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## Our World at a Crossroads/ Perspectives on the Way Forward

*A talk by Professor Rajmohan Gandhi*

This talk will be in four sections of unequal length. The *first*, quite self-centred, will be on my links with this country, which, I must complain, is hard to name. *England* is natural in some ways but exclusionary in more important ways. While *UK* and *GB* are mere initials, their full forms ask for a great many syllables. *Britain* seems at times to lack warmth. *Brits* is a lovely word, but *Britland* would be presumptuous. I may largely stick to *this land*.

The *second* section, not wholly free from connection with self, will be on links with this land of my grandfather, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and on two related equations: Gandhi/Churchill and India/Empire.

The *third* will be on today's India, and

the *fourth* on 21<sup>st</sup> century's Britain, including its new or recent Brits -- on the way forward, in other words.

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I was a few months short of 21 when in May or June of 1956 I first set foot on this land. It was spring, and England was beautiful beyond my imagining.

From the spring of 1956, when World War II was a recent memory for your ancestors – or for some present this evening --, to the early summer of 1957, I lived in or visited London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cambridge, Oxford and a few other places in this land. In Edinburgh, where I spent most of that time, I learnt journalism at *The Scotsman*, fortunately still going strong, and friends there and elsewhere in this land helped me recognize that my life had value and purpose.

Not that I was down on myself before landing here. I just had small expectations. That the world needed me – even me – that I could play a part which no one else could, was to me an astonishing revelation. Doors to that revelation were opened for me by friends in this land, some still living but many of them now in, I believe, in an even more beautiful place.

That year and during other visits in the late 1950s and early 1960s, from dozens of wonderful human beings in this land, whom I will not dare name, I received friendship, encouragement, delightful company, instruction, love, expectation, faith, vegetarian food cooked in Indian style, and tips for life as we washed dishes together.

A most wonderful friend, a genius with the camera, once took a picture of me in wintertime in Central London as I was about to return to India. Looking then at that picture, and at the history of the places around me in the picture, I almost believed that I was going to do big things back in India.

Vanity and fancy lie deceptively close to a sense of purpose. I do not however regret that I found the latter, here in this land.

Along with a purpose in life, I also fortunately found an understanding that like everyone else I was a sinner.

Awareness of my vulnerable human nature has not stopped me from doing some useful things. So at any rate I imagine. If that is indeed the case, a large part was played by the year-plus I had in this land.

A few years ago, while studying the American Civil War of the 1860s, I came across these lines that Abraham Lincoln wrote as a young man on seeing a stretch of land that had nurtured him in childhood:

The very spot where grew the bread, That formed my bones, I see.

How strange, old field, on thee to tread, And feel I'm part of thee.<sup>1</sup>

All of us know that human beings manage to tread not on grain-fields only, but also on fellow-humans, and wars result. But this I know: treading on the pavements of this land, I feel a close connection. I am aware that my bones and my soul have been enriched by the earth, air and water of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

To this day, two practical thoughts that friends in this land passed on in 1956 remain of help to me. The first: live by appreciation, not comparison. This maxim has prevented wastage of energy in envy or resentment, whether of individuals, races, communities or nations. The other: live to make the other person great, a key I think for teamwork, whether in an NGO, a political party, a cricket team, wherever.

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On his first visit to England, which occurred in 1888, my grandfather Mohandas Gandhi was two years younger than I was in 1956, but then people in previous centuries matured early. They entered wars, or parliament, or halls of literary or artistic fame, or did other interesting things, at younger ages than we from less ancient generations.

Born into a Gujarati-speaking Hindu family, from the mercantile Bania caste, in a parochial though coastal region in western India, Mohandas was a few days' shy of his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday when, after steaming through a canal built in the year of his birth called Suez, the P & O liner *Clyde* brought him to Tilbury. His first days in London were hard, he would write four decades later:

I would continually think of my home and country. My mother's love... haunted me. At night, the tears would stream down my cheeks, and home memories of all sorts made sleep out of the question. It was impossible to share my misery with anyone (A 40).

When he landed, Gandhi did not know these English sentences with which he would later recall the unpromising start to his England connection. Quickly acquiring fluency, he intermingled with an imperial London at its zenith, with Victoria reigning already for 50 years and counting. Eating the required dinners at the Inner Temple, where he had enrolled, Gandhi was called to the bar in 1891.

Becoming what today we would call an activist, for the lily-white London Vegetarian Society, he learnt the basics of politics – organizing meetings, enlisting allies and patrons, raising resources, getting the word out. The London of 1890-91, when Gandhi joined LVS

members in ‘lecturing at clubs and public meetings’ and arranging suppers of ‘lentil soup, boiled rice and large raisins’, became ‘a fine training ground’ for him.<sup>ii</sup>

The provincial youth from a conservative Indian family became aware of the world and of Ireland, which was much in the news then, as it has been always. He also became comfortable with European social life. He gave up ballroom dancing almost as soon as he had commenced it, but his interactions with Brits of both sexes, including over tea or during a climb on a hill, form a fascinating part of his autobiography.

Near the end of his life, in February 1947, a 77-year-old Gandhi walked for peace, at times in bare feet, in Noakhali in what now is Bangladesh. When he found a pleasant stretch of grass to walk on, he recalled his youthful days in England:

The earth of Noakhali (he said) is like velvet, and the green grass is a magnificent carpet to walk on. It reminds me of the soft grass I had noticed in England (93: 378).

But the greatest impact on Gandhi’s spirit in London between 1888 and 1891 was received from his reading of the Sermon on the Mount, the Gita, the teaching of the Buddha, and about Islam.

At some point in the fall of 1890, an uncle-and-nephew pair, Keightley was their last name, sought Gandhi’s help with the Hindu spiritual classic, the Gita. They were reading Edwin Arnold’s translation, *The Song Celestial*, and wanted, with Gandhi’s aid, to understand the Sanskrit original.

Though Mohandas had studied some Sanskrit in Alfred High School in Rajkot, his knowledge of the ancient language was meagre. As for the Gita, he had not read it even in Gujarati. Conveying these awkward facts to the Keightleys, he nonetheless read the Gita with them, in English and in Sanskrit, and developed an interest in the text, which became an important part of his life.

For the rest of his life, Gandhi would speak of Arnold’s as the best English version of the Gita. Showing initiative, young Gandhi not only befriended Arnold; he enlisted Arnold as the vice-president of a vegetarian club started in their Bayswater neighbourhood by Gandhi and his housemate or flat-mate, Josiah Oldfield.

The Keightleys next told Gandhi of Arnold’s book on the Buddha, *The Light of Asia*, which Mohandas read with ‘even greater interest’. At the suggestion of, as Gandhi called him, a ‘good Christian from Manchester’, he also read the Bible.

He found the Old Testament heavy going, especially the Book of Genesis, but was bowled over by the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament and its commandments -- do not hate, do not lust, do not hoard, do not kill, love your enemies (A 60).

Our world has changed unbelievably between 1890 and today. Life is richer in so many ways. Yet in one respect our world today is poorer.

A young person landing today in London from Rajkot or Rawalpindi or Ludhiana is less likely to read the Sermon on the Mount. What a loss!

Since we are on texts, and having mentioned Lincoln earlier, let me express the opinion that no one interested in the English language, or in relations between races, or in struggles against oppression, should fail to read Lincoln’s Second Inaugural.

From the Scottish thinker Thomas Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, young Mohandas learnt something also about the Prophet of Islam.

The one clear religious conclusion that Gandhi reached in London was that God existed.

In 1947, when he was seventy-seven, Gandhi would say that 'at the age of twenty or twenty-one' – that is when he was in London – 'it became a dream of mine to attain... a state of mind [which] cannot be affected even in dire circumstances or at the moment of death' (93: 228).

Despite aspirations of this kind, to which London had given birth, my grandfather did not attain perfection. During his South Africa years, for instance, 1893 to 1914, he fought for the rights of the Indian community, not for the equality of Blacks and Indians. On occasion in that far-off time, he even used derogatory language while speaking of Africans.

Yet on 18 May 1908 – 109 years ago --, here is what Gandhi said to the YMCA in Johannesburg. First he named the people living in South Africa: the Africans, the Indians, the Chinese, the whites, and the mixed or Coloured race, as it was called. Next he referred to the Empire, in which, in 1908, his faith was yet intact. Then Gandhi said:

If we look into the future, is it not a heritage we have to leave to posterity, that all the different races commingle and produce a civilisation that perhaps the world has not yet seen? (8: 323)

This vision of a commingling of the races was articulated publicly years before most others had the courage to entertain it in private. The seeds of the vision were sown during Mohandas's London years.

His final five months in London were relaxed. He was 21. Exams were behind him. He still had twelve Inner Temple dinners to attend and pay for. Because he did not drink, Mohandas was in demand at these dinners, where each table for four was given two bottles of port or sherry or, at times, champagne.

In June 1891, after he had boarded, first, a train at Liverpool Street station and then, at Tilbury Docks, a ship going East, this is what he wrote down:

I could not make myself believe that I was going to India until I stepped into the steamship *Oceana*. So much attached was I to London and its environments, for who would not be? London with its teaching institutions, public galleries, vegetarian restaurants, is a fit place for a student and a traveller, a trader and a 'faddist' – as a vegetarian would be called by his opponents. Thus it was not without regret that I left dear London (1: 50-51).

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In his life, he would make four more journeys to this land, three from South Africa and one, the last, from India, in 1931.

In 1909, three years after Gandhi and numerous other Indians in South Africa had put up satyagraha or nonviolent defiance against racial laws and spent several months or more in prison, he journeyed to England to inform the British public of their struggle.

Invited to speak at London's Emerson Club, Gandhi said that South Africa's 'grim prisons' were the gateways to the 'garden of God' where the 'flowers of self-restraint and gentleness' grew 'beneath the feet of those who accept but refuse to impose suffering'. Then he added:

War demoralizes those who are trained for it. It brutalizes men of naturally gentle character. It outrages every beautiful canon of morality. Its path of glory is foul with the passions of lust, and red with the blood of murder. This is not the pathway to our goal. (10: 159.)

No human being remains fully consistent. Gandhi too did not. Gandhi associated himself with the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, raising recruits from England's Indian community at the time. But when the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War approached and came, Gandhi advised the British (in 1940) to fight Hitler not with weapons of war but with nonviolent noncooperation. Later, in October 1947 – 70 years ago -- when Pakistani irregulars backed and guided by Pakistani officers raided Kashmir, Gandhi supported the decision of the Indian government to send armed troops to Kashmir to repel the Pakistanis.

Seven years earlier, in 1940, he had advised the British to resist Hitler with nonviolence. I wish he had not offered that unrealistic advice.

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Why violence occurs between and inside nations is a question we should be wrestling with. Answers will never be simple, or acceptable to all, or final. When, after three decades of his urging nonviolence to the people of India, violence marked India's streets from the summer of 1946, Gandhi's friends asked for his explanation.

Here is what Gandhi said on 24 July 1947, *before* Punjab's great carnage occurred in August, September and October of that year:

Outwardly [in our struggle against British rule] we followed truth and non-violence. But inwardly there was violence in us. We practised hypocrisy and as a result we have to suffer the pain of mutual strife. Even today we are nurturing attitudes that will result in war and if this drift is not stopped we shall find ourselves in a conflict much more sanguinary than the Mutiny of 1857 (96: 129).

Within weeks, his worst fears were realized. A great carnage occurred in both halves of Punjab -- up to a million perhaps were killed in a three-month period.

The twin components of Gandhi's nonviolent struggle, 'fear not' and 'hate not', were both difficult to practice, but the first found wider acceptance than the second. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote that, thanks to Gandhi,

That black pall of fear was lifted from the people's shoulders, not wholly of course, but to an amazing degree... It was a psychological change.<sup>iii</sup>

Hatred, however, proved more resistant than fear. Gandhi had often warned his compatriots that hate was a master, not a slave, that it could not be confined to one channel, saying, for instance, in 1926:

We cannot love one another if we hate Englishmen. We cannot love the Japanese and hate Englishmen. We must either let the law of love rule us through and through or

not at all. Love among ourselves based on hatred of others breaks down under the slightest pressure.<sup>iv</sup>

Gandhi's analysis went against the pleasing belief that Indians generally had assented to his tough prescription, which was that while British rule had to be opposed, the English, the Scots, the Irish and the Welsh had to be accepted, even loved, as individuals.

In his own life, Gandhi schooled himself against ill-will through, as he put it, a life of prayerful discipline. He said 'no' to hatred when it rose in his heart, he recalled individual Brits he loved, and he solicited God's grace.

A core of his followers, the satyagrahis – fighters dedicated to nonviolence -- implemented his prescription of friendship to the Brits even while wanting British rule to end. But in its restraint, this core did not represent the mass attitude.

To be asked to love the British people was too much for the great bulk of those who cheered and supported Gandhi-inspired satyagrahas, or took part in other revolts. The events of 1946 and 1947 showed that it was only a short step from hating the British to hating Hindus or Muslims.

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To go back a bit: It was in a multi-racial and multi-religious setting, at imperialism's high noon, that Gandhi had grown in London from age 18 to age 21. He did not confine himself to London's Indian world, which even then was pretty large.

A fond hope was born in him, which he retained for years, that the British Empire, where the sun never set, would take the idea of an individual's liberty, and the idea of the equality of all races, to the world's distant corners.

South Africa's ground realities jolted these hopes. Later, in 1920, five years after Gandhi had returned to India, London's response to the Amritsar massacre of 1919, in which at least 379 Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were killed in ten minutes by soldiers of the Empire, and the revelation of a secret Anglo-French treaty that gave European non-Muslims control over Islam's holy places in the Middle East, united India's Hindus and Muslims in a bid for independence.

Gandhi changed from being a believer in the Empire to its foe, and launched a nationwide campaign of nonviolent noncooperation with it, which was the start of a historically remarkable people's struggle that led to freedom in 1947.

The Empire and its demerits continue to form the subject of unceasing debate. Recently an Indian politician known to me, Shashi Tharoor, has written a book on it. It abounds in the hyperbole of a bright high-school debater playing to the gallery.

In fact, the Empire did both bad and good things in India, performed sordid deeds but also noble ones.

The world is becoming less separated. Indians now live all over the world. They will inevitably be examined and judged on their deeds. It is prudent for Indians who write or talk about a foreign presence to do so in as fair a manner as possible.

This talk is not an assessment of the British Empire or its India role, but I should share some of my findings.

One, not every Englishman or Brit in India was an imperialist. Two, not every imperialist was only an imperialist: often he or she was also a writer or a doctor or a nurse or a teacher or a scholar of an Indian language or doing other interesting and useful things like preserving water or growing trees or a garden.

The Brits took a lot out of India but they also put a lot into India. Greed, at times callous greed, was at work, so also friendship, at times courageous friendship, as also service, at times costly service.

Was there divide and rule? As the Americans would say, you bet there was. Unconcealed, spelt out, even boasted about. At the start of colonialism, in the middle, and at the end.

In a 1911 history book aimed, it was stated, at British 'boys and girls interested in the story of Great Britain and her Empire' and co-authored by C. L. R. Fletcher, Rudyard Kipling underlined the usefulness of India's divisions:

The extension of our rule over the whole Indian peninsula was made possible, first by the exclusion of any other European power, and secondly by the fact that the weaker states and princes continually called in our help against the stronger. From our three starting-points of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, we have gradually swallowed the whole country.<sup>v</sup>

Some Indian leaders were blunt about divide-and-rule. Vallabhbhai Patel, who would become Deputy Prime Minister in free India's first government and on whom I have written a thick book, said this on 9 August 1945:

The British talk of Hindu-Muslim quarrels but who has thrust this burden on their shoulders?.... Give me just a week's rule over Britain, I will create such disagreements that England, Wales and Scotland will fight one another for ever.

This may have been over-confidence on Patel's part, I think.

A different tack was adopted by another Indian leader, also one of my biographical subjects, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari -- let's just call him C.R.

One of the toughest challenges faced by British imperialists in India was the length and intricacy of Indian names.

In 1938, C.R., who would later succeed Lord Mountbatten as independent India's Governor-General, was the elected Prime Minister of a large area then called the Madras Presidency. But the appointed imperial Governor, Lord Erskine from Scotland, was at least as powerful as the Premier.

The Empire's chief guardians at the time, Lord Zetland (Secretary of State for India) and Lord Linlithgow (the viceroy), both Scots too, were in Zetland's phrase 'enormously tickled on learning that CR -- 'the leading protagonist in the cause of teetotalism' (as Zetland put it) -- had accepted an invitation to the St. Andrew's [Day?] Dinner at the Caledonian Society of Madras. They were aware, as Linlithgow put it, 'that perfect sobriety on such occasions is not always observed.

Happily, the Caledonians stayed sober, and the Premier was in merry form. He referred to the Scottish words on the menu – ‘the funny spelling mistakes’ – and asked, ‘Why do you not correct the proofs?’ and added:

I was a little pleased, let me confess, to hear what was said in dispraise of the Englishman and in praise of the Scot. We would like at least to imagine that you are quarrelling among yourselves....

As for the imperialist Kipling, who spent his boyhood and youth in Lahore and Simla, he may have celebrated divide-and-rule, but he also gave us – all of us -- a poem called ‘If’, which should be read alongside the Sermon on the Mount, Lincoln’s Second Inaugural and, I should add, Tagore’s ‘Heaven of Freedom’.

I have mentioned some biographies written by me. There are more I would like to write.

Were I a young Indian today in the UK, I would try to capture the biographies of some of those young Brits who at age 17 or 18 went -- in the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as East India Company employees -- into an unknown, distant, and hot land. They became scholars as well, including in Indian languages; they dug deep, and they presented India’s past to Indians of the present and the future.

To recall that age, let me refer to two men, Charles Philip Brown (1798-1884) and Robert Caldwell (1814-91). Brown studied the literature, grammar and history of Telugu, one of South India’s great languages, and to some extent the history of Telugu-speakers. Caldwell did the same with another great South Indian language, Tamil. The two are loved figures to this day in India, honoured with statues and in other ways.

But their relationship with each other was interesting. In 1837, on a voyage back to India from this land, to which he had briefly returned, Brown talked with Caldwell, who was on the same ship.

Describing these talks, Caldwell (who would become a bishop) said that knowledge had swollen Brown. Admitting that Brown had ‘an immense and impressive mastery of languages – Sanskrit, Telugu, Hindustani, Greek, Latin and French’, and ‘a very respectable knowledge of English literature’, Caldwell added:

Had [Brown] been educated at one of the universities and been... in the company of men of real learning and abilities, all would have been well. He would have speedily found his level; his love of display would have been checked... he would have been cut down to an agreeable companion...

But having been in great part self-educated, and afterwards been chiefly in the company of his inferiors in talent and acquirement, ... [Brown gave out] tumults of mighty sounds... War to the knife was waged against my poor thought.

Caldwell finally countered Brown’s vehement outpourings with outpourings of his own and thereafter found Brown ‘tractable enough and a source of vast amusement’. After conceding that he had ‘never met with any person who had such an all-grasping all-retaining memory,’ the bishop added: ‘If I have any chance... of being talked to death, it is neither by infidels nor by Radicals but by my restless “Pandit”, Mr. Brown.’<sup>vi</sup>

At times, I think that the constant and lengthy argumentation we Indians have with one another may also be one of imperialism's legacies.

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Many in this land have frankly acknowledged mistakes from the past. I honour that. Not easy to do.

But today's young Brits should also remember with pride that three or more centuries ago some of their forebears, with courage and boldness, took two revolutionary ideas to all corners of the globe:

One was the idea that men and women should be free to think and believe as they think fit; and the other was the idea that human beings, whatever their background, gender or affiliation, are equal in value.

Liberty and equality have always been under attack and are under attack today. They are attacked in the name of nation, or religion, or culture, or security. But they will survive. They will endure because the human soul will always want liberty and equality.

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Now some brief remarks about today's India.

Today's India is indeed a young, lively and confident land, with new highways, subway systems, city extensions. And enormous aspirations and expectations. Hundreds of millions have climbed out of poverty in the last three decades, though hundreds of millions remain in its grip.

A great number of talented Indians are contributing the world over to economies, universities, think tanks, laboratories, hospitals and other sites like that.

Yet influential sections in India have succumbed to the temptation of intolerance, to a belief that nothing is more important than putting minorities in their place.

A national religion is being championed, and the patriotism of followers of other religions is being questioned.

Suddenly it seems that the constitutional assurance of equal rights for all, of the equal value of every life, may after all only be a paper promise.

Word of disquieting incidents has probably reached you here. Those who kill humble Muslims for allegedly eating or storing beef, or for transporting a cow, are seldom caught and, it would seem, never punished.

In the name of stopping illegal migration from Bangladesh, Muslims from families who have lived for generations in the eastern state of Assam face expulsion from their homes and fields.

In some parts of India, impartiality from the police or the courtroom can no longer be assumed. Acquittals seem common for Hindus and rare for Muslims.

Students from Africa, present in India in thousands, are often taunted for the colour of their skin and at times physically assaulted.

Just when Indians appeared to be ready -- economically, intellectually and technologically -- to play a major global role, India's democratic and pluralist Constitution faces threats, and the reputation of Hinduism, the great religion to which eighty percent of Indians belong, is at stake.

Just when it seemed that India with its secular constitution and plural society, holding around one billion Hindus but also close to two hundred million Muslims, 25 million Christians and 20 million Sikhs, might assist a diverse world in getting along, the country witnesses pressures of the kind that several Muslim-majority lands have faced for some time now.

Many in India are troubled. The world should be too.

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Now on today's Brits. A few years ago, taking a train from the coast to London, I found myself standing at one end of a long coach. I observed the people sitting before me all the way to the other end of the narrowing coach. They were young and old, men and women, white and non-white. They looked harmless, nice, vulnerable.

A thought crossed my mind: 'Are these the wicked imperialists who oppressed the world?'

Harmless, nice, vulnerable? Who am I to judge, I who visits after five years or more and leaves within days? You who live here know the reality, which must be complex and for many difficult, even perhaps frightening, if also exciting and enjoyable at other times.

I will not try to tell you what you are like today, but I will say that the mix is remarkable. I will also say that when a young Pashtun woman like Malala Yusufzai, who was shot in the head in Pakistan for the crime of going to school in Pakistan, is brought back to life here, and she enjoys here the freedom to be who she is, and to say what she believes, that is something to feel good about and be thankful for. Others equally courageous and fortunate also exist, even if we do not know of them.

Today's Great Britain is different from the land where I first came 61 years ago, different from the land my grandfather came to in 1888, which was different from the land of Caldwell and Brown earlier in that century. Population inflows have altered the landscape.

But that is the story of almost every country in the world. And let me share what I have learnt about my country -- which too contains nice and vulnerable people, people of diverse backgrounds, growing up with conflicting versions of history. I have learnt that in India

we possess *opinions* about neighbouring groups and communities. We do not possess *knowledge* about them. We don't listen to one another, we don't listen to one another's stories.

Some of your amazing forebears spent whole lifetimes listening to the dialects and speech of distant peoples. To some peoples they restored knowledge of their long-forgotten past.

Will the Brits now take the time to listen to one another and take steps towards bridging their divides? To my mind, the combination of past history and current diversity makes this land powerfully qualified to lead the quest for the peace and sanity of our world.

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Listening, seeing ourselves in the Other, and the Other in us, and, with God's grace, forgiving. If there are better ways for building a better tomorrow, I would like to be told what they are.

Let me recall an interview that Usha and I had in 2005 with a family based in Lahore, the capital of Pakistani Punjab, but belonging originally to Jullundur, one of the biggest cities in Indian Punjab.

On 19 July 2005, we met Sughra Rasheed in her sister's home in Thokar Niaz Baig, Lahore. In broad terms, we knew that in the 1947 killings Sughra had lost several relatives in the city of Jullundur.

In 1947, she was a young wife and mother in Delhi. Her husband, Abdur Rasheed, was a railway officer from a family hailing from villages near Jullundur. The husband's brother was a young doctor, also Delhi-based. The husband's father (a retired railway officer) lived in the railway colony in Jullundur city.

We asked Sughra Rasheed for the names and ages of those killed in August 1947 in Jullundur. Her answer, given clearly, calmly, and solemnly, and filled with brief pauses as she tried to remember, was as follows:

'Dr Badruddin, the father of my husband. He was 60. Fatima, his (my husband's) mother. She was 55. Jamila, their newly married daughter, my husband's sister. She was 25. Tahira, their younger daughter, who was 22. Qutubuddin, my husband's grandfather. He was 80. Idu, a servant. Idu's wife Fateh. Five children of Idu and Fateh.'

We were moved by this brief re-creation, through naming, of the killed, and perhaps specially by the naming of the servants. Like the vast majority of the killed of 1947, the servants of Dr Badruddin and his family had lacked the means or the critical contacts -- in the military, the police, or the railways -- that made escape possible for many of the better-off, though not, in this case, for Sughra's relatives.

Sughra's son Salman Rasheed, one of Pakistan's best-known travel writers, felt he had to track down the people who killed his grandparents and his aunts and their servant and his family. He made trips to Jullundur. A man there told him, 'I was waiting for you. I knew you would come.' Then the man said, 'My father organized the killing. He went sick with the memory before he died.'

Says Salman, referring to the man who had waited for him: 'I had inherited grief; he had inherited guilt. I think the time to forgive has come.'

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To know what happened, or is happening, seems a formidable task. To bring healing seems almost impossible.

Yet we must do what we can where we can.

We can listen. Sensitively, patiently, listen.

We can share what we find.

We can listen to those who are sad and those who are bitter.

If possible, we can listen to different sides of a story.

We can listen also to our consciences. We can pray, too.

We can encourage those who try to heal, and those who speak truth to power, be it the power of money, or of authority, or of the street.

We can encourage the women and men who try creatively – through art, song, drama and design -- to send out a message of bravery, including the bravery of forgiveness and the bravery of truth-telling.

And we can encourage ourselves by remembering the nice little things that happen every day – little things that show goodness, thoughtfulness, bravery or mercy intervening in our world.

May interaction and reflection inspire us to understand that all those around us, no matter how they look, or what they say they believe in, are our people.

Thank you, Brits, new Brits, old Brits. Like the people of India, you too are my people, all of you.

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<sup>i</sup> Wills, *Gettysburg*, p. 79.

<sup>ii</sup> 'My Friend Gandhi,' by Josiah Oldfield in Chandrashanker Shukla (ed.), *Reminiscences of Gandhiji* (Bombay: Vora, 1951), p. 188.

<sup>iii</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, ), pp. 358-9.

<sup>iv</sup> Raghavan Iyer, *Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 39 & p. 242 (check).

<sup>v</sup> C.L.R. Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling, *A History of England* (Oxford: 1911, 1930 edition), p. 241.

<sup>vi</sup> Bishop R. Caldwell, *A History of Tinnevely* (1881; reprint by AES, New Delhi, 1982), pp. 83-97.