

# Cultivating inter-faith faith

**TOI** [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/cultural-inputs/cultivating-inter-faith-faith](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/cultural-inputs/cultivating-inter-faith-faith)

Jagdish Batra

July 22, 2021

## Jagdish Batra

Dr Jagdish Batra is a senior academic, currently working as Professor of English at O.P. Jindal Global University, India. He has nearly four decades of teaching and research e [... MORE](#)



The issue of inter-faith trust is a vexed one. Nonetheless, it stares us in the face and has to be addressed if we desire a society in which all communities can live peacefully together. In order to achieve this end, the major communities – Hindus and Muslims have to do a bit of introspection and set their respective houses in order.

The Hindu community is perturbed over the onslaught on its numbers through conversions carried out through allurements, deceit or force. While the use of deceit or force are unlawful and criminal acts and the law of the land has to take cognizance of it, the other methods would surely worry the Hindu society. But the Hindus have to look within at rampant the caste-based discrimination which is the biggest factor leading the marginalized – the so-called lower castes – to think of changing creed. Casteism is an old system probably dictated by the contingencies of some bygone era, but no longer does it have any rationale and relevance. It is against the cardinal principles of Hinduism which believes in that all creations have an element of divinity in them. When all stand equal in the eyes of the Almighty, why should this inhuman practice prevail?

The Muslim community too has to re-consider the practice of Islamic principles in the light of what the Pakistani-Canadian intellectual Tariq Fateh problematizes as ‘Mullah ka Islam’ vs. ‘Allah ka Islam.’ The ancient texts are prone to be interpreted differently by different people, and that holds true for all ancient or even modern faiths. Reader-response is the key factor but at the same time, context has to be kept in mind. The fact is that not all Islamic injunctions are supported by the Muslim community at large. Take, for example, the criminal justice system. When the principle of ‘eye for an eye’ has been shunned there, why can’t there be re-thinking or re-interpretation of other injunctions in a contextual framework.

If we do that, then we shall find there is a lot of meeting ground between the two major communities. There would then be a better understanding of the need for the Common Civil Code which has been supported by various courts in the country, including the Supreme Court which even asked the Central Government to take steps in that direction.

Similarly, population control need not ruffle any religious feathers because it is the dire need at the present moment.

Learning to co-exist peacefully means respecting each other's sentiments and also appreciating logic. In this, history holds a lesson for us. The British were able to sow the seeds of mutual distrust between Hindus and Muslims which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan with the concomitant holocaust of partition. If, at that time, India chose the path of secular polity then it can and has to be realized through a strong commitment. History has brought us to this point and the nasty memories of Partition along with the biases and animosities must be forgotten. If a minority in a locality feels threatened by the majority, it is a blemish on our secular structure. There should be no need for the Kashmiri Pundits, or the Hindus in Mallapuram, or certain parts of U.P. and Haryana to leave home.

Such an atmosphere of trust and goodwill needs the synergy of all stakeholders. The politicians who hold supreme power in our country – barring some exceptions – have disowned all pretences of ethicality and are solely led by the urge to create vote banks based on divisions brought about by misinformed opinions, biases and stereotypes. They would not mind shredding of the fabric of the nation.

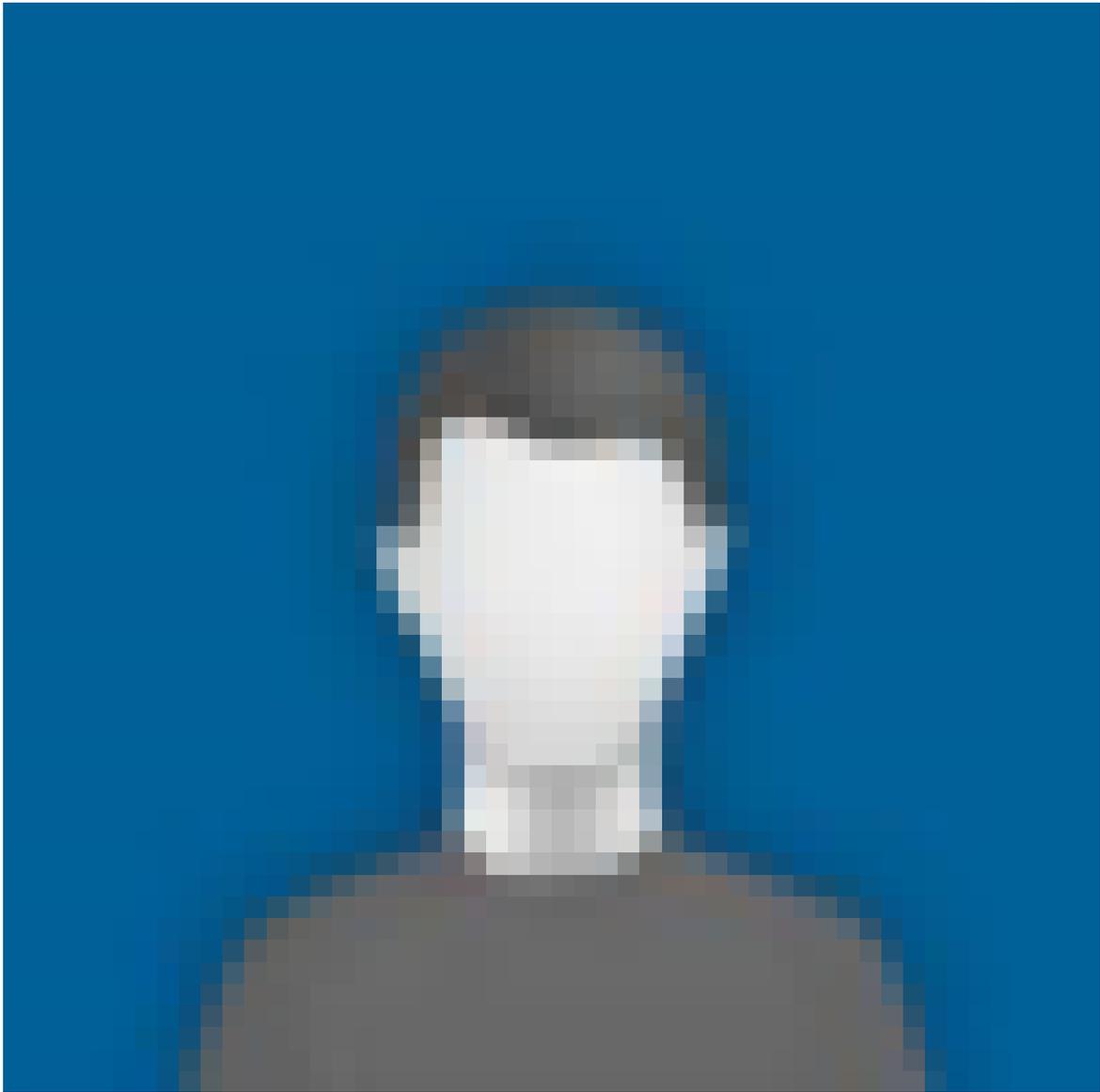
It is the social organizations which can address the need to bring about bonhomie in society. People like Anna Hazare, Kailash Satyarthi, et al have immense goodwill.

Religious leaders and bodies, which have tremendous clout with the general public should take a lead. Unfortunately, we have pampered the politicians beyond all limits and turned them into demi-gods, so much so that even the godmen kowtow the politicians.

But not all fingers are equal in size, as they say. We do have enlightened religious preachers and gurus who can bring about reforms withstanding the wrath of the conservative elements.

Apart from them, the intellectuals on both sides can contribute significantly to bring about understanding between different communities. The only requirement is that they should rise above political considerations and be fair. If stray lynching incident of a person of one faith get highlighted beyond proportion whereas people of another faith leaving en masse does not raise any hackles, then it is a reflection on the intellectual class. Again, a crime is a crime, and an act of terror is an act of terror and has to be condemned without assigning it green or saffron colour, because otherwise the entire community stands vilified leading to deeper divisions in society. It is the intellectual class that creates visible public opinion and can be helpful in building a truly liberal and secular society.

Top Comment



Hanumanta Reddy

511 days ago

Truly its holy & path of universal Brotherhood. Today man does not do what he knows. He is supposed to do what he knows.

Why faith is diminishing? In the early year s of mankind what was the status of faith? We need to compare that with the present status. Did our education system help to cultivate Faith with in us? Years before before there was lack education and yet Faith was at its high. Life was in its true form quite evidently or comparatively. Faith & literal education have no relationship. Rather they are understood as against each other creating a unusual debate.

Add COMMENT READ COMMENTS (1)

Disclaimer

Views expressed above are the author's own.

END OF ARTICLE

WRITE FOR TOI BLOGS

## TOP VOICES

- [Chidanand Rajghatta](#)  
Ruminations,TOI News,Tracking Indian Communities
- [Avijit Ghosh](#)  
Addictions
- [Pooja Bedi](#)  
Heartchakra
- [Indrajit Hazra](#)  
Red Herring

