

## **Bhagwan S. Gidwani**

Former Additional Director General of Tourism,  
Director General of Civil Aviation India,  
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Author of 'The Sword of Tipu Sultan' and 'Return of the Aryans'.



*History is a documentary of incidents of relevance in any community. This record of achievements in history then becomes a source of inspiration and pride amongst the community in future.*

*The history of Sindhis is replete with narrations of the community's culture and heritage, which is then passed down from generation to generation.*

*Only a minuscule few personalities from the entire Sindhi community have been able to record our history comprehensively. Amongst them one person has been able to conceptualize and present this history in a unique and interesting fashion and he is -*

*Mr. Bhagwan S Gidwani;  
who introduces us to the very origins of our  
Indus Valley Civilization.*

*We have the good fortune of having him with us today, as he has come all the way from Canada to receive the Sahyog Foundation Award for his contribution in the field of research in the origin of Indians.*

*Jawhrani:* Sir, you come from an illustrious family that had taken active part in the freedom movement. Did you personally too, play any role?

*B. Gidwani:* Jawhraniji, I am sorry to say that I personally did not take part in the freedom movement. But yes, my father Shamdass Gidwani was mentor to Veer Savarkar and Bhai Parmanand. He was the President of Hindu Maha Sabha. My uncle, Dr. Choithram Gidwani was also a part of our family and used to live with us. He was the President of the Sindh Congress. When India gained independence, at the cost of partition, both were very much aggrieved. They felt that Indian leaders were desperate to seek power, even at the cost of the division of our motherland. They must have probably felt that time was against them as they were in the twilight stages of their lives. They cared less if Sindh was included in India or not, with the result that millions of Sindhis had to bid adieu to their ancestral abodes, empty handed, and take refuge in unchartered territories of India. They abandoned Sindh, the mother of India, which is Bharat. Sindh had been the abode of Hinduism and Aryans. Sindh had given India the name of 'Hindustan'. It is symbolic of Indian heritage. The land, where Vedas were written, was abandoned without even the blinking of an eye. At that time, I was thirty years old and the tragedy of partition compelled me to think deeper. I felt learning law was futile and a waste of time. I wanted to study about the origin of Sindh and its contribution to the culture and civilization of motherland India. And this determination gained total control over my being.

*Jawhrani:* We are told that our leaders failed to guide us through the tumultuous days of the freedom movement, rather they left us in the lurch and sought power and perks for themselves. Do you agree?

*B. Gidwani:* To a great extent, yes. They were ensconced in their luxurious palaces. They enjoyed power in the wake of independence. Compare it with our own plight; when my uncle Choithram Gidwani died, he left just eighty rupees and a broken watch. Politics was not a lucrative profession in those days and only after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi did it become a lucrative activity. But we should not say that our leaders had taken refuge, rather they benefitted from independence and Partition. They created very good opportunities for their descendants. They sent us to the wolves and it is a fact that they wanted all power for themselves and even more than that...

*Jawhrani:* You mean to say they took these wrong decisions to empower themselves resulting in partition?

*B. Gidwani:* Ram, they took those wrong decisions to gain power! Partition was a great misfortune. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had the audacity to say on the eve of independence, that "It is India's tryst with destiny". Mahatma Gandhi didn't join him in the celebrations as he was very much aware of the fact that as a result of partition, a volcano of blood and gore would erupt and he better be alongside those unfortunate migrants, who had to leave their ancestral homes. Spiritual foundation of India may be strong or you may save yourself from aliens' attacks, but what can you do in case of attacks from internal spoilers. What can one say of them. What has partition done to us! Partition has raised problems, Partition has solved no problem and rivers of blood have flown. And make no mistake; rivers of blood will still flow, because a fatal mistake has been made.

*Jawhrani:* We were promised heaven, greener pastures; we were told that we would get similar rights; but when we came we were termed as refugees, accommodated in dilapidated barracks, where each barrack housed hundreds of refugees. A single room sheltered three to four families. We had to queue for meals and were provided with ration cards for medicines. All the dreams we had harboured were shattered pieces. We became homeless and you too have experienced this for yourself. What were your feelings then?

*B. Gidwani:* Yes, we have been very much a witness to this mayhem. It is unfortunate that our revered national leaders - Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel exhorted Sindhis not to leave their homes, whereas machinations of new dispensation of Pakistan engineered riots, which left Sindhis with no other alternative but to migrate to India.

The aforesaid revered leaders said that they would not do anything for refugees as they were proceeding to India against their suggestions. Luckily, Jairamdas Daulatram and Acharya Kripalani advised Choithram Gidwani to leave Sindh and ensure Sindhis migrate to India; otherwise everyone would have perished in the ensuing communal riots in Sindh. No one was there to help the Sindhis.

*Jawhrani:* Though home for centuries, Sindhi Hindus had to renounce all luxuries and proceed to India as their very honour was at stake. If we glance through the last fifty odd years, we see that our

parents had to literally pass through hell! What are your impressions?

*B. Gidwani:* We were betrayed! When Prof. Ghanshyam Shivdasani and Dr. Choithram Gidwani met Mahatma Gandhi and apprised him of the plight of Sindhis, he declared, "I am a Sindhi". After that the authorities began paying some heed to Sindhis' woes, otherwise Sindhis were just passing through hell. However, let bygones be bygones, we should not complain.

*Jawhrani:* Do you think that undue advantage was taken?

*B. Gidwani:* Yes. The leaders took undue advantage. They were simply unwilling to provide any facility to Sindhis. To survive and prosper in these hostile circumstances was entirely due to our own initiative and enterprise. There was some help from Gandhiji. I light a candle on Gandhiji's birthday, to pay homage and express our gratitude towards him. He was the only bright spot in the otherwise dark life of Sindhis in India.

*Jawhrani:* It is sheer hard work on the part of Sindhis, which leads them to success. We have always penned new and glorious pages in world history. But in India we have encountered a huge loss. Presently, Sindhi is neither spoken, nor read, nor used in official records or homes. Partition has harmed our language and literature a lot. We are now at a stage where we have to inform our children that we are Sindhis and our mother tongue is Sindhi. What is the situation as far as Sindhis overseas are concerned? To what extent do children have regards for Sindhi tradition, culture and language? Do they converse in Sindhi?

*B. Gidwani:* You are right to say that Sindhi language is the life and blood of 'Sindhyat' and others would also agree with you, but what is the ground reality? Our children hardly have any opportunity to study Sindhi language. It's the age of fierce competition. People would not like to lose out in life in their attempt to learn Sindhi language. But I very much agree with you, that if we want to preserve our 'Sindhyat', Sindhi identity, Sindhi culture, and Sindhi affiliations; then Sindhi language must survive. I give you the example of Jews. When Israel came into existence, it became an article of faith in every Jewish family, that every member of the family must learn Hebrew. Not that their intention was to migrate to Israel. No. It was just a matter of faith. The teachers who taught Hebrew became rich overnight. It became the most lucrative profession in the world. Today, you will find every Jew, whether he be in Europe or the USA, speaking Hebrew!

*Jawhrani:* Before asking you about your books, can you tell us about your reaction on receiving the award from Sahyog Foundation, for which you have specially flown to India?

*B. Gidwani:* I have got a vast circle of friends. I have received seven-eight awards in USA too, but I have never gone out of Canada to receive them. You would ask me, why? That is because travel is expensive and exhausting. It takes you away from work. But when Sahyog Foundation invited me I made up my mind to go to India to receive it. That is because I have high regards for Sahyog Foundation. This is not a political organization. It works in the field of culture, education and literature. Fortunately, I have been able to meet other awardees of Sahyog Foundation too. I really wanted to come.

*Jawhrani:* Thank you very much, you had to cross seven seas....

*B. Gidwani:* Therefore, I phoned you and enquired if you could accept a date to my convenience. When you agreed to my proposal, I promptly flew down to receive the award. I am really happy to do so.

*Jawhrani:* Probably, your first book was on Tipu Sultan. There are many other characters in Indian history. Why did you choose Tipu Sultan?

*B. Gidwani:* Since 1947, I was under this perpetual obsession to write on Indian culture. How did India come into existence? How did Hinduism take roots in India in 8000 B.C.? This led to my studying history. When I reached the period of Tipu Sultan, I wondered why the English as well as Indian historians have excessively abused Tipu Sultan. He was the only person who fought twelve wars against the English. He captured many English prisoners of war; one of them being a General. He never joined the English when others like the Nizam and Marathas joined them and fought against Indians. His Prime Minister was a Hindu Brahmin named Purnea. Fourteen, out of the twenty-four ministers of his cabinet were Hindus. Twenty-eight Generals out of the thirty-eight were Hindus. Why did people then call him names? There was even a temple inside his own courtyard and he distributed many jagirs to Hindus; yet people called him a dacoit! Some accused him of forcibly converting Hindus to Islam, which is not a fact. Some of his governors were responsible for that, whereas he himself was an honourable man. Why were Britishers his staunch enemies? He was the only person to have waged many wars against them.

*Jawhrani:* To what extent was this book a success?

*B. Gidwani:* It was a great success, indeed. 250 thousand copies of it were sold in India alone, and around 85,000 copies were sold outside India. Later on, a T.V. serial was made based on it, for which I wrote the script, screenplay, dialogues, which was produced by Sanjay Khan.

*Jawhrani:* Your second book was on Omar Khayyam. Its name flashes intoxication and love across one's mind while your earlier creation was a dry subject. How come this sea-change?

*B. Gidwani:* Everyone needs a diversion. Everybody is a lover at heart, but people have misunderstood Omar Khayyam. He always talked of wine, women and song. What's life - wine, women and song is just escapism from the harsh reality. He, himself was unaware of his life's purpose. He was a sufi saint but did not apply that label to himself. This was his grievance against God. If his complete poetic works had become common knowledge, Islamic nations would have probably got him killed.

*Jawhrani:* Rebellion, of a high degree?

*B. Gidwani:* Yes, extreme rebellion. He was the greatest rebel. He used to address God, thus :

“For all the sins, face of man is blackened  
Man's forgiveness give and take  
God! You also deserve one's forgiveness  
For all the sins, you have blackened the face of man”  
You made man of base and earth  
Oh! Thou.... with base and earth  
Devise the snack”  
This Eden you created made man weak  
You deserve man's forgiveness  
Not the other way around.”

*Jawhrani:* So, you are very much influenced by the philosophy of Omar Khayyam, but coming to the book that created ripples in the entire world - for which you had to go back through centuries to discover the truth and present it in form of “Return of the Aryans” - how much time did you invest in this research?

*B. Gidwani:* If one really takes stock of the time, since I began working on it, then it would be eighteen long years. But I have been thinking about the subject ever since 1947 in which case it would be forty to fifty years invested in the creation of “Return of the Aryans”. I traveled extensively. I had to visit Lithuania, Russia, Iran, Finland and Germany. I collected many songs and then classified all of

them. It took a great deal of my time. In a nutshell, it took me eighteen years to get the material, translate it and then to catalogue it.

*Jawhrani:* Do you feel you have put forth an undisputed fact before the whole world?

*B. Gidwani:* I can't say that because even now many people do not accept my point of view. My theory propounds that Aryans were Hindus, they took birth, grew up and died as Hindus. They adhered to the timeless Sanatan Dharma.

*Jawhrani:* It is said that abundance of everything mellows down a person and he turns towards God. You have also begun research on Gautam Buddha. Can you tell us about your progress, in brief.

*B. Gidwani:* I am not the first person to write on Gautam Buddha. Many more have already written volumes on his person. What strikes me most about Gautam Buddha is that he was a great Hindu. He is a Hindu Avtar! Though many suggested that he established his own order, He always felt:

"You see, I walked on that path,  
Here, I have collected fresh flowers,  
Here, I have collected fresh thoughts."

Hinduism is not a dogma. Hinduism gives you freewill - to think for yourself, to come with new ideas; act, as you wish. And, this is what Gautam, himself felt. He felt that Hinduism had given him every opportunity and he did not want to form a new order. It was his disciples, who wanted that, after his death.

*Jawhrani:* It is great that you write on a variety of subjects, ranging from history to religion. We are indeed grateful to you for your presence.

*B. Gidwani:* Thank you.