An open letter to the 'Hindu Nationalist', Narendra Damodardas Modi Ji, Chief Minister of Gujarat

Sir,

I hope you are fine. While talking to two Reuters journalists, Ross Colvin and Sruthi Gottipati, on July 12, 2013, you identified yourself as a ‘Hindu Nationalist’ and credited the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for instilling in you, spirit “(to be a) patriot. Whatever work you do, you think are you doing this for the good of the nation? That's the basic training. The other basic training is discipline. Your life should be disciplined.”¹

The news agency declared that it was a ‘rare interview’ of yours taken at your official Gandhinagar residence. It shocked me immensely as you were not talking as an ordinary Indian citizen but as the chief minister of Gujarat, a constitutional position under the democratic-secular constitution of India. I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to you in the hope that you, who claim to be believer in transparency, will respond to the issues I raise.

As a seasoned RSS pracharak or whole-timer you know about your roots better than me. Still I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the term ‘Hindu Nationalist’ originated in a specific historical context during India’s Freedom Struggle against the British colonial masters. This Freedom Struggle was mainly led by the Congress, which stood for an all-inclusive democratic-secular free India. The ‘Muslim Nationalists’, under the banner of the Muslim League, and the 'Hindu Nationalists', under the banners of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, opposed it, claiming that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. These Hindu and Muslim ‘Nationalists’ joined hands with the colonial masters in order to thwart the Freedom Struggle so that they could have theocratic states of their choice, ‘Hindusthan’ or Hindu Rashtra and Pakistan or Islamic state respectively.

The politics of the Muslim League and its role in dividing India are well known but I need to refresh your memory about the nefarious role that ‘Hindu Nationalists’ played in India before and after Independence. I am relying exclusively on documents of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha in order to put across reality.

‘Hindu Nationalists’ believe in the two-nation theory like the Muslim League

Narendra ji! I would like to draw your attention to the fact that both the originator of Hindutva, V.D. Savarkar and RSS, had unequivocal faith in the two-nation theory: that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. While the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah resolved to have a separate homeland for Muslims of India in the form of Pakistan in 1940, ¹

Savarkar propagated as early as 1937 that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. While delivering the presidential address to the 19th Hindu Mahasabha session at Ahmedabad, ‘Veer’ Savarkar declared,

As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India, several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so. These were well meaning but unthinking friends take their dreams for realities. That is why they are impatient of communal tangles and attribute them to communal organizations. But the solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and Moslems...Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are. India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian [sic] and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems [sic], in India.2

Sir! The RSS, following in the foot-steps of ‘Veer’ Savarkar, always rejected the idea that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians together constituted a nation. Its English organ, Organizer, on the very eve of Independence (August 14, 1947), editorially (titled ‘Whither’) underlined its belief in the two-nation theory once again in the following words:

Let us no longer allow ourselves to be influenced by false notions of nationhood. Much of the mental confusion and the present and future troubles can be removed by the ready recognition of the simple fact that in Hindusthan only the Hindus form the nation and the national structure must be built on that safe and sound foundation…the nation itself must be built up of Hindus, on Hindu traditions, culture, ideas and aspirations.

Your claim, ‘My secularism is, India first' is problematic as you do not regard yourself as an Indian nationalist but as a ‘Hindu nationalist.’ If you are a Hindu nationalist then there will be, naturally, ‘Muslim nationalists’, ‘Sikh nationalists’, ‘Christian nationalists’, and so on. Thus you set the ball rolling for a divided India. This is surely a corollary of your organizational faith in the two-nation theory.

---

Hindu Nationalists decry and denigrate the Indian national flag

Modi Sir, as a senior and prominent whole-timer of the RSS you must know that on the eve of Independence the above mentioned RSS organ used the following language against the Tri-colour, the new National Flag of India:

The people who have come to power by the kick of fate may give in our hands the Tricolour but it never [sic] be respected and owned by Hindus. The word three is in itself an evil, and a flag having three colours will certainly produce a very bad psychological effect and is injurious to a country.³

Hindu nationalists ran coalition governments with the Muslim League in 1942-43

1942 was a critical year in the history of India’s Freedom Struggle. In a nation-wide call the British rulers were asked to ‘Quit India’. The rulers responded by turning the country into a hell: armed squads killed common Indians completely disregarding the rule of law, millions were arrested and thousands suffered unparalleled repression. The Congress governments which were ruling different Provinces of British India were dismissed. The only political organizations allowed to work were the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. These two organizations united to serve the rulers and formed coalition governments. It was corroborated by the mentor of RSS. ‘Veer’ Savarkar in his presidential address to the 24th session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Kanpur in 1942 declared,

In practical politics also the Mahasabha knows that we must advance through reasonable compromises. Witness the fact that only recently in Sind, the Sind-Hindu-Sabha on invitation had taken the responsibility of joining hands with the League itself in running coalition Government. The case of Bengal is well known. Wild Leaguers whom even the Congress with all its submissiveness could not placate grew quite reasonably compromising and socialable as soon as they came in contact with the HM and the Coalition Government, under the premiership of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the able lead of our esteemed Mahasabha leader Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, functioned successfully for a year or so to the benefit of both the communities.⁴

When Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was trying to liberate India, the Hindu nationalists were helping to strengthen the British rule and its armed forces

Sir, you must be familiar with the name of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, who tried to liberate India militarily with the help of Germany and Japan. However, during this period ‘Hindu Nationalists’,

³ Organizer, August 14, 1947.
instead of helping him, were hand in glove with the British masters in defeating Netaji’s liberation
struggle (in which former succeeded). Hindu Mahasabha under ‘Veer’ Savarkar’s leadership
organized recruitment camps for British armed forces. The Hindutva camp’s surrender to the
colonial masters was total, as we see in the following utterances of ‘Veer’ Savarkar:

So far as India’s defence is concerned, Hindudom must ally unhesitatingly, in a spirit of
responsive co-operation with the war effort of the Indian government in so far as it is
consistent with the Hindu interests, by joining the Army, Navy and the Aerial forces in as
large a number as possible and by securing an entry into all ordnance, ammunition and war
craft factories…Again it must be noted that Japan’s entry into the war has exposed us
directly and immediately to the attack by Britain’s enemies. Consequently, whether we like
it or not, we shall have to defend our own hearth and home against the ravages of the war
and this can only be done by intensifying the government’s war effort to defend India.
Hindu Mahasabha ites must, therefore, rouse Hindus especially in the provinces of Bengal
and Assam as effectively as possible to enter the military forces of all arms without losing a
single minute.5

What RSS instills in cadres?

Sir, in your interview you claimed that RSS instills in cadres the spirit of patriotism, working for the
good of the nation and discipline. Since RSS stands for Hindu Rashtra or nation, one can
understand the fate of democratic-secular India in the hands of RSS cadres. You should have shared
what the most prominent ideologue of the RSS, Golwalkar, expected from RSS members. While
addressing a gathering of top ranking RSS on March 16, 1954, at Sindi, Wardha, he said:

If we say that we are part of the organization and accept its discipline then selectiveness has
no place in life. Do what is told. If told to play kabaddi, play kabaddi; told to hold meeting
then meeting….For instance some of our friends were told to go and work for politics that
does not mean that they have great interest or inspiration for it. They don’t die for politics
like fish without water. If they are told to withdraw from politics then also there is no
objection. Their discretion is just not required.6

This second statement of ‘Guru’ Golwalkar is also significant.

We know this also that some of our Swayamsevaks work in politics. There they have to
organize according to the needs of work public meetings, processions etc., have to raise

5 V. D. Savarkar cited in V. D. Savarkar, Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra
6 SGSD, vol. iii, p. 32.
slogans. All these things have no place in our work. However, like the character in a play whatever role has been assigned should be portrayed with best of capability. But sometimes Swayamsevaks go beyond the role assigned to a performer (nat) as they develop over-zealousness in their hearts, to the extent that they become useless for this work. This is not good.⁷

Modi Sir, we find here 'Guru' Golwalkar referring to the Swayamsevaks loaned to the political satellite as ‘nat’, performers, who are meant to dance to the tune of the RSS. It should be noted here that Golwalkar’s above design of controlling the political arm was elaborated in March 1960, almost nine years after the establishment of the Jana Sangh (the forerunner of the BJP) in 1951. What I would like to know from you is whether you are serving the democratic-secular polity of India or are a mere ‘nat’, a tool in the hands of the RSS for turning India into a theocratic state. Fact is that RSS makes its cadres spineless.

Betrayal by RSS in India’s Freedom Struggle

Sir, your claim that the RSS taught you patriotism is suspect, given the history of that organization as seen in its documents. I shall present some relevant documents for your kind perusal.

The Non-cooperation Movement and the Quit India Movement were two great milestones in the history of the Indian Freedom Movement, and here is the great thesis of the great Golwalkar on these two great happenings:

Definitely there are bound to be bad results of struggle. The boys became unruly after the 1920-21 movement. It is not an attempt to throw mud at the leaders. But these are inevitable products after the struggle. The matter is that we could not properly control these results. After 1942, people often started thinking that there was no need to think of the law.⁸

Thus 'Guru' Golwalkar wanted the Indians to respect the draconian and repressive laws of the inhuman British rulers! After the 1942 Movement he further admitted,

In 1942 also there was a strong sentiment in the hearts of many. At that time too the routine work of Sangh continued. Sangh vowed not to do anything directly. However, upheaval (uthal-puthal) in the minds of Sangh volunteers continued. Sangh is an organization of

---

⁷ SGSD, vol. iv, pp. 4-5.
⁸ SGSD, volume IV, p. 41.
inactive persons, their talks are useless, not only outsiders but also many of our volunteers
did talk like this. They were greatly disgusted too.\(^9\)

Sir, we have been told that the RSS did nothing \textit{directly}. However, there is not a single publication
or document of the RSS which throws light on what the RSS did \textit{indirectly} for the Quit India
Movement. During this period, in fact, its mentor, ‘Veer’ Savarkar, ran coalition governments with
the Muslim League. I must conclude that because the RSS did nothing, directly or indirectly, for the
Quit India Movement, and indeed acted against it, that titanic movement was, for you and your
forebears, the opposite of patriotic.

**RSS denigrates martyrs of India’s Freedom Struggle**

Modi Sir, I would like to know your views on the statements of ’Guruji’ decrying and denigrating
martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Ashfaqullah Khan. Here is a passage from the
chapter, ‘Martyr, Great But Not Ideal’ from \textit{Bunch Of Thoughts}, a veritable \textit{Geeta} for RSS cadres
such as yourself.

> There is no doubt that such men who embrace martyrdom are great heroes and their
> philosophy too is pre-eminently manly. They are far above the average men who meekly
> submit to fate and remain in fear and inaction. All the same, such persons are not held up as
> ideals in our society. We have not looked upon their martyrdom as the highest point of
> greatness to which men should aspire. For, after all, they failed in achieving their ideal, and
> failure implies some fatal flaw in them.\(^{10}\)

Sir, can there be a statement more insulting to the martyrs than this? The founder of the RSS, Dr.
Hedgewar, went one step further:

> Patriotism is not only going to prison. It is not correct to be carried away by such superficial
> patriotism.\(^{11}\)

Don’t you feel, Sir, that if martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Ashfaqullah,
Chandrashekhar Azad had come in contact with the then RSS leadership, they could have been
saved from giving their lives for ‘superficial patriotism’? This also must be the reason why RSS
leaders or cadres did not face repression during British rule and the RSS did not produce any martyr
during the Freedom Movement. Finally, Sir, are we to regard as noble patriotism the cringing letters
that ’Veer’ Savarkar wrote to the Angrez Sarkar?

\(^9\) SGSD, Volume IV, p. 40.
\(^{10}\) MS Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1996, p. 283.
\(^{11}\) CP Bhishikar, Sanghavariiksh Ke Beej: Dr. Keshavrao Hedgewar, Suruchi, 1994, p. 21.
RSS’ hatred for democracy

Modi ji, as Chief Minister of Gujarat and a prominent leader of the BJP, you are supposed to function within the Democratic-Secular polity of India. What is your take on the following decree ordained by 'Guru' Golwalkar while addressing a group of 1,350 top level cadres of the RSS in 1940?

RSS inspired by one flag, one leader and one ideology is lighting the flame of Hindutva in each and every corner of this great land.12

I would like to bring it to your notice that this decree of ‘one flag, one leader and one ideology’ was also the battle cry of Fascist and Nazi parties of Europe in the first half of 20th century. What they did to democracy is well-known to this world.

Against federalism

The RSS is also dead against the federal structure given in the Constitution, again a basic feature of the Indian polity. This is clear from the following communication of M.S. Golwalkar to the first session of the National Integration Council in 1961:

Today’s federal form of government not only gives birth but also nourishes the feelings of separatism, in a way refuses to recognize the fact of one nation and destroys it. It must be completely uprooted, constitution purified and unitary form of government be established.13

‘Hindu Nationalists’ stand for Casteism and anti-women Polity

Sir, if you peep into the archives of the RSS and its brother organizations who want the rule of Hindutva in India, it will be immediately clear that all of them hated the Constitution of India, which was drafted under the guidance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. When the Constituent Assembly of India had finalized the Constitution of India the RSS was not happy. Its organ, Organizer, in an editorial on November 30, 1949, complained:

But in our constitution there is no mention of the unique constitutional development in ancient Bharat. Manu’s Laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of Persia. To this day his laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits that means nothing.

13 MS Golwalkar, Shri Guruji Samagar Darshan (collected works of Golwalkar in Hindi), Bhartiya Vichar Sadhna, Nagpur, nd., volume iii, p. 128. Hereafter referred as SGSD.
In fact, RSS had been following the ideology laid down by ‘Veer’ Savarkar. It may not be a secret to you, Sir, that ‘Veer’ Savarkar remained a great proponent of Casteism and worshipper of Manusmriti throughout his life. According to this apostle of Hindu Nationalism:

Manusmriti is that scripture which is most worshipable [sic] after Vedas for our Hindu Nation and which from ancient times has become the basis of our culture-customs, thought and practice. This book for centuries has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Even today the rules which are followed by crores of Hindus in their lives and practice are based on Manusmriti. Today Manusmriti is Hindu Law.\textsuperscript{14}

Sir, as a great flag-bearer of Hindutva politics you must know what kind of society ‘Hindu Nationalists’ like you want to usher in. Since you are very busy, I am reproducing from the Code of Manu his prescriptions for Dalits/Untouchables and women. These dehumanizing and degenerate laws, which are presented here, are self-explanatory.

Laws of Manu concerning Dalits/Untouchables.

(1) For the sake of the prosperity of the worlds (the divine one) caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thighs and his feet.

(2) One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudras, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes.

(3) Once-born man (a Sudra), who insults a twice-born man with gross invective, shall have his tongue cut out; for he is of low origin.

(4) If he mentions the names and castes (gati) of the (twice-born) with contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth.

(5) If he arrogantly teaches Brahmanas their duty, the king shall cause hot oil to be poured into his mouth and into his ears.

(6) With whatever limb a man of a low caste does hurt to (a man of the three) highest (castes), even that limb shall be cut off; that is the teaching of Manu.

(7) He who raises his hand or a stick, shall have his hand cut off; he who in anger kicks with his foot, shall have his foot cut off.

(8) A low-caste man who tries to place himself on the same seat with a man of a high caste, shall be branded on his hip and be banished, or (the king) shall cause his buttock to be gashed.

(9) Let him never slay a Brahmana, though he have committed all (possible) crimes; let him banish such an (offender), leaving all his property (to him) and (his body) unhurt.

Laws of Manu concerning Women

1. Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one’s control.

2. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence.

3. Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families.

4. Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.

5. No man can completely guard women by force; but they can be guarded by the employment of the (following) expedients:

6. Let the (husband) employ his (wife) in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfillment of) religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils.

7. Women, confined in the house under trustworthy and obedient servants, are not (well) guarded; but those who of their own accord keep guard over themselves, are well guarded.

8. Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; (thinking), ‘(It is enough that) he is a man,’ they give themselves to the handsome and to the ugly.

9. Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world).

10. (When creating them) Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct.
11. For women no (sacramental) rite (is performed) with sacred texts, thus the law is settled; women (who are) destitute of strength and destitute of (the knowledge of) Vedic texts, (are as impure as) falsehood (itself), that is a fixed rule.

I would like to remind you that a copy of Manusmriti was burnt as a protest in the presence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during historic Mahad agitation in December, 1927.

For RSS Casteism is synonymous with Hindu Nation

Sir, as a loyal, disciplined and committed cadre of the RSS, you must be familiar with the fact that Casteism is the essence of Hindu Nationalism. ‘Guru’ Golwalkar went to the extent of declaring that Casteism was synonymous with the Hindu Nation. According to him, the Hindu people are none else but,

The Virat Purusha, the Almighty manifesting himself […] [according to purusha suktta] sun and moon are his eyes, the stars and the skies are created from his nabhi [navel] and Brahmin is the head, Kshatriya the hands, Vaishya the thighs and Shudra the feet. This means that the people who have this fourfold arrangement, i.e., the Hindu People, is [sic] our God. This supreme vision of Godhead is the very core of our concept of ‘nation’ and has permeated our thinking and given rise to various unique concepts of our cultural heritage.\[^15\]

Sir, please tell me whether you stand with the RSS and ‘Guruji’ or with the Democratic-Secular Polity that has given you your power. This concerns common Hindus and specially women.

I am sorry that my letter is getting long. You will forgive me as I have no other choice as your Reuter interview and other utterances and actions cover a very large canvas. You will appreciate that I am not raising the issue of the 2002 Gujarat Carnage as many other individuals and organizations have been doing. I strongly feel that I must raise those issues which generally are skipped: what is your agenda for the Hindus of this country and for the existing Democratic-Secular polity.

I will end by raising two more issues, Sir.

‘Hindu Nationalists’ celebrate assassination of Gandhi

Nathuram Godse and others who conspired to kill M.K. Gandhi, claimed to be ‘Hindu Nationalists’. They described killing as something ordained by God. RSS celebrated his killing by distributing sweets. Are they not revered by the Hindutva camp? Aren’t you one of them? When you were in

\[^15\] Golwalkar, M. S., We or Our Nationhood Defined, (Nagpur:Bharat Publications, 1939), p.36.
Goa in June 2013 for the BJP executive committee meeting, you sent a message to the ‘All India Hindu Convention for Establishment of Hindu Nation’ organised by the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS). Your message read: “Even though every Hindu conducts himself with love, compassion and intimacy with god, giving precedence to non-violence, truth and “satvikta”, repelling demoniacal tendencies is in our destiny. It is our tradition to remain alert and raise a voice against persecution… Only by protecting our culture, can the flag of “dharma” and unity be kept intact. Organisations inspired by nationalism, patriotism and devotion for the Nation are true manifestations of people’s power.”

You must have sent this intimate fraternal message to the HJS knowing them well. Shockingly, from the same dais in this convention from where your felicitation message was read, one of the prominent speakers, K.V. Sitaramiah, declared that Gandhi was ‘terrible, wicked and most sinful’. Rejoicing the killing of M.K. Gandhi, he went on to declare, “As Bhagwan Shri Krishna said in the Gita, Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinashaya Cha Dushkritam/ Dharamasansthapnaya Sambhavami Yuge-Yuge (For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age) On…30th January 1948 evening, Shriram came in the form of Nathuram Godse and ended the life of Gandhi.”

Let me add that K.V. Sitaramaiah has also authored a book titled ‘Gandhi was Dharma Drohi and Desa Drohi’ in which the back cover matter, quoting from the epic Mahabharat, demands ‘Dharma Drohis must be killed’, ‘Not killing the deserved to be killed is great sin’ and ‘where the members of Parliament seeing clearly allow to kill Dharma & truth as untruth, those members will be called dead’.

Sir, please say if this is not an open call to annihilate those members of Parliament who do not subscribe to author’s definition of Dharma.

Neo-Nazi mass murderer of Norway, Breivik, glorified ‘Hindu Nationalists’

Last of all; kindly tell me how you respond to Norwegian mass killer Neo-Nazi, Anders Behring Breivik, who hailed India’s ‘Hindu Nationalist’ movement as a key ally in a global struggle to bring down democratic regimes across the world. Just before he went to massacre a large number of

17 http://www.hindujagruti.org/news/16527_mohandas-gandhi-was-terrible-wicked-and-most-sinful.html
people in Norway he released a 'manifesto' of 1,518 pages, of which 102 pages dealt with the Hindutva movement of India. It declared support to 'Sanatana Dharma movements and Indian nationalists in general.' This manifesto also laid down a plan of co-operation between Neo-Nazi movements of Europe and ‘Hindu Nationalist’ organizations of India. It said that it was essential that these two 'learn from each other and cooperate as much as possible' as 'Our goals are more or less identical.' This manifesto specially mentioned the names of Hindutva organizations like RSS, BJP, ABVP & VHP in this regard. Importantly, the manifesto pledged military support 'to the nationalists in the Indian civil war and in the deportation of all Muslims from India' as part of a larger campaign to 'overthrow of all western European multiculturalist governments.' I am requesting your response on a matter which, in fact, should have been raised by the Reuter journalists.

I shall be eagerly looking forward to your response. I am sure that with the vast resources available to you, nationally and internationally, it will not cause much inconvenience to your Highness.

Thanking you.

Yours,

Shamsul Islam

Delhi, 17-07-2013

notoinjustice@gmail.com