

# Construction & Deconstruction Of The Other

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**A**yodhya, Palestine, Uri, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen – what was behind the sustained and continuous conflict and clashes? What transforms humans into harbingers of death and destruction? What induces hatred so powerful that the embrace of death becomes the sweet touch of divinity? While answering such questions, in favour of specific political climates, we most often ignore the physiological marvel at work: the creation of the enemy.

The common thread in all these world conflicts is the skilled and nuanced painting of an enemy who can be hated and loathed. The engraving of such an image through rhetoric, visual media and tell tales is the recipe to the perfect disaster, for all conflicts are only dreams till men don't give them the wings of conviction.

So what are enemies made of?

Symbols, views, secrets, needs and absolute darkness. Enemies are painted in dark colours that one's community associates with unpleasantness, forces that induce fear and consequentially hatred along with ideas and habits oppositional in nature to the subject community. But painters who don't shade their perfect paintings with real imperfections don't sell; the enemy thus needs to be located in reality. Symbols and symbolic ideas help in locating the enemy in reality, that is to say, for the entire subject community to be able to identify with the 'enemy', popular symbols adopted by the 'enemy' are fashioned in ways that induce extreme hatred that is based mostly on exploited emotions rather than facts.

However, famous and successful paintings have mysteries and secrets; attempts are thus made by painters of the

enemy to always keep concealed, part of the perceived plan of the 'enemy' to foster a sense of danger against the enemy. Yet the painting isn't complete... it lacks the final touch, the last stroke, it lacks the final sheen that gives the gloss it needs. The final sheen is the transparent gaze tinted with dishonesty, lies and evil.

Emotions powerful enough to move men to action are aroused when

the 'enemy' is seen to be absolutely dishonest, evil and wrong and the subject community is divinely shrouded in truth and justice. This completed picture of the 'enemy' has been germane in the construction and the

continued stability of communities across the spectrum. Through this construction, communities ensure inter-personal solidarity by pitting themselves as one unit against an opposing force perceived to be threat to communal



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harmony. The placement of the fulcrum of unity of a community in its exteriors rather than its interiors makes the community fragile and prone to decay.

In a world torn between massacre and war it's time for communities to locate the source of their unity and stability within themselves. The hard first step must be taken by dismantling the plethora of perceived images of the 'enemy'. A way to this end could be exploring and learning about the cultural and social shades of the perceived 'enemy'.

Let's retell the tales of Yahweh and Muhammad, let's have a rendezvous with the Varuna of Vedas and Kabuliwala of Kabul, let's wash off the painting of the enemy with the spirit of humanity. Let the gaze be transparent and there be no enemy anymore because the painters' hands are now inked with sinister hatred that plagues us from within.

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