

PREFACE
A SAFER, BRIGHTER WORLD
THE MISSION OF K.K. SARACHANDRA BOSE:
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Having been brought up by a lawyer who had a private practice often focusing on defending clients from some of the more predatory practices of insurance companies, and a history of pro bono work in defending the poor and taking on civil rights issues, I was intrigued when I had the opportunity to help edit a new book by K. K. Sarachandra Bose, an attorney from India with many of the instincts and passions of my father.

I went to St. John's College in 1963. Located in Annapolis, the capital of Maryland, I was pursuing a classical education. At that time, Maryland was still segregated and, during my second year, became a center of activity for civil rights demonstrations in favor of passing the Maryland Public Accommodations Act, which was to outlaw segregation in hotels and restaurants. During this time, I participated in one of the demonstrations and found out there was a sit-in in a nearby drugstore which had a counter and some tables for serving customers coffee and ice cream and the like.

The sit-in was dramatic and sponsored by the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), one of the premier civil rights organizations in the United States. The sit-in started when the foolish owners of this little drugstore made the unlucky decision to refuse a cup of coffee to Clarence Mitchell, III, who was the youngest black legislator ever elected to the Maryland House of Delegates. Young Clarence was the

wrong person to refuse to serve during that time, and in minutes the store was drowning in protestors in a sit-in. His brother, who was the head of an NAACP youth group in Baltimore, was at the sit-in, another component of an amazing family of freedom fighters.

After several hours, the NAACP, nervous about attention being diverted from the main goal of the demonstrations—the passing of the Public Accommodations Act—asked us to leave. As we started proceeding toward the door, the owners decided to become aggressive and began picking people up near the door and throwing them into the street. As part of the passive resistance training many of these people in the Movement had received, we did not resist and were hurtled onto the sidewalk where we began to sing “We Shall Overcome” and other freedom songs. The police came, picked us up, threw us into squad cars and arrested us for “disturbing the peace on a public street.”

I wound up in a jail cell with Michael Mitchell, along with fifteen others scattered in other cells nearby. I have to admit that it was all very glorious, incredibly righteous, and we sang freedom songs in jail for several hours, until we were released. I had never felt so, well, morally empowered in my life.

When the trial date came, my father, Robert Shulman, came down from New York to join Michael’s mother, Juanita Mitchell, a lawyer and famous NAACP leader and civil rights leader, to be on our defense team. Her husband, Clarence Mitchell, Jr., was the leading civil rights lobbyist in the United States, helping to pass numerous bills like the 1957, 1960 and 1964 Civil Rights Acts, as well as the 1965 Voting Rights Act. After the trial (Michael and I received probation without verdict, which did not go on our record, and the other peaceful protestors got off), there was a police brutality hearing and I was amazed to see how

powerful Juanita Mitchell was in handling this situation as well.

After the trial, I formed a civil rights organization at my school, which largely helped tutor some of the educationally disenfranchised black children in Annapolis. My father went off to a life of service to the cause, participating in the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) Mississippi Summer Project, helping to protect civil rights workers from police harassment during that troubling time when three civil rights workers were killed. Later on, among other contributions, he taught a class called Poverty and the Law at a University in Long Island with my mother, who was the lead social worker in a poverty agency, providing legal services for the poor. In the last year before he retired, my father handled four police brutality cases—at some danger to himself.

All of these people and other people like them—who devoted their lives to liberating themselves and others—worked in the shadow of Martin Luther King, before and after his death. King's work had been modeled on the work of the great Mahatma Gandhi. The American Civil Rights Movement owed much of its tactics to Gandhi's *satyagrahas*, powerful peaceful protests that turned the British Empire upside down, and propelled India toward independence.

In an era in the United States, when some of the key components of the Civil Rights Movement, like affirmative action and the Voting Rights Act, are being challenged and the elimination of racial profiling of Afro Americans is a *cause célèbre* for those who believe in human rights, it seems, despite the great legislation of the past, there is a great deal of room to go forward in the civil rights movement of the U.S. The proportion of Afro-Americans incarcerated compared to whites is

astounding, as well as the proportions of blacks executed for capital crimes.

And in certain ways, there is a comparison with India. Despite the fact India offered equal opportunity to all and the eradication of Untouchability in 1947 in their Constitution, the reality never caught up with the law. Indeed, caste distinctions and Untouchability still exist in the new millennium, as Bose's new book will clearly show. As someone who has navigated the Indian system of justice for many years, K. K. Sarachandra Bose has decided it is time to make reality catch up to the law, and to make the eradication of caste and Untouchability his first priority. I am lucky to have had the opportunity to preview and help edit this important book. As discrimination must end in the United States, it must also end in the rest of the world. And the destruction of the caste system in India and the curse of Untouchability in India would be a strong message to those who love true freedom in the rest of the world. He is concerned about the way in which Hindu scripture has been misused to justify these human rights abuses, and wishes to see the invigoration of the indigenous religion, Brahmanism, as a means to resurrect the pristine and pure concepts of the indigenous people before imperialistic powers twisted religion doctrine and scripture to their own advantage.

As an attorney and social advocate, K. K. Sarachandra Bose has devoted his life to the poor and downtrodden. But, in his way of looking at things, the concept of giving is not just to impart a temporary fix to a shortage of resources, but rather to look at upgrading the status, value and opportunity of the recipient. He believes that the world is so filled with such great need, and hopelessness is, in part, a spiritual deficiency and an absence of meaningful and nurturing dialog among the people of this world.

In this book, after years of working on many social projects, he has decided to tackle what many feel is the greatest socio-economic and spiritual drain on the nation of India—the caste system and the plight of the so-called Untouchables. This book is an invitation to all its readers to support his efforts to rid his native land of a curse that has economically crippled India's need for advancement as a member of the family of nations. This will be just another step in making this planet a better place to live.

There could be no loftier goal than that. And, therefore, it could be said that the effort of Chairman Bose's work over a lifetime could be stated succinctly as doing everything he possibly can to bring about "a safer, brighter world."

As a business lawyer dealing with prestigious banks and corporate interests of the highest order, Bose understands the rich prerogatives of the wealthy and his natural inclusion in that class of successful business people. But he demurs from wholeheartedly focusing on the comforts and privileges of his social status. Rather, he has leveraged his wealth and time consistently in the direction of helping those less fortunate than himself. He has been for many years, an Advocate with a social mission: to help the downtrodden. Although it is true that a man or a woman can have an impact on society without the benefit of money or political power, it is also true that the world would be a lot poorer than it is without the efforts of a very few wealthy and successful people who regard their social and economic status as simply a means to empower their participation in causes for humanity.

Yet in taking this attitude, Bose is not assuming the attitude that because others are poor, a man should give up everything he has to the poor. He acknowledges a built-in and even natural selfishness as a prerogative of human nature. As he puts it, "There

is a saying, charity begins at home. That means, the fundamental to charity is taking care of one's self, and then taking care of others. If a person forgets himself and indulges in helping others, his actions cannot be considered as charitable as his actions are detrimental to his own self and is as good as a lame person supporting another lame person, or a blind person leads the way for another blind. The best charity thought that one can have is *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu* ('Let the whole world be happy and contented.')

In this sense, Bose escapes the spiritual dilemma of those who disable their ability to give by, in one sense or another, ascribing to the oath of poverty. In these oath-takers' efforts to be "charitable," they violate their own happiness and right to legitimate self-interest. As it says in the Christian scriptures, "Love the Lord thy God" and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Such a view prescribes that to live a truly natural life, one must balance personal happiness with giving to others, and look for a satisfying compromise within oneself to determine that ratio.

There is a very good reason that Sarachandra Bose stresses this balance between self-interest and interest in helping others. The reason is buried in the nature of his childhood in which there were issues spawned by a rather powerful division between these two fundamental aspects of personal commitment in one's life. It was a conflict that could have destroyed his adult perspective and perhaps the meaningfulness and value of his life.

The conflict between commitment to one's self and family and to one's neighbor, extending outward to the world itself, was initially the result of the enormous wealth possessed and utilized by his father, E.K. Kunjuraman, during Sarachandra's early childhood. At that time, his father was an active member of the Legislative Assembly and a dedicated Gandhian politician. His

mother, Karthiyayani Amma, on the other hand, was a deeply religious housewife, attentive to her family's personal needs.

The problem for Sarachandra was not his father's lack of generosity or commitment to the world. It was the fact that his father donated the bulk of his wealth to social causes without considering the future impact of his giving. In other words, he gave so fast and so furiously that he had nothing left over for himself or his family. It was, in fact, a perfect example of the ratio of generosity versus self-interest resulting in profound consequences for the little boy. Yet, despite this problem, Sarachandra's childhood was still an enthusiastic, happy time because, despite the extraordinary consequences of his father's encroaching poverty, at one point, the universe threw young Sarachandra a lifeline.

But, during this period, economic hardship certainly did come his way. By the time Sarachandra was eight or ten, his father had lost his cars and his elephant, a symbol of prestige in the Indian culture he was growing up in. Things were so economically bleak that his mother's property was sold to finance his education. On a personal note, owing to his father's continuing preoccupation with politics and social causes, Sarachandra found himself stranded without proper paternal supervision. His father not only gave away his wealth, he gave away his time. Without some help, Sarachandra might have floundered on the rocky terrain of a life without real moral leadership.

That is where the lifeline came in—in the person of his father's elder brother, E.K. Krishnan, an experienced farmer by trade. His uncle became the desperately needed spiritual and moral mentor Sarachandra needed as he came of age.

As mentioned, despite the difficulties involved, Bose's education was financed. He recounts:

Being bright in mathematics, I got admission in an engineering college, but dissatisfied with my main subject, I left engineering. Then my father found a job for me in a company. I graduated with a BA as an external student while working and earning my own bread, and then did my postgraduate work in law as an internal student. While in Dubai, I earned a diploma in business management from a London school.

For thirty-five years, following his acquisition of a law degree and the license to practice his new profession, K. K. Sarachandra Bose has been carving out a reputation in the business world of Dubai and India. At the same time, has engaged in many philanthropic and humanitarian causes. Even many of the cases he has fought have been related to individual rights, including the need for the state to protect and enforce the property rights of their citizens.

I like the idea of a civil rights movement that respects both oneself and the cause, because a man or woman who truly knows his or her own needs can truly understand the needs of others. True self-knowledge is the key to righteousness and to righteous action. I think true self-knowledge is the mainsprings from which K.K. Bose has been drawing his power and his commitment. His civil rights actions will be based on a true respect for individual freedom to—work, to succeed in one’s career and business, and to be prosperous—in keeping with India getting out of the choking straits of desperate poverty. There has been a strain in the Indian civil rights movement that put a high premium on poverty. As in the United States, the civil rights movement in India must undertake real economic opportunity as one of its main goals.

I am looking forward to big changes in India following K.K. Bose pursuit of his sacred quest.