

**Of Jaswant Singh,
the BJP and the RSS**

An Analysis

by

K. K. Pathak

**Published by
The Rajaji Foundation**

The Rajaji Foundation

The Rajaji Foundation is a Registered Trust established in 1977 to promote the ideals and philosophy of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari or Rajaji as he was known to millions of Indians.

A close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajaji was a philosopher-statesman. With a brilliant intellect, Rajaji was an individualist to the core, whose philosophy of public life was embedded in traditional Indian values. A passionate exponent of Dharma in public life. Rajaji never shied away from decisions even if such decisions were 'unpopular'. It was not surprising that at the age of 80 he founded the Swatantra Party to fight for Dharma in public life.

The Rajaji Foundation has held many seminars and discussions on issues of political, economic and social interest. In 2002 it published a volume entitled The Swatantra Party – Victory in Defeat by Col. H. R. Pasricha.

The Rajaji Foundation
143, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Mumbai 400 001.
Phone : 22670610

Mr. K. K. Pathak, R.E.S (Rajasthan Education Service) is an educationist and academician. Until his retirement he was a prolific writer and commentator on public affairs.

**Of Jaswant Singh,
the BJP and the RSS**

An Analysis

by

K. K. Pathak

**Published by
The Rajaji Foundation**

This publication has been sponsored by the Rajaji Foundation.
*The views expressed in this booklet are not necessarily those
of the Foundation*

Price: Rs.20/-

Published by Mr. S. V. Raju for the Rajaji Foundation, 1st Floor, Sassson Building,
143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.

DTP Typesetting and Printing by Shubham Print & Web, 59 Dr. V. B. Gandhi
Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400001. *Phone:* 022-22842619 ● *Email:* kotaknet@gmail.com

First Printed : May 2010

C O N T E N T S

| | Page No. |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| <i>Chapter One</i> | |
| Jaswant Singh's Expulsion | 7 |
| <i>Chapter Two</i> | |
| Does the BJP Have a Future? | 19 |
| <i>Chapter Three</i> | |
| The RSS Connection | 31 |

Introduction

This booklet is about Jaswant Singh's expulsion from the BJP. Apart from unveiling the mystery shrouding the matter all these months, I should like to discuss the future of the BJP as the main Opposition in Parliament with particular reference to its relations with a social organization like the RSS. I must frankly admit that in my considered opinion the BJP has to be a truly national party, shedding its communal agenda once for all without which I see little future for the BJP to flourish as a party representing all sections of our society. In a true democracy there is no distinction between a majority community and a minority one. Nor can political parties thrive on communal appeals for long. You cannot play the communal card twice. The BJP wants to play it all the time in the name of ideology. Honestly speaking, a communal agenda should not be the ideology of a political party in a secular set-up like ours.

From this malady, casteism has now come to play a far greater role in letting small, regional parties come up with a sectarian agenda for political gain more than ever before. Neither communal leaders nor casteist approaches to gain political power are going to play the role they have hitherto been playing; because the importance of a communal card or a purely casteist one has diminished in the eyes of the people at large. They have realized that no good is possible to emerge out of a sectarian approach. This apart, the capacity of beguiling and befooling

the people has its own saturation point. We have reached that stage where neither communities, major or minor, nor castes, dominant or weak, could be made to vote for their composite development. Bihar, U. P. and Punjab are a few burning examples of models of development on sectarian lines. If Bengal is for Bengalis, Maharashtra is for Marathas, Punjab is for the Sikhs, then, of course, we are done as a nation. No structure of any society can be sustained on mutual hatred. It is love alone that binds people together. Otherwise, we would be heading for a progressive fragmentation of our society on caste and community lines, leading to chaos to the great delight of such neighbours as Pakistan and China that are already out to dismember India into small principalities, making our country a congenial ground for foreign invasion. These are quite serious issues which must capture the attention of the people. Let us hope we will rise to the occasion before it becomes too late to redeem this situation. That's the only hope I see for any hopeful future for India in which a crisis of leadership has already resulted in a greater crisis of national character.

So far as Jaswant's expulsion is concerned, it is an immediate cause to stir up thinking people rise to the occasion. He and I are friends over the past two decades or so, exchanging views on men and matters of national and international importance and culminating in a stream of correspondence, quite interesting enough in itself. Apart from this, some ten months ago Jaswant asked me to be a co-author with him a book on the late C. Rajagopalachari, more affectionately called Rajaji or CR. I was reluctant to be yoked by Jaswant, but I had to give in as his kind offer was the most delightful thing I would be doing after some fifteen years of my retirement from the Rajasthan College Education. I have now the privilege of reading the chapters Jaswant has so far written on such neighbours as Pakistan and China and such friends as Russia and America, getting more closely acquainted with his strong views and settled

convictions. I am somewhat surprised to note Jaswant's unique understanding of Rajaji's views and opinions as exhibited by him in his charming explanations of them in true national interest. I am proud of his intellectual endowments. Let them be gainfully utilized for the benefit of the people to get enlightened on men and matters of importance in the present-day world. Jaswant's lucid account of the long struggle for freedom from foreign rule in his recent book on *Jinnah And Partition* has belied the definition of a *bore* given by Voltaire in his *Philosophical Dictionary*. Jaswant has mentioned details of everything without boring the reader. I myself have gone through what has appeared in the press as reviews of his book. My own impression is that like most of the BJP leaders the journalists who have reviewed his book have themselves not taken the trouble of reading it! Jaswant was given a bad name and thereafter hanged! He did not deserve it, let alone earned it, by flouting either party discipline or its ideology in any way, whatever. Thinking people all over the country have felt his expulsion as an unnecessary action against the moderate face the BJP had till the other day, when Jaswant was expelled in a manner which has shocked impartial observers beyond words could express the painful dimension of the matter.

I should like to thank the Publishers and an old friend like Mr. S. V. Raju, Hon. Trustee of the Rajaji Foundation for bringing out this booklet for the benefit of those who love truth more than anything else in life. I trust the reader will enjoy reading it and getting to the truth of the matter.

23, Mahal Khas
Fort
Bharatpur - 321001

K. K. Pathak
R.E.S. (Retd.)

Chapter One

Jaswant Singh's Expulsion

To my mind Jaswant's expulsion was on the cards for a long time, much before he started writing the book on Jinnah.

It was Atal Bihari Vajpayee who realized Jaswant's merits and gainfully utilized them, projecting a talented colleague like Jaswant as a moderate face of the BJP. Vajpayee was not wrong in his assessment of things for a better future for the party he belongs to. Whatever he did to promote Jaswant, became an affront to his ambitious colleague like L. K. Advani who thinks himself to be the wisest man in the BJP, if not in the country. He never got tired of calling Dr. Manmohan Singh, "a weak Prime Minister", considering himself to be the replica of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The way Dr. Manmohan Singh conducted himself on the issue of the Indo-US nuclear deal, staking his position as Prime Minister, has undoubtedly proved that he is much stronger than the fake Sardar Advani poses himself to be. I can safely vouch for the fact that the feat performed by Dr. Manmohan Singh could never be emulated by Advani if he were in the chair. It will be recalled that Dr. Manmohan Singh brought to the notice of the entire country in his modest way by telling Advani on the floor of the House that he would not have shed tears in a corner as Advani pretended to do when the Babri Masjid was demolished by his followers in his presence.

Sardar Patel

Sardar Patel was not communal. He did not trust the Muslims and he had the courage to tell all this at the face of Mahatma Gandhi when Maulana Azad through Pandit Nehru tried to poison the ears of the Mahatma against the Sardar in 1947. But the Sardar did everything he could to protect Muslims in Delhi in the 1947 Hindu-Muslim riots after the Partition. I need give two examples by way of confirming my strong views about Sardar Patel. Some Muslims had taken refuge in the Nizamuddin dargah in 1947 and Patel was informed that the Hindus were out to kill the Muslims who had taken refuge in the dargah. Patel alone rushed from the place of his residence (1 Aurangzeb Road, now a nursery) to the Nizamuddin dargah and remained there for more than an hour. He left the place only when he had fully ensured the safety of the Muslims, some two/three hundred of them.

The other example is more stirring. Trains bringing the Hindus from West Pakistan (read West Punjab) were attacked by Muslims and most horrible deeds were done by them to the Hindus coming to East Punjab. But Mahatma Gandhi called Sardar Patel and asked him to go to Amritsar, ensuring safe passage to the Muslims going from India to West Pakistan. Patel remained in Amritsar for more than two days and returned to Delhi only after carrying out the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi in full. How can Narendra Modi be a 'Chotta Sardar' and Advani a 'Bada Sardar' when both kindled the flames of communal disharmony which neither the waters of Sarayu nor of Sabarmati can extinguish? It is not a digression from the main point. Instead, it is a proof enough to let the reader be convinced that Sardarhood bestowed upon Advani and Modi is fake, not real either in spirit or in deed.

A Leader-in-the-Making

Jaswant became Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the

Lok Sabha. Vajpayee wanted him to be there, not Advani. Months later when Vajpayee appointed Jaswant as Finance Minister it was Advani who objected to Jaswant's appointment on the ground that Jaswant had lost his seat from Chittorgarh and was no longer a member of the Lower House. The ground was hardly sound as past practice in the matter was against the 'moral ground' Advani took, blocking Jaswant's passage to elevation over Advani's head. Advani had gone as far as to ask Jaswant not to take oath along with other members of Vajpayee's team, though Vajpayee himself did not take the trouble of telling Jaswant not to turn up for taking oath as Finance Minister! The real story of animosity against Jaswant started from this episode, though Vajpayee immediately appointed Jaswant as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

After a few months Jaswant got elected as member of the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan and Vajpayee appointed him Foreign Minister. Even at that time Advani was far from happy. It was the third term of Vajpayee as Prime Minister as the first term lasted 13 days and Advani did not oppose Jaswant's appointment as Finance Minister as he knew well that Vajpayee's term as PM would not last even for weeks. When Vajpayee's second term as PM started Advani did his best to clip the wings of Jaswant. These are facts and the conclusions drawn from them are facts beyond any iota of doubt, as subsequent events proved.

Record as Foreign Minister

The way Jaswant conducted himself as Foreign Minister made Advani more uncomfortable because as Home Minister of India he could not check, let alone control, the rapidity with which terrorism across the borders increased. Jaswant was quite successful in isolating Pakistan and for the first time in the history of Independent India Jaswant could show to the entire comity of nations throughout the world the ugly face of Pakistan as

the hub of all terrorism unleashed all over the world.

Jaswant's untiring crusade against Pakistan helped him to enter into dialogues with the United States of America, laying the foundation of a positive relationship with America for the first time in the history of free India. Neither Nehru could make the best use of America's multilateral policies after the Second World War nor Indira could make use of the option of active economic cooperation with America in the early seventies when Richard Nixon was very keen to have India as a partner in place of China; the second option Kissinger found more workable. It was Indira's arrogance and perhaps annoyance over the issue of America's role in 1971 war with Pakistan she fought to dismember Pakistan into two nations. She may have her own justifications for turning down the offers of American cooperation, but they have proved so costly today that we are not ahead of China in any way, whatever.

Almost a similar approach of Pandit Nehru in 1962 proved to be a national disaster for the reason that we had to spend more and more on military preparedness after China's invasion of India in 1962, ignoring economic development. Nehru's non-alignment was a "bunk" as K. Hanumanthaiya of Karnataka put it to Nehru himself at the 1962 AICC session in Delhi. Jaswant has admirably dealt with these points in far greater detail in his book on C. Rajagopalachari than I am capable of doing it over here.

Getting India and USA Closer

His success as a Foreign Minister lies in three things he did. First of all he isolated Pakistan and showed its ugly face to the entire world. His second success was the beginning of a new era of a positive relationship with America of which Dr. Manmohan Singh made the most admirable use, taking it to a logical conclusion which neither Nehru nor Indira could do.

His third task was to let China be ignored for better relations with India. Jaswant's stature rose. Pressure was mounted on Vajpayee to make Advani Deputy Prime Minister, apart from Home Minister he already was all along the period of Vajpayee's third stint as PM. It was a move to counter the growing stature of Jaswant, who was not a mass leader, but more capable to take the BJP to a place where Dr. Manmohan Singh has taken the Congress without being himself a mass leader. If 206 members of the Congress were elected in May 2009, the work of Dr. Manmohan Singh as PM had a far greater role than any other consideration. I need give one example of Rajasthan. Ashok Ghelot along with a novice like C.P. Joshi could not get a simple majority in the Assembly elections in November-December 2008, but within five months Rajasthan sent the highest number of MPs. Can we call it a miracle of either Ghelot or Joshi? Joshi himself lost his assembly seat from his home-town! Jaswant has faith in the people of Pakistan, not in the Taliban.

Record as Finance Minister

Jaswant's success as Finance Minister after serving as Foreign Minister for more than three years led Advani to talk of the "feel good" factor. Did he do anything to curb terrorism across the border? Even Parliament was made a target in daylight when Advani was Deputy Prime Minister-cum-Home Minister of India. Jaswant is a man of vision who knows what ails his country and how best he could cure her ailment. I do not think Advani has any such vision except relying on his communal agenda through which he humbled Vajpayee. What happened in Orissa and Gujarat are examples for all to see the truth of the matter. Naveen Patnaik could realize the damage the BJP did to his party in Orissa. He disassociated from the BJP in 2008 and fought the Assembly elections all on his own, winning with a comfortable majority and wiping out the BJP there. So far as Gujarat is concerned, the return of Modi there has little to do with his communal agenda. In fact, Sind and Gujarat have

faced the brunt of Muslim invasions some one thousand years ago more or less in the same way as Punjab and the Frontier Province did. The psyche of the people in Gujarat is somewhat different from the rest of India. Its impact is deep. No Modi is needed to kindle the flame. An isolated episode is enough for the people of Gujarat to get inflamed. Sardar Patel belonged to Gujarat and old memories did influence him at the time of Partition. Gandhiji was also a Gujarati but his mind had transgressed the pettiness of revenge. It was for this reason that he died for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Before he was assassinated by an RSS man, even Golwalkar met Gandhi and tried to convince him against his policy of Hindu-Muslim unity. Golwalkar did not stop there. He sent one delegation after another of his RSS workers to put pressure on Gandhi, a thing the British failed to do with him in South Africa, let alone in India.

Jaswant's secular credentials are very clear to all and sundry after his expulsion from the BJP for calling Jinnah a secular leader. Advani did it in Pakistan. And back home, was made a target by his partymen and was even disowned by the RSS. He could survive only after conceding that he had made a "mistake" of calling Jinnah a secular leader. Jaswant could not for reasons I need not give as they are known to the educated and thinking people.

Jaswant Singh's Expulsion

I take Jaswant's expulsion as a boon in disguise. He was in the BJP without subscribing to Advani's communal agenda and without having any connection with the RSS. He is now a free man who is bound to follow Mahatma Gandhi, standing for real amity and goodwill between the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. He is no Mahatma or Saint, but his thinking resembles the greatest exponent of Hindu-Muslim unity, Mahatma Gandhi. I do not remember if he at all took part in

the Ram Rath Yatra of L. K. Advani. Not that he was against extolling Ram but he was definitely against making Ram a political plank for the BJP to stand on, seeking support of the majority community in India. At the time of the demolition of Babri Masjid he was very sad and what he told me on the phone was more sad than Vajpayee's comment. Advani was uncomfortable ever since Rajiv Gandhi became PM, throwing out the BJP in a way which gave Advani an opportunity to think of reviving the BJP through a communal agenda for kindling the communal flame in the country. The initial success he got at the next hustings encouraged him more and more to rely on the issue of Ram Temple at Ayodhya. As a matter of fact he was making things more difficult for the moderates in the BJP, and thereby denying the BJP a national status, apart from vitiating the atmosphere in the country, spreading hatred leading to communal disharmony.

Advani's Politics

V. P. Singh was a highly ambitious man. He let the Mandal cat out of his bag and gave Advani more impetus to tread on a similar path with an entirely different agenda. V. P. Singh accepted BJP's support only to take revenge against Rajiv in particular and the Congress in general. Just to counteract V. P. Singh's Mandal stunt Advani started his Rath Yatra. It was Laloo Prasad Yadav who stopped Advani when he entered Bihar. The result was withdrawal of support to the V. P. Singh government, which collapsed for want of majority support. Advani indirectly supported Chandra Shekhar but he did not accept the offer. Instead, he preferred the outside support of the Congress, rejecting Advani's proposal of sharing power with him. This made Advani more keen to get the maximum benefit out of the communal frenzy in the name of Ram Temple he had already created. A few intelligent and talented members of the BJP were badly embarrassed as the party had a very small number

of members who were totally opposed to the way Advani tried to revive the fortune of the BJP after taking over the reins from Vajpayee.

Distorting Hinduism

The interlude of Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi was quite brief and he after the fashion of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee made Kashmir an issue. None cared to see the wisdom he exhibited. Advani again got the driver's seat and did whatever he could to annoy the minority community of Muslims, relying on the majority community for getting to the position of power to govern the destiny of secular India. 'Hindu Rashtra' was revived by him, calling the Congress "pseudo secularists". As far as I know it is the Hindus who never went round the world for any religious crusade. Hinduism is essentially a tolerant religion. Advani made Hinduism more intolerant than the RSS ever thought of making it. That's how he earned the total support of RSS for his communal agenda, as without the RSS support the BJP was in no position to carry out the demolition of Babri Masjid.

Like China, the BJP is living in the past and making every effort to make the past a reality in the present. If the Muslim invaders destroyed temples in India some eight or nine centuries ago, there seems to be no valid reason for the BJP to repeat the barbarism of the Kabila culture of Muslims in the 20th century. If all these efforts of Advani to revive the BJP are a matter of credit in the name of ideology, then, of course, the future of the party is going to be darker than ever before. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, the founder of Jan Sangh, never thought of all this. His differences with Nehru were over the Kashmir issue and he parted company with Nehru on that ground. The BJP, which is born out of the Jan Sangh, is a party of Hindus alone; it can never have a majority of its own. Vajpayee and Jaswant knew it much better than Advani does even today.

Let me say it frankly that I have nothing personal against Advani. I hardly knew the man before he gave an interview to *India Today* some two decades ago. The editor of the magazine simply asked Advani if he was a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian. The answer could have been either a No or a Yes or both together. He said in reply: I can quote scriptures that Ram and Krishna ate meat! A student of M-Tech. at I.I.T. Bombay came to me with a copy of the magazine with the lines marked by him. He asked me if Advani was right. I told him he was wrong. The boy insisted on my writing to Advani whose address I did not know. Anyway, I wrote a postcard at the Parliament address, asking him to let me know the “scriptures” where he read all that he had said in the interview. Advani wrote back, enclosing six xeroxed pages from Vivekananda’s *Collected Works*, underlining a sloka from Valmiki *Ramayan* and another from Vyasa’s *Mahabharat* along with a covering letter. I was a little shocked to learn that Advani did not know the distinction between *scriptures* and *epics*. The two epics were written by writers much later when historical Rama and Krishna were not alive to confirm or reject what the writers wrote about them on the basis of their own imaginations. I wrote back to Advani all this and added that his comments in the interview had hurt the feelings and sentiments of those who worship Ram and Krishna not as historical persons but as *Tatwa* (concept) of Ram and Krishna.

Historical persons may be objects of criticism, but concepts of Ram and Krishna could only be the subject of worship, not of criticism made by him only to support his non-vegetarian meals. Advani wrote back, asking me to see him whenever I visited Delhi next. More about this later. I remember Dileep Padgaonkar of the *Times of India* wrote a beautiful article, dealing with Jaswant’s expulsion from BJP and making specific mention of the three villains of Indian politics after Independence. These details may be a little boring to go through but I am confident that a serious thought given to them will enlighten us about

how hypocritical these leaders are as they deceive themselves by living in a world of their own making and thereby deceive the people at large for the sake of political popularity cheap enough even for anyone in public life.

The Kandahar Episode

Jaswant's rise and his work as Foreign Minister and Finance Minister took the limelight by his active guidance to George Fernandes, who was Defence Minister when the Kargil war was fought; this led to Advani being pushed into the background in the eyes of thinking people in the country. Advani realized this and made up his mind to show Jaswant the door out as soon as it was possible for him to do so. Vajpayee's faith in Jaswant became a hurting point for Advani and he could not cope with the situation with ease. Vajpayee knew all this more than Advani could say without using words to convey his pent up feelings. The result was Advani's elevation as Deputy Prime Minister. This made Advani's head more uneasy and a sense of vanity gripped him so badly that self-righteousness became his worst weapon to deal with his opponents. His diatribes helped Dr. Manmohan Singh to grow higher and higher in understanding and stature in the eyes of the people at large, becoming a cause of humiliation for Advani. Advani's frustration grew more and with his intolerance. For Advani, Jaswant's expulsion was "painful but necessary" in August- September, 2009. But a little bit of sanity still prevailed upon him when he said that he was "opposed to Jaswant's expulsion" and that it was done on the insistence of persons like Vinay Katihar and Anant Kumar. He did not name Rajnath Singh along with Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj as he knew it would have a backlash on his career in the BJP. The fact is that Advani wanted Jaswant to be expelled and he had prepared his disciples to play the part he had assigned them, that Advani was not speaking the truth on the Khandahar episode needs no comment as things are so transparent that there is little than can be hidden from the eyes of the educated people in the

country. Here again Vajpayee's trust in Jaswant's ability became a hurting point for Advani. I do not nourish malice against anyone because I am affiliated to *Satyam-eva-Jayate* instead of any political party. Even after 15 years of my retirement from Rajasthan College Education I have not ventured to join any political party. Way back in 1961 Gayatri Devi of Jaipur wanted me to be her political advisor, making gracious provision for me and ensuring a seat in Parliament from Dausa. Although C. Rajagopalachari wrote to me, "not to reject the Maharani's proposal off-hand", yet I had written to her that it was not possible for me to make politics my profession and link my fortune with her.

An Able and Astute Politician

Jaswant is an able and astute politician. He is capable of taking a stand without caring for the consequences, once he is convinced that his stand is in the national interest. I consider this quality as the best a political leader ought to possess. Unfortunately, we have very few leaders belonging to the class and the saddest part of the whole story is that the leaders with this quality is fast-dwindling. The purpose of my writing all this is not to defend Jaswant, for he needs no defence, the least of all by a man like me without any political background. I will feel some satisfaction if the dear reader takes the message up making it his mission to enlighten others on what qualities a leader of society should possess.

I quite remember as early as April 1993 I had asked Advani to make it a point to enumerate those true qualities which make for a good and dedicated leader in every public speech instead of taking more Rathaytras in the name of Ram. My advice fell on deaf ears. Had Advani paid heed to it, he would not have been a frustrated man he is today. He may deny all this, but facts will not change to suit his convenience. Jaswant's expulsion is a great blow to the BJP. Future events will prove the validity

of my view which few in the BJP seem to realize today. I am happy Jaswant is free to unlock his heart through writing books and educating his countrymen with his mature opinions. He has already been named the Ambassador of Peace in South Asia when he went to London to deliver a lecture at Oxford. I sincerely believe that persons like Jaswant can play a more positive role in letting the people of Pakistan veer round the need for good neighbourly relations, doing away with fundamentalism unleashed in Pakistan by a new tribe known as the Taliban. A vigilant citizenry will not let Pakistan military play the nefarious role they have been playing ever since Ayub took over the reigns in Pakistan in 1959.

Chapter Two

Does the BJP Have a Future?

Before I set out to say anything about the future of BJP as a political party in a parliamentary democracy like ours I should like to narrate an anecdote which will give the reader a fairly good idea of what I think of BJP as a political party.

It was April 1997 and I had gone to Delhi for my routine medical check-up at the AIIMS. As usual, I rang up Dr. Manmohan Singh after reaching Rajasthan House, the place of my stay, whenever I am in Delhi over these past 35 years. Ever since Dr. Singh became Finance Minister of India in the Rao Cabinet I took upon myself the task of persuading my friends to support the economic policies he has followed to bring the economy of the country back on the right track after the disastrous populism of previous governments. My acquaintance with him turned into a bond of friendship and brotherhood when I sought cooperation of such old friends as M. R. Masani, C. Subramaniam and Nani A. Palkhivala. These friends responded in a positive way, assuring me all possible help and cooperation they were capable of in the evening of their lives. I simply sent their responses in the original to him, not to gain Dr. Singh's friendship, but to reassure him of his economic agenda. The policies he came out with were the policies for which we had stood and worked under the inspiring leadership and guidance of C. Rajagopalachari when Nehru was at the helm of affairs

in the country. Quite naturally, Dr. Singh gave me the proud privilege of inviting me for lunch with him after my retirement. Since then it became almost a routine practice that whenever I was in Delhi I was invited by Dr. Manmohan Singh to meet him either over breakfast or lunch or dinner, using these occasions for fruitful discussions on national and international issues.

In April 1997 when I informed him I was in town he asked me to come for lunch. Vajpayee was also keen to meet me as we used to exchange views through letters. I rang Vajpayee up in the morning, asking him if he could spare some time for me. He told me that Parliament was in session, discussing finance bills; but that he would come earlier than he used to, giving me the privilege of meeting him in the afternoon at 5 p.m. that day.

In this connection, I must make a mention an anecdote for the amusement of readers. Dr. Singh told me that my good Bhabhiji, his good wife, was out, at Chandigarh in connection with some repair work in a small flat they own there. I frankly asked Dr. Singh that in her absence I would rather do without a lunch with him that day. But he retorted that he too would take lunch. I reluctantly agreed to come at 1 p.m. for lunch with him. I reached his Safdarjung Lane residence at 1 p.m. only to find him in his office at Parliament House. His P.A. rang him up about my timely arrival and Dr. Singh, who had forgotten that he had invited me for lunch, came running from his office. Both of us discussed national affairs. We reached the conclusion that some kind of a national government representing the best talent of the major parties was the only way out to save the country from the chaos that was prevailing at the national level. Deve Gowda was PM at that time.

Meeting with Vajpayee

In the afternoon Vajpayee came in time from Parliament

and we met at 7, Safdarjung Road residence. He had been PM for thirteen days and his passionate appeal made in the House for letting him form a stable government at the Centre had failed to produce any fruitful result. We all know how he left the House after making that memorable appeal and went straight to Rastrapati Bhavan to tender his resignation, having failed to secure a majority in the House. Against this background I asked Vajpayee to do something to form a national government, trying to make his party touchable. Vajpayee in his typical but characteristic style told me: Pathakji Maharaj! we will make BJP touchable within two minutes. I was hardly convinced of his confidence to make the untouchable BJP touchable in two minutes, as he claimed to do. I said a national government was the only way out to let the best talent in all the parties work together for the cause of good and effective governance at the Centre. As soon as I made this proposal Vajpayee again repeated: Pathakji Maharaj! (three times he repeated it) your proposal is impractical. To this categorical statement, which he repeated three times, I got up terminating the meeting and telling him very frankly that since we differed on the fundamentals there was no scope for a fruitful discussion with him in national interest. The abrupt termination of our meeting did surprise Vajpayee as it was amply visible on his face after my getting up with folded hands, bidding good-bye to him. When I came out of the room his staff was more surprised to see me out within two/three minutes as they knew that Vajpayee had come earlier than usual from Parliament only to meet me.

This anecdote has a meaning so far as the future of BJP is concerned. After the fall of I. K. Gujral's government Vajpayee did his best to remove the untouchability of the BJP and formed a mini-national government in the name of National Democratic Alliance (NDA). He could manage affairs for almost six years despite the Jayalalita and Mamata Banerjee efforts to pull the rug from under his feet.

The formation of the NDA was possible only when Advani's communal agenda was set aside by the BJP. If communal agenda constituted the very ideology of BJP, Advani should not have joined the Vajpayee cabinet. It is rather difficult, if not impossible, to imagine how Advani must have felt to see his Rath yatra work undone for the sake of providing a workable government at the Centre. The constituents of the NDA were so widely divergent in views and opinions that I myself never felt confident of a smooth sailing. It hardly took a year for the experiment to collapse and as a result the nation went to the hustings again. This time the lesson taken by other minor parties was clear, as they did not want another parliamentary elections after a year and let things run smoothly in spite of fundamental differences. I must confess that Vajpayee alone could achieve all this, though Advani was still on his Rath yatra with his communal agenda fluttering its wings in a void.

The RSS Influence

However, things changed and Orissa witnessed the burning alive of a German missionary and nuns were raped and attacked in Gujarat. It was just the beginning, not an exception at any rate, the communal agenda showing its ugly face, torpedoing Vajpayee's efforts to run his government with the help of such partners as would never have anything to do with the renewed efforts of a small section within the BJP with full backing and approval of Advani. He may reject my argument off-hand, but facts are glaring enough to prove me correct in my assessment as Vajpayee himself confessed much later that he was for the removal of Narendra Modi as CM of Gujarat, and that it was Advani who did not let him do the right thing. It would not be out of place to mention here that my last meeting with Advani in April 1993 was against the corruption in higher education in Rajasthan. The main architects of this corruption were none other than the committed RSS people. I was frank enough to tell Advani when he was President of the BJP that RSS had

nothing to do with any character-building as they had plunged headlong into corruption in Rajasthan, the moment they came to power with Bhairon Singh as CM, who did not have a majority of his own in the Assembly for almost eight years of his tenure as CM in Rajasthan. I quite remember. All my efforts to check the activities of the RSS, playing a nefarious role in transfers and postings and making money, did not bear any results. It happened in a big way in 1977-80 when Bhairon Singh was CM of the Janata Party and the RSS people were making profession of social service lucrative enough to become persons of means. I myself was made a victim by the RSS, but I fought my way out in my own way, frustrating their efforts to do me any damage. I should like to refrain from naming the persons who debased an otherwise social body, making it a political ploy for self-aggrandizement.

Advani and Narendra Modi

I may be excused for this digression, but not without a definite purpose of exposing the hollowness of preaching morality without conforming to their preachings themselves. My efforts to check the growing corruption in higher education in Rajasthan are well known to a friend like Jaswant Singh who could not do anything to help get the situation out of the quagmire of corruption. I remember Vajpayee did help me by writing to the then minister for higher education in Rajasthan, an RSS “big gun” as he was so called then.

Advani’s defence of Narendra Modi cannot be justified on any ground, whatever. The greatest difficulty with Advani is his self-righteousness without any principled background. I understand Advani’s frustration more clearly than the myopics around him. How can the BJP be called a national party with a communal agenda contrary to the basic concept of secularism in the country’s constitutional provisions? The Election Commission should have derecognized the party on the grounds

of its communal agenda. When Vajpayee was PM, Jaswant Singh was busy laying a sound foundation of a positive relationship with America. Vajpayee made many blunders and one of them was his 1998 nuclear test. It ran contrary to the efforts Jaswant was making to make the path smooth, as Dr. Manmohan Singh did later when he became PM. Pandit Nehru gave sovereignty to China over Tibet in 1950. But there was no sense in Vajpayee going all the way to offer suzerainty to China over Tibet when he visited China as PM.

Bridging the Hindu Muslim Divide

I need to mention one more fact regarding my last meeting with Advani in April 1993. I had bluntly asked Advani if he had any agenda to drive out of India almost 15 crores of Muslims, adding that even if he had a fool-proof plan to do that, the comity of nations would not let him. When Hindus and Muslims are to live together in the country let this be done without relegating the Muslims as second class citizens. Advani had the audacity to call Jinnah a secular leader when he visited Pakistan as Deputy Prime Minister! This double-speak of Advani is so characteristic of him that it has blocked his way to get to the top. He was criticized for all this but not expelled from the BJP as Jaswant was. This simple fact proves that Advani is in the eyes of the RSS and the fundamentalist Hindus in the BJP, a reliable man.

So long as the BJP does not delink itself from the false ideology of Hindustan is Hindu Rashtra, I see no bright future for it to play a positive role in a parliamentary democracy like ours either as a main Opposition party or a ruling one. It can never have a majority of its own. All it can do is to have parties like Shiv Sena as its partner. Such parties have no future in India whose cultural heritage is religious tolerance and secular code of conduct of its citizens. I pity Arun Shourie for asking the RSS to take over the affairs of BJP. Whether he did it in a jocular mood or earnestly I have no means to know. But his

advice seems to be working much to the disadvantage of BJP and the role of RSS has increased manifold in the daily affairs of the BJP. The present leadership of the RSS is a complete break from its past leadership. The present leadership has completely failed to let the BJP play the role of an effective Opposition party in Parliament. The way the BJP has conducted itself on the issue of Indo-US nuclear deal made me firm in my conviction that BJP is not a principled party with any ideology which could take India on the path of progress and prosperity. It was Vajpayee alone who could do the miracle. Jaswant was next in line, but unfortunately he was expelled by Advani and his company who are running the affairs of BJP after the fashion of a fundamentalist party. Fortunately, the Hindus are not fundamentalists. Nor are the Indian Muslims fundamentalists.

Making BJP a Truly National Party

The aim of this chapter is to make positive suggestions for making BJP a truly national party, representing all sections of society more or less in the way the Congress was. The greatest exponent of Hindu-Muslim unity in India was Mahatma Gandhi. He was unfortunately dubbed by Jinnah and some of his colleagues in the Muslim League as a Hindu leader making the Congress a Hindu organization. No doubt Jinnah was a member of the Congress from 1896 to 1913 when he left the Congress and later joined the Muslim League. Mahatma Gandhi did it almost after a decade as he was preoccupied with his activities in South Africa against Apartheid. Jinnah did it for personal reasons under the garb of serving his *Qaum* (Muslims). He met with opposition as well as support from the Muslims before Partition. But he could not exploit the support of his *Qaum* for vitiating the atmosphere. Nor was he made of that stuff. Even during the unfortunate and horrible deeds during the Partition days he never backed communalists and fundamentalists in his *Qaum*. He was a frustrated man who was overshadowed by Gandhi and he could not get rid of that complex. Till 1913,

he was with the Congress agitation against foreign rule and he was not against Gandhi. But he could not accept Gandhi getting raised in stature head and shoulders above the lanky Jinnah after 1920. The difficulty of Jinnah was that he was a constitutionalist first and an agitator next. He tried to work within the framework of the constitutional provisions the British gave to India during their rule. This made him closer to the British rulers, than Mahatma Gandhi, though Gandhi was more humble in his approach and followed the constitutional provisions within the framework of freedom as his first aim. This vital difference in the approaches of two great men of India led them on different paths. It was much later that Jinnah was gripped more by personal ambition to lead his *Qaum* than he actually cared for almost around 1942.

I have narrated all this in brief for the benefit of those who want the BJP to be a much stronger party than it has so far been, playing a positive role in a parliamentary set-up like ours. This is possible only when BJP delinks itself from the RSS and VHP and sets out to carve a national agenda which includes all sects and sections of our society. So long as enlightened and good people like Jaswant do not swell the ranks of BJP. I see a darker future for BJP ahead. Advani cannot play the same card twice. No one is interested any more in Ram Temple issue. Economic progress of all sections of society without any disparagement is the only way out to make BJP a party which is in reality a national party. To live in the past and trying to beguile people with promises of bringing back the past will not work at all. If Afghanistan was part of India during Akbar's rule, it is no longer possible to get Afghanistan back. The fact that Pakistan is still in possession of the fruit of its aggression in Kashmir in 1948 is proof enough to think on different lines than the present thinking of BJP. Everyone is free to live in a fool's paradise. But it would be a great crime to let others live in a fool's paradise, beguiling people for getting majority in

legislatures in India. Befooling and beguiling have reached a point of saturation and the people at large are no longer interested in an outdated and outmoded past. One cannot live in the past without any regard for the present and deep concern for the future. Neither BJP nor the Hindu fundamentalists can do it and rewrite history the way they wish to.

Need for Transparency

The path adopted by the BJP is negative and the thinking of the partymen has become extremely negative. Vasundhara Raje was asked to quit leadership of the Parliamentary party in the Rajasthan Assembly without asking Rajnath Singh to quit. He was replaced only after a great deal of fuss over the Raje issue. On the contrary, Advani has been elevated for humbling the party in the last parliamentary elections! All these are hardly positive signs of BJP becoming stronger than ever before. Tolerance and humility should replace aggressive nationalism and its consequent arrogance, without which I see no future worth its name for BJP in the days ahead. So long as thinking people do not take hold of this party, I see a dark future with more rapidity than ever before. I did fax a letter to Advani when he expressed his desire to quit the post of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, asking him to become more and more moderate in his thinking and promoting persons like Jaswant Singh. To my utter surprise, Advani called Jaswant's expulsion "necessary" only to backtrack by saying he was opposed to it!

I earnestly wish my friends in the BJP will give serious thought to what I have said here and make amends as early as possible in the best interest of the nation, making a democratic set-up more functional and less and less guided by the whims of political leaders who have no concern for what ails their country and how best they could cure her of the ailments.

As far as I recall, Advani was present at the meeting

Vajpayee had called regarding the Khandahar episode, deputing Jaswant to conduct the affairs in such a way that the lives of the passengers on board were made safe. A few months ago Advani flatly denied having any knowledge of the Khandahar mission given to Jaswant. It was too much for Jaswant to digest one untruth after another, though he tried to cover up things to save Advani from embarrassment. But truth cannot be locked in a box for long. At last Advani's presence at the meeting became public as other members who had attended the meeting told the truth in the matter. Denial is a common trait of political leaders these days. But a leader who poses himself to be a morally sound man should continuously resort to denial is a matter which badly reflects upon Advani. That such a man should be elevated as Chairperson of party's members in both the Houses makes me believe that BJP is in no mood to face the reality of the situation. Such a party can do no good to a nation that has already reached a point of degeneration which should be a matter of deep concern to the thinking people in the country. To talk of Hindu Rashtra is an historical anachronism. Even the BJP members know this as well. But they never get tired of letting people believe that they are more holy than others. Is BJP a 'Holy Cow' ? I do not think so. The past record does not give any indication of the kind of holiness they claim as a creed. Let them think over these matters and start afresh as a party of people who are different from others. All evils that afflict our society today are more pronounced in the rank and file of the BJP than other parties.

The cry of inducting youth is meaningless for the simple reason that the rot began from the top and has now percolated down to the bottom. We have not enabled the youth to conduct themselves in society with any sense of national responsibility, let alone with any selfless dedication to any national cause. In the absence of useful employment, politics has come in handy as a means of livelihood. What good such youth are capable

of doing to the nation is not a matter of satisfaction for those who still hope that future hope lies in our youth.

Jayaprakash Narayan

I need to mention Jayaprakash's call of 'total revolution' in the country. For dislodging Indira Gandhi he had gone as far as to ask the youth to come to the streets in Bihar and Gujarat, resulting in loss of national property in a big way. I was a little disturbed over what JP was doing. I could not restrain myself and wrote to JP that instead of asking the youth to give up studies and come out on the street he should ask them to sit at 'dharna' at their own homes, impressing on parents the need for honest means. Had JP asked the youth to set their own homes in order there were bright possibilities of something good coming of the whole exercise. JP did not even acknowledge my letter, let alone heeding to the advice I had given him in the national interest. All his disciples who stood by him have proved that they had little to do with the high aims JP had set before them. Almost all his front-line followers have polluted public life, debased society and destroyed all idealism which makes for a better society with a sound moral base to sustain the benefits.

Why the Janata Party Failed

I am not belittling JP in any way. I am too small a person to do that. But the path he had adopted did more damage to the cause he wanted to espouse to make India a better country. I am simply stating some facts which emerged out of the whole exercise he undertook in spite of his old age and bad health. To say that he could dislodge Indira in 1977 is a poor satisfaction because his experiment to make democracy functional did not bear fruit, hardly lasting for 21/2 years. The most senior leaders who had rallied behind JP in the 1972-77 period let his dreams go the wrong way round, resulting in Indira's return to power in 1980 in a way which none had anticipated at that time.

I think the BJP should induct good and moderate people. Extreme positions are hardly good so far as positive results are concerned. The era of discipline brought through emergency hardly lasted for a few months and things became what they were before clamping emergency to discipline the people at large. Gandhi believed in the change of hearts, not in laws. That's why his mass movements were a grand success.

A word of advice to my Muslim brethren in the country: Keep aloof from fundamentalism without becoming instrumental in letting terrorism across the borders become a matter of pride. Muslims in India are Hindustanis and Hindustan is their home. They should follow Turkey in modernization of Islamic life.

Chapter Three

The RSS Connection

I have so far dealt with the expulsion of Jaswant Singh from the BJP and the future of this party as I see it. I have said things without mincing words. My word to the reader given in the beginning was to render an impartial account of the matter I had set out to deal with. As far as I think I have tried to abide by the promise made in my introduction. I must frankly tell the reader that the cause of a strong Opposition in a parliamentary set-up like ours has been my deep concern ever since C. Rajagopalachari took up the cause in the middle of the last century. Nothing has deterred me throughout these five decades from saying what I deem right.

I firmly believe that ideology is for the betterment of society. If it runs contrary to this aim, it is not ideology but personal whims of ambitious persons to come to limelight by hook or by crook. If an ideology does not bind people in one fabric of national pattern, it ceases to be called an ideology. The way our society is progressively fragmented in the name of this or that ideology must worry thinking people in the country, irrespective of their affiliations or sympathies with this party or that. I do not think any citizen of this country will find fault with this simple maxim of all ideologies, whether they are based on religious grounds or in the name of bringing up dalits or

Gandhi's "poorest of the poor". With this much said by me I should like to deal with a question of BJP-RSS-VHP relations.

Fundamentalism is Enemy of Democracy

The question would not have captured my attention if it had promoted national unity, binding all sections of our society in a more abiding way than it has so far done. As I see things, these relations have given rise to a new phenomenon I should call by the name of Hindu fundamentalism, a viper with deadly fangs destroying the very creed of Hinduism giving a direction which leads to a path that is likely to divide the country into mutually hostile sections and thereby threatening internal security and peace, as it has already done to some extent. No sane citizen would appreciate, let alone make his contribution to make our society a hot-bed of hatred on such a large scale that we may not be able to cope with the disastrous consequences of all this dirty game. Neither Hindu fundamentalism nor Muslim fundamentalism nor even fundamentalism in the name of letting the down-trodden come up is desirable or justifiable on any account. No social structure is sustainable on such grounds which ultimately create mutual hatred instead of love and brotherhood. I am not taking any academic position, but simply stating things as I see them happening round me. All this is done to gain political clout in the name of restructuring our society on just and sustainable grounds.

I should like to say with all confidence that neither caste nor religion nor untouchability could be abolished by the present-day leaders whose only aim seems to me an exploitation of these sentiments for political gain, leading to a position of power. I should like to refrain from naming people who have been indulging headlong in this dirty game, serving neither any national cause or even the cause of bringing up weaker sections of our society. This much, said on my part, would now enable us to reject lock, stock, and barrel all claims of our present-day leaders

to do any effective service to those for whom they claim to indulge in such nefarious games. My purpose of writing all this would be adequately fulfilled if I could enable to let people see through these tactics of garnering support on appeals which run contrary to the unity of our nation and consequently peace and amity of our society which is essentially secular. Winning elections to gain political power on false promises made on all the more false grounds has not served any purpose. Nor can it serve any cause of any section of our society. This writing on the wall should be very clear to the destiny makers of our society.

Against this background, I should like to say something about the relations of BJP with RSS and VHP. The right to form associations and establish organisations for social purposes cannot be denied. But to use them for purposes other than the stated ones is a crime – a social crime – for which neither the Election Commission nor the Indian Penal Code has any provision to deal with. These unbridled horses are trampling the very core of our cultural heritage in the name of protecting that heritage! Laws could not bring about socialism, abolishing disparity in society. Nor could hundreds of constitutional amendments made over these past six decades have done the nation much good. Quite naturally, we have to rise and let the citizen wake up, so that an uprising from below goes a long way to curb the rot at the top. I see no other way out to check and curb the maladies that afflict us today.

The Role of the RSS

Let us go back into the history of India, recalling the invasions the Muslims made to plunder the country which was essentially made of Hindu culture. Islam is hardly a fifteen hundred years old religion. The Middle East was basically the hub around which Islam flourished. The cultural heritage the people of what we call Iran, Iraq and Egypt today was rich enough. Religion was not a binding force to their societies. Islam

was not born when these regions were so rich that Greeks and Romans invaded them. Islam grew out of Kabeela culture and it spread all over the world on the basis of sword alone as Christianity spread on the basis of crusades by its adherents. The invasions by Muslims from the Middle East were acts of barbarism, destroying temples for the sake of richness that abounded then. It was Akbar the Great who realized that the soul of India was basically secular. After fighting furious wars he established himself in a way which looked quite secular. But his descendents were less enlightened and deviated from the path he had adopted. That history of Muslim atrocities on the Hindu population cannot be repeated now. Nor can any revenge be taken either by RSS or VHP or BJP. This simple fact has to be taken into consideration by all who now call themselves Indians.

The RSS was established to revive Hindu pride against Muslim atrocities committed centuries before RSS was formed in 1925. After the formation of Indian National Congress it was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who made a modest effort to revive national unity through Ganesh Chaturdashi celebrations. I should not like to go into further details and its consequences because moderate leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale did not resort to such methods. In the uprising of 1857 the Hindus and the Muslims fought together against the British. Within five decades despite this unity against the British rule, Muslim League came into existence alongside of the All India Congress. Things went as far as to call the Congress a Hindu organization.

It was pettiness of the Muslim community in India to call the Congress a Hindu organization. Both were social organizations with the clear aim of driving out the British from the country. The moderates in the Congress got a better hold of the organization and Savarkar and later on Hedgewar came to denounce Gandhi's leadership for espousing the cause of

Hindu-Muslim unity in India. It goes without saying that Islamic fundamentalism gave rise to Hindu fundamentalism in India through the RSS. Such reactions are natural, though they may not be in the general interest.

That's how the RSS came into existence and its history started with Rana Pratap of Mewar and ended with Shivaji of Maharashtra. I say this on the basis of my own association with RSS from 1944 to January 1948. I was a student of a Mission school established by the British in 1822 at Agra and our Principals were Englishmen and teachers were a mixed lot of Englishmen, Hindus turned Christians and Anglo-Indians. I used to read the Bible in zero period and it continued for seven years. It was during this period that I used to attend RSS sakhas in the evening. A schoolboy's impressions are very abiding. They cannot be brushed aside as immature impressions. I never heard a word from the RSS organizers about Gandhi's national movement against the British. After 'Dhwaj Pranam' a general discourse in the form of stories about Rana Pratap and Shivaji were narrated with references to Muslim atrocities. Though they were facts, yet the cause of national unity suffered a lot on account of such preachings. After the assassination of Gandhi by an RSS man I was not allowed by my parents to attend the RSS sakhas any more. But I must frankly say that there was something in the RSS of those days which went some way to building character on purely moralistic lines. The hatred for the Muslims was hardly appreciable then, let alone today.

The Jan Sangh and the RSS

Shyama Prasad Mukerjee founded the Jan Sangh not on hatred for Muslims but for the Kashmir issue and division of Bengal with a dark history of communal riots hardly witnessed ever before. His differences with Pandit Nehru were genuine and quite justified. Later, the leadership of Jan Sangh fell into the hands of RSS cadres and the party became a purely Hindu

party more or less in the same way as the Congress had show-pieces like Maulana Azad or Ali brothers or Khan Abdul Gaffar of the Frontier Province. Very few Muslims took part in the Congress programmes.

These are facts which cannot be denied by anyone, however great or humble. All efforts of Gandhi failed to dispel this impression as Jinnah after the failure of the 1944 parleys with Gandhi made it a personal agenda to denounce Gandhi as a Hindu leader. It was his political weapon, not that he honestly believed in Gandhi being anti-Muslim in any way. The Jan Sangh soon became a political tool of the RSS to promote its anti-Muslim leanings. Soon the Jan Sangh rank and file was taken over by the RSS. It was one reason why Jan Sangh could not flourish as the entire credit of safeguarding the interests of Muslims went to the Congress. Pandit Nehru was essentially a secularist of the highest order. And so the Muslim community in India got full patronage of the Congress.

Patronage is always followed by concessions and the Muslims enjoyed them though some of them were contrary to the concept of secularism. There was little scope for the Jan Sangh to flourish as a strong Opposition in the country. The party paid a heavy price for its links with RSS. In fact, they were not links but a complete take over of the party by RSS. An organization which started as a social body soon became the backbone of a political party. That was its undoing, denying it the benefit of other minority communities. No argument against these simple facts can go down the throats of thinking people in the country. Only fanatics can believe that the facts I have narrated are wrong.

Muslim Politics in India after Partition

In the first elections in 1952 the Muslim League was very active and fought the Assembly elections in UP with all their

might. The results were so disappointing that by the 1957 elections the Muslim League was completely wiped out. Since no other option was there before the League the Muslims by and large shifted their loyalties to the Congress. Things went on without much change till Jayaprakash Narayan made it a cause to remove Indira Gandhi from the political prominence she had acquired after trouncing the Old Guards in 1971. C. Rajagopalachari had founded the Swatantra Party in 1959 and made the party the main Opposition in 1962-67 period. After his passing away in December 1972 the leadership of the party fell into the hands of persons who were politically immature. In 1971 Rajagopalchari did align his party with the Old Congress as it was called after the famous 1969 split in the Congress and Jan Sangh was also a part of that 'Grand Alliance'. But the experiment failed to check the rise of Indira Gandhi in 1971. It was under these circumstances that Jayaprakash gave up his 'sanyas' and started a movement against Indira Gandhi. She made the mistake of imposing Emergency and getting most of the leaders arrested, making them heroes after the Emergency was lifted. In 1977 Jayaprakash founded Janata Party, merging all parties into it leaving the communists alone. Pygmies became Gullivers in 1977 and the experiment lasted only two and a half years. It was during this period that RSS cadres got debased and indulged in corruption. The fall of RSS started with the rise of Janata Party. I know how RSS people made money out of transfers and postings of government servants when Bhairon Singh was Chief Minister of Rajasthan, who belonged to the erstwhile Jan Sangh.

Since then the RSS ceased to be a social organization as after the breaking up of Janata Party on the issue of double membership of the erstwhile Jan Sangh. BJP came into existence. There remained no distinction between RSS and BJP and RSS people dominated the affairs of the BJP. The distinct character of RSS lost its sheen and BJP became a party of Hindus who

were fundamentalists as their background was RSS association. In my considered opinion BJP has lost much ground as a political party to be able to take the place of the erstwhile Swatantra Party on the basis of policies entirely different from the Congress.

The greatest folly was Advani's Rath yatra. It made the BJP untouchable more or less in the same way as the double membership issue caused the disintegration of the Janata Party. I quite remember Morarji Desai telling me a lot more about the erstwhile Jan Sangh ministers in his cabinet when I met him in the first week of June in 1978. I cannot repeat all that here for reasons I need not enumerate. I quite remember Nanaji Deshmukh had to wait outside for more than 50 minutes as Morarji Desai, who had given me 15 minutes of time, was not prepared to terminate the meeting with me. I myself pointed out that Nanaji was growing impatient, but Morarjibhai did not pay any attention to my reminders and went on unlocking his heart to me on the roles of Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes, Charan Singh and Biju Patnaik on the one hand and Vajpayee, Advani and Deshmukh on the other. I have a mind to say something about what Morarji told me, but not here in this small book. I should like to discuss this issue in another book I propose to write on what ails India and how best to cure her ailment.

So far as the present situation is concerned the role of RSS in shaping BJP's future role as a political party has increased manifold with Bhagwat at the helm of affairs of the RSS. Sudarshan was a moderate. Prof. Rajendra Singh hardly bothered about BJP affairs. I knew him personally and I quite remember when I was a student at Allahabad his father, who was a personal friend of my uncle, used to come to meet my uncle in the morning after his morning walk. I heard him say a good number of times: Panditji, please ask Rajju not to waste his life in RSS.

Impact of Advani's Rath Yatra

Advani's Rath yatra paid some dividends but the cost was

so heavy that it took Vajpayee more than six years to make BJP touchable. The National Democratic Alliance was the work of Vajpayee, not of Advani. He could manage things for six years. Advani cannot do it for six months. I am not denigrating Advani's capability in any way. But I know for definite that he is not the face acceptable to other parties. Naveen Patnaik's shrewd move to delink his party has paid him dividends. George is a sick man. In Bihar the present arrangement will work out of sheer necessity to cling to power till the next assembly elections take place. Sharad Yadav and Nitish Kumar are quite conversant with the ways of the RSS dominated BJP.

I firmly believe that BJP's RSS association has helped revive the Congress in a big way. The communists are no longer power-brokers. They have become as much untouchables as the RSS dominated BJP is today. It has to give up its communal agenda and delink itself from the RSS. Advani cannot do this. A moderate face like Jaswant Singh, could have but unfortunately Advani showed him the door for fear of getting replaced by him. This is not a figment of my imagination. I have said things as I saw them and now see them happening. The future alone will tell how correct is my account of men and matters. I have not written all this out of any malice or ill-will. How can I have any malice when I am not at all affiliated with any party? I earnestly wish BJP all success as a strong Opposition.

Let me narrate an incident which took place when C. Rajagopalchari wanted to unite the Opposition before the 1971 elections. Prof. N. G. Ranga, the then Chairman of the erstwhile Swatantra Party, was hobnobbing with the RSS, he even addressed its annual rally. He wanted a merger of the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party. C. Rajgopalchari was much influenced by Ranga in favour of a merger between the two parties. M. R. Masani was General Secretary of the Swatantra Party and was against Ranga's move. Rajaji asked me what I thought of

the proposal made by Ranga. I quite remember my remark: For God's sake let's do nothing to pollute the sanity of the Swatantra Party with the fanaticism of the Jan Sangh. When Masani came to know about my opinion he congratulated me for speaking the truth without mincing words. Today I feel I was right and Ranga was wrong in pleading the cause of merger. Nothing has changed over these four decades after I gave my opinion to C. Rajagopalchari in response when he asked me to unlock my heart.

In my considered opinion RSS is no longer a social organization. It has become more political and less social over the past three decades or so. Its political teeth are hardly helpful in BJP becoming a national party in the true sense. It is not representative of all sections of our society. The more so as the Muslim community is hardly friendly to BJP because of its links with RSS and VHP. Dedication to selfless service is possible when we desist from making public life a lucrative profession in a democratic set up like ours. Education is devoid of civic sense as it does not have any civic orientation. Leaders have ceased to make any moral impact. Dr. Manmohan Singh's rise is an example that moral scruples play a great role in elevating people to higher status in life. A nation without a sound moral backbone cannot enjoy any affluence in our society and disparities from man to man will become more and more glaring than they have so far been despite all the efforts of a socialist Nehru and Indira Gandhi to carry gunny bags of socialism to the homes of Gandhi's "poorest of the poor".
