each community and others grasp their outstretched hands gratefully. There are spontaneous individual and collective expressions of remorse and grief at the loss suffered by the other community, and of compassion, through which processes of social and personal healing set in.

But without structured modes of facilitating reconciliation for survivors of the Partition violence of 1947, there has not been adequate closure for families that experienced the agony and permanent uprootment from and the loss of their loved ones and homeland. My own parents and their extended families lost their homes amidst hate, slaughter and arson in a region of the country that became a part of Pakistan in 1947, and their grief of loss remains dormant more than sixty years later, just below the surface. Perhaps we needed much earlier to bring together people who lived with the violence from both sides of the border, to share truth, discover their common burdens of suffering and privation, and thereby find the spaces for individual and collective forgiveness.

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In most cultures, through many phases in human history, warring and bitterly estranged peoples have from time to time wearied of battles and hate, of destruction and fear. They have instead buried their weapons and collectively sought or rediscovered ways of

living together with peace, faith and goodwill. In lay terms, reconciliation may be understood as processes by which is achieved the restoration - between members of different racial, ethnic, religious or social groups or classes, who have been divided by mass violence, organised campaigns of hate and distrust or prolonged oppression - of mutual dialogue, understanding, social, cultural and economic interactions, trust and amity. This restoration aspires to achieve levels of shared living and social relations that at least match those that prevailed before the violence or hate campaigns, or to even higher levels that are mutually considered more acceptably just and egalitarian. It involves the expulsion or neutralisation of loathing and suspicion that invaded social relations between diverse people, and in the end a genuine meeting again of hearts, individual and collective.

The imperative of reconciliation after conflict is that in its absence, hate is retained and nurtured, with stereotypes, myths, selective memory and lies about the demonised 'other', and passed on as a dubious legacy from generation to generation. In recent times, memory has been abused, for instance, to 'fuel the fires of hatred' in Northern Ireland, and in the completely varied recollections of their common history by Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, and Muslims and Serbs in Bosniaⁱⁱⁱ. The misuse of distorted memory of falsehoods and deliberate half-truths has also been used globally most widely in recent times to mount a climate of pervasive distrust against people of Muslim faith, in the so-called global war on terror.

In Ludhiana in Punjab, India, speaking to an audience on the need for reclaiming and defending a secular India, I recall being confronted by an elderly man in the audience who wept painfully, 'My family was uprooted from Pakistan in 1947, and it lost many lives in the hands of the Muslims. What can I tell my children? How do you expect me to tell them to forgive and forget?' I replied that my own family belonged to Rawalpindi and suffered in similar ways. I added: 'But why should Muslim men, women and children today deserve hatred, and even worse retribution, for crimes that other Muslim people may have committed decades ago? And more importantly, why is your memory so selective? If you must recall to your children the crimes suffered by Hindus and Sikhs

during Partition, should you not recount to them also the fact that their Hindus and Sikhs ancestors committed exactly the same unspeakable atrocities against Muslims on this side of the border?’

The falsehoods and half-truths of memory rob the ‘other’ of not just equal citizenship, but even elementary humanity. The western Indian state of Gujarat in 2002 witnessed some of the most brutal mass violence after Partition, especially targeting women and children, in which women’s bodies were used as battlefields. The extraordinary support of many women of the majority Hindu community for these acts of mass sexual violence suggests the potency of the toxins of hate that seeped deep into the souls of even women of the majority religious community, and distorted their perceptions of women of a different faith. They stopped seeing Muslim women in their own likeness, as women and as human. It drove them to regard Muslim women as deserving of the same violence which, if it had been instead targeted towards themselves, would have humiliated and crushed them.

Ideas of reconciliation and forgiveness – as well as justice – are intrinsic in varied but related ways to virtually every major strand of diverse religious and secular convictions that have impinged through the centuries on the consciousness of Indian people. These include various tribal faiths, Buddhist, Jain, Vedic, Islamic, Christian, Parsi, Sikh, reformist Bhakti, Sufi, agnostic, atheistic and sceptical philosophical traditions. It is however beyond the limited scholarship of this essay to track this edifying, compelling and sophisticated canvas of humanitarian ethical, social and political discourse. I will do no more than to quote Gandhi who, in modern times, is arguably the most credible political practitioner and thinker of the politics of reconciliation. In an inconsolable country grieving bitterly for a million lives extinguished by Partition, homes and homelands lost forever and a country dismembered by the divisive politics of hate, Gandhi’s last battle before his assassination in January 1948 was for the rights of the Muslim people, and not even those who had chosen secular democratic India as their home, but those who had opted for the religious state of Pakistan. The conviction that drove him all his life was that ‘There is no way to peace. Peace is the way’. He spoke of peace as ‘a heavy downpour of rain which drenches the soil to fullness, likewise only a

profuse shower of love overcomes hatred'. His comments on forgiving and forgetting are illuminating: 'To forgive is not to forget. The merit lies in loving in spite of the vivid knowledge that the one that must be loved is not a friend. There is no merit in loving an enemy when you forget him for a friend'.

I recall a peace activist friend who has devoted the best years of his life to attempts to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity in India, who in a moment of dark despair said to me, 'I have given up hoping that Hindus and Muslims will love each other. Today for me it is enough that they do not kill one another.' Such minimalist reconciliation does not eliminate conflict, but only reduces the resort to individual or collective violations of body and property as the means to resolve this. Reconciliation is deepened when it travels well beyond such a resolve to continue to hate but not destroy, to one that positively builds trust, confidence and eventually empathy between previously embroiled people. ^{iv}

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I propose that paths to authentic forgiveness and reconciliation must traverse at least four milestones: acknowledgement; remorse; reparation; and justice. The first of these elements, acknowledgement, involves for me a public acceptance - by direct perpetrators, by State authorities, but also by people and organisations who openly or tacitly ratify the violence or were silent or indifferent as it unfolded- that grave and unjust violence and discrimination actually took place, causing unconscionable suffering to those who were targeted by the violence. The second, remorse, is a public expression of collective sincere regret or contrition for the hate, violence, injustice and suffering that transpired.

Reparation for me involves the material elements of reconciliation: at the very minimum, it entails adequate and timely assistance to enable victim survivors to sustainably achieve shelters, livelihoods, common resources, habitats and cultural environments that are at levels at least comparable (and, I believe, better) than what they enjoyed prior to the conflict. This is in conformity with established principles of international law, under

which restitution involves 're-establishment of the situation which existed before the wrongful act was committed'. There can be no compensation for loss of loved ones, homes and valued ways of life, since no monetary value in the world can be attached to these deprivations. But reparation should still address, with humility and sensitivity, these losses as well to the extent that is humanly possible, to assist the survivors to keel living. For it to be even more healing, not just the impersonal State but also perpetrators or people who share the identity of the wrong-doers, should be actively mobilised in a process of rebuilding. In the aftermath of the Gujarat 2002 massacre, some Hindu village folk were successfully mobilised in the region surrounding Godhra, the epicentre of the upheaval, to contribute their voluntary labour to rebuilding the destroyed homes of their Muslim neighbours, and this manifestly was intensely healing for the battered survivors.

Justice involves firstly legal justice, the equal application and protection of the law of the land and by institutions of the State, including fair, timely and non-partisan processes of registering police complaints, investigation, arrest, bail, prosecution, trial and appeal. It includes also accountability to people and the legal system of public officials who are charged with preventing and controlling communal violence, reparation and restoring peace. Finally it involves restoring peace: the establishment of a sustainable environment of harmony and amity founded on legal and social justice, guarantees of non-repetition, freedom from fear and distrust between communities, and strengthening of social, economic and cultural bonds between them.

Those who oppose post-violence human rights struggles often suggest that efforts for legal justice undertaken long after visible violence has ceased on the streets, only revive enmities and cause further unrest and tensions rather than encourage peace. These threaten the fragile peace that is constructed with so much difficulty in post-conflict societies. This argument reminds me again and again of beliefs that a family in which a woman accepts repeated violence in the hands of her spouse without complaint or resistance is a peaceful one, and a household in which she is encouraged or supported

(or instigated?) to be emboldened enough to speak out is one in which the peace and sanctity of family life is being imperilled and destroyed.

Indeed the pleas for shrouding throbbing pasts in suffocating silence are particularly unjust for women survivors of communal violence. There are even in normal times, enormous conspiracies of silence that surround violence against women, whether in homes, work places or on the streets. In all communal squalls, the bodies of women are specially targeted. Women's bodies are refashioned as the property of the hated 'other' and as symbols of their honour, therefore attacks on these aim to humiliate the men who 'own' them and help break their spirit. Imposed consent for silence as forms of spurious reconciliation are likely to muffle the unhealed agony of women survivors most of all.

It is only when the crimes of the past are acknowledged, and atonement made with public expressions of genuine remorse, when the State, the perpetrator and survivor all join hands to rebuild broken lives, and when justice is done and seen to have been done, is it possible for those who suffer to forgive, to heal, to trust and possibly to even love again.

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A survivor of apartheid in South Africa famously and tellingly reminded members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission about the enormous imbalances of power that are implicit in alternate notions of reconciliation and justice. 'Reconciliation is only in the vocabulary of those who can afford it', he agonisingly countered them. 'It is non-existent to a person whose self-respect has been stripped away and poverty is a festering wound that consumes his soul'^{vi}. I have found nothing in what members of the Commission said that adequately responds to his anguished challenge.

In a visit to South Africa, I tiptoed in awe before accounts of the justly celebrated Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, constituted after the political end of apartheid. It has inspired at least a score of other such commissions in other countries which have attempted to assist their people to deal with a history of strife^{vii}. A review^{viii}

of the experience of 20 such commissions found that official investigations into State atrocities and terror have helped the survivors move ahead, and yet found that they are poignantly torn between two contradictory needs, to remember and also to forget.

I wondered what lessons we could learn from the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in India, to bridge the communal chasm that is growing between people of different faiths.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission assured legal amnesty to all perpetrators of atrocities as long as they admit their crimes before the Commission in the glare of a watchful media. It was argued in defence of the South African Commission that this was a major advance from earlier commissions elsewhere, in which amnesty was negotiated behind closed doors, and behind the backs of the victims of these mass hate crimes. However, the truth is that even in South Africa this decision was hastily imposed from 'above', without adequate information, debate, let alone the democratic consent of millions of Black people who had lived with the indignities, injustice and terror of apartheid, even though the decision had absolutely critical bearing on both how they dealt with their past and they built their futures. Hugo van der Merwe, a South African scholar, says that the ANC leadership at that time believed that 'for local dynamics to change, national intervention must first take place. This will then filter down, or create the conditions (and incentives) within which local actors can pursue reconciliation processes'^{ix}.

Desmond Tutu specifically rejects what he describes as the 'Nuremburg trial paradigm', suggesting the victims (or human rights defenders) should not individually or collectively pursue legal charges against their wrong-doers, nor should the State authorities 'run the gauntlet of the normal judicial process' to bring them to face trial and eventual punishment.^x He offers some practical arguments, such as that without this agreement, the apartheid leadership would not have agreed to a negotiated settlement, and that anyway the judicial system would have continued to be biased against the victims.

There can be both convincing rationales and debates about the imperatives of compromises that are entered into by political leaderships in historically difficult moments of transition, such as those faced by the post-apartheid South African nation at the time of its rebirth as a democracy in 1992. I can understand (but not necessarily agree) if Tutu and Mandela defend the decision of assured amnesty for truth-tellers who committed unspeakable crimes of apartheid as the only one that was politically feasible at that moment in South African history, if they admit even the possibility that the decision may have been politically appropriate but at the same time *ethically* flawed. But my problem is with Tutu's *ethical* (and not political) arguments in defence of this amnesty, because these are intended to state moral principles that have much more universal application: briefly that even legally determined and imposed punishment is retribution, which in turn is vengeance, and therefore it is ethically wrong.

Using Nozick's (1981) description of retributive punishment meted out through the legal system as 'punishment inflicted as deserved for a past wrong', Crocker^{xi} persuasively proposes many ways in which retribution is *not* revenge. Retribution is given for a violation that is a collectively accepted wrong; it is constrained and establishes limits to the punishment that can be meted out to the wrong-doer; it is impersonal, principled and takes no personal satisfaction from the suffering of the person who undergoes punishment. Most importantly in our context of communal riots, it rejects the doctrine of collective guilt, that mere membership of an opposing group justifies revenge. I will argue that ethnic conflicts that in India are mainly in the nature of disguised pogroms or genocides, in which there are clear victims and perpetrators, with primary culpability of State and organisations that are dedicated to the manufacture of hatred and the instigation and planning of the sectarian violence. In these circumstances, retributive justice, by challenging impunity, negating counterfeit hierarchies of suffering between communities and re-establishing equality before the law between people of disjoined communities, necessarily paves the way for eventual restorative justice.

The dangers of 'reconciliation' imposed on unequal contenders are further highlighted by Sumanta Banerjee^{xiii} who asks the difficult question whether the advance assurance of amnesty for apartheid crimes was only a fig-leaf to disguise the surrender imposed on the weak to give up their rights forever to secure justice from their powerful oppressors. Banerjee points out the paradox that Winnie Mandela, former wife of legendary ANC leader Nelson Mandela, was jailed for fraud and theft during the apartheid regime period, but 'the Truth and Reconciliation Commission cannot punish even a single white gangster, even if it finds him guilty of murders and other crimes against blacks, during the apartheid era. Thus, while Winnie Mandela gets imprisoned on charges of fraud, the white racists can get away even with the killing of the famous South African radical leader Steven Biko. Biko's murderers, when brought before the Commission, confessed to the killing in all its gory detail. But when his family tried to institute a case against them, it was denied' because if perpetrators of human rights abuses fully disclosed all the crimes that they had committed, they were granted amnesty. She describes this bitterly as a 'novel method indeed to bring about reconciliation between the oppressor and the oppressed - at the cost of justice'. Sumanta Banerjee's even more trenchant criticism is that neither the apartheid regime nor the vast socio-economic disparities were put to trial in the quest for truth. As a result, the leaders of the apartheid regime were never held accountable, and '95 percent of the economy (continues to be) controlled by the same white settlers who created apartheid'. Data also shows that 47.8 percent of Africans were unemployed in 2003 compared with only 9.9 percent of whites. ^{xiii}

The victims of apartheid were thus denied by the democratic leadership of new South Africa the right to bring their oppressors to legal justice. I observed in South Africa strong disagreement and dissatisfaction among many Black South Africans with Mandela's claim of collective forgiveness for the brutal crimes of the recent past. Forgiveness to be authentic and genuinely healing must be the voluntary, informed and empowered choice of the survivors, and cannot be forced on them. If it is, the wounds of apartheid will continue to fester.

This indeed has been the experience also of other amnesty legislation in other countries as well, that 'legal forgetting'^{xiv} which is politically imposed from above rankles the survivor and does not bring about any real closure for her, nor for the divided societies of which she is a part. To free offenders from the legal consequences of their actions amounts to trading away justice in return for a kind of unequal peace. This was also the experience of post- World War II amnesty laws passed in France and Holland for people who had collaborated with the Germans, and also in many Latin American countries in the 1980s^{xv}.

Besides, just truth-telling was explicitly required under the rules of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for qualifying for amnesty, but no expression of remorse. The Commission also made recommendations for reparations for the victims. I have argued my view that for reconciliation to be authentic, it requires at least four components to be accomplished: acknowledgement, remorse, reparation and justice. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission most powerfully assured only one of these components, namely acknowledgement, and to some extent it organised reparation for some of the victims. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission certainly yielded a great deal of truth, and although it did not require remorse, Desmond Tutu who chaired the Commission, and Fazel Randeria, one of the Commissioners whom I met in Johannesburg, affirmed that a great deal of genuine regret was spontaneously forthcoming from those who testified to often chilling crimes before the Commission. But the assurance of amnesty traded away - and many like me believe very cheaply - the requirements of legal justice, although others may persuasively argue that the larger ends of restorative justice were indeed achieved.

There can be little doubt that the statespersonship and magnanimity of the ANC leadership, embodied in the towering and charismatic personality of Nelson Mandela and unique humanitarian enterprises like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, helped avert runaway bloodletting of the kind that literally tore the Indian nation apart in 1947 (and subsequently the Pakistani nation in 1971). This in itself is an enormous historic achievement. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings also helped

the nation, and particularly its Black populations, to confront and to some degree come to terms with the savage oppression of the nightmarish apartheid decades. In the cathartic hearings of the Commission, frequently did Black survivors display the most extraordinary humanity in forgiving their tormentors. As Tutu repeatedly affirms, there is indeed no future without forgiveness.

However, in my short days in South Africa, I repeatedly encountered a country that remains very deeply fractured on racial and overlapping class lines, as well as gender, between Black African, coloured, Indian and white, men and women. Within these there are further divisions, of ethnic groups within the Blacks, the Indians, and Afrikaaner and British white people. The colour of one's skin remains in South Africa the overwhelming defining feature of one's identity, opportunities and social relations, although there is over the last decade a small but growing Black middle class who are seeking to escape the centuries-old confines of race. The incredibly luxurious suburbs are still populated almost exclusively by White people, whereas in the crowded and deprived shanties, it is rare to encounter anyone other than Black men and women, boys and girls. And within each and between each of these are chilling narratives of rape and sexual violence.

Fazel Randera, a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said to me, 'I do believe that building on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process of staring truth in the eye and actively negotiating the society we wish to build, will help overcome many of the problems that not only we face but the world faces. Even class will eventually be peacefully negotiated away.' I am not persuaded. Inequality, racism, patriarchy and injustice will have to be fought constantly by people's resolute democratic (and I am convinced non-violent) struggles and State action. There are no painless short-cuts to equality, equity or justice. Not even truth, forgiveness and mercy, even though I deeply believe in all of these.

I am not prevailed upon by the premise of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that acknowledgement and some reparation are enough for reconciliation to occur, without remorse or justice. Is legal justice intrinsically just retributive (seeking

punishing of those who caused others harm), or is it equally or even more importantly an assertion of equal citizenship rights, is a question that we repeatedly return to in this volume. To my mind, reconciliation is a process of building or restoring between estranged members of different racial, ethnic or religious groups, mutual trust, understanding, respect and goodwill. It is necessarily egalitarian, and cannot be founded on a surrender of one's rights, dignity and aspirations from a position of weakness. True forgiveness requires a prior establishment of a situation of sufficient equality of power to enable persons who suffered *not* to forgive if they so choose, and for their choice to have consequences on those whom they elect not to forgive. For this reason, I believe that justice and remorse are both intrinsic to an authentic and enduring process of reconciliation.

I acknowledge that it is unfair to expect that the ravages of centuries of colonial rule and fifty years of legalised racism can disappear with one commission and a decade and a half of democracy. It did prevent untold bloodshed and sectarian slaughter. But staggering economic and racial inequality persists. South Africa remains hopelessly divided on racial lines, with the privileges or deprivations of class mostly reinforcing those of race and gender. Oppression and injustice not only of the past but also the present are engines of dangerous anger among young people, reflected in a murky sub-culture of brutalised street violence and crime.

I believe strongly that official or non-official efforts for reconciliation should never be even a well-intentioned apology for impunity for crimes, especially by State authorities, and others who enjoy power. Legal accountability for atrocities and crimes, especially by authorities, paves the way for the possibilities of genuine reconciliation, although by itself it does not guarantee it. As Tina Rosenberg, writes 'If the victims in a society do not feel that their suffering has been acknowledged, then they . . . are not ready to put the past behind them. If they know that the horrible crimes carried out in secret will always remain buried . . . then they are not ready for reconciliation'.^{xvi}

The paramount humanitarian and political challenge remains of finding a path that leads to authentic reconciliation between the Hindu and Muslim people of India - when they are estranged by violence or memory - but one that includes acknowledgement, remorse, reparation as well as justice. There are clearly no markers for us to follow.

There is no universal set of magic solutions that would apply equally to heal hurt, anger, betrayal and hostilities that have accumulated and been transmitted through generations in different societies and people. The content of reconciliation - as both process and goal - will inevitably vary in different cultural, historical and political contexts. The historical context of Hindu Muslim conflicts in India is that these and other diverse communities lived together in relative peace through centuries, and it is largely after 1857 (when Hindu and Muslim soldiers and kings and queens fought the colonial rulers unitedly shoulder to shoulder, and together chose the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar as the symbol of the insurrection against the British East India Company), that the rifts between the two communities were engineered at least in part as an element of colonial policy.

The responsibilities for preventing and controlling communal violence and ensuring reparation almost exclusively vest with the State. The duties for organising processes of reconciliation are somewhat more broad-based: these obligations also vest primarily with the State, but people on both sides of the conflict and their own organisations also can contribute a great deal to both the success and the arrest of processes of reconciliation. The role of human rights and the social organisations committed to secular democracy and peace is optional, but if equipped with compatible values and skills, they can vastly facilitate the process.

The greatest hope is that among ordinary people in both communities, there are everyday lived ways of giving and receiving trust and respect. There is the courage and resilience of the survivors, and many acts of compassion by people of the majority community. In the daily lives of affected communities, as they struggle with the timeless challenges of finding food, work and dignity, hatred and fear are manufactured and

sustained by organisations and the State, but also simultaneously these are resisted and overcome by ordinary people in the ways that they lead their lives. As Howard Zinn affirms, 'Human history is not just a history of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasise in this complex history will define our lives...' There are indeed the glimmerings of individual resistance, of courage and compassion, of love amidst slaughter.

ⁱ B Rajeshwari, *Communal Riots in India A Chronology (1947-2003)* (New Delhi: IPCS Research Papers. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2004)

ⁱⁱ Though the respect for diversity and respect has been present from a long time, Amartya Sen. in his seminal book, *The Argumentative Indian*, (New Delhi: 2006) traces it for the first time, in a coherent manner from Asoka's reign (3 B.C.) to the present times.

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations, *Religion and Reconciliation Background Paper*, <http://www.tcd.ie/ise/postgraduate/reconciliationBACKGROUND.pdf>

^{iv} Bloomfield and Barnes eds, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict Handbook* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2003)

^v Stef Vandeginste, "Reparation.." in *Reconciliation after violent conflict: A handbook*. eds. Bloomfield, David and Barnes, Teresa (Stockholm: IDEA, 2003) p 145

^{vi} Luc Huyse, "The Process of Reconciliation" in *Reconciliation after a violent conflict: A Handbook*, ed. D Bloomfield and Teresa Barnes (IDEA:Stockholm, 2003) p 25

^{vii} United Nations, *Religion and Reconciliation Background Paper*, <http://www.tcd.ie/ise/postgraduate/reconciliationBACKGROUND.pdf>

^{viii} Hayner (2001)

^{ix} Luc Huyse, "The Process of Reconciliation" in *Reconciliation after a violent conflict: A Handbook*, ed. D Bloomfield and Teresa Barnes (IDEA:Stockholm, 2003) p 25

^x Desmond M. Tutu, 'No Future Without Forgiveness' quoted in *Doubleday*, 1999

^{xi} David A Crocker, "Retribution and Reconciliation." http://www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/Winter/Spring 00/Retribution_and_Reconciliation

^{xii} Sumantha Banerjee, "Reconciliation Without Justice." <http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2003&leaf=05&filename=5822&filetype=html>

^{xiii} (Gelb, 2003:4) quoted in

http://www.odi.org.uk/rights/Publications/CurranPiron_PublicPolicy&Exclusion.pdf

^{xiv} Luc Huyse, "The Process of Reconciliation" in *Reconciliation after a violent conflict: A Handbook*, ed. D Bloomfield and Teresa Barnes (IDEA:Stockholm, 2003) p 25

^{xv} *ibid*

^{xvi} *ibid*