

TRANSCRIPT

"FREE MARKETS VS. HUMAN RIGHTS: DOES INDIA HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE?"

A conversation With Harsh Mander

Moderator: Sanjay Patil

ANNOUNCER:

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BIPASHA:

On behalf of the Open Society fellowship program and the India program, which is also co-hosting this event, even though unfortunately they can't join us today-- we'd like to invite you to today's discussion on-- the tension between economic liberalization and a rights-based approach to-- development and governance, in the context of India. So first-- I would like to introduce Sanjay Patil, who is moderating today's event. Sanjay's currently a program officer for the International Harm Reduction Development Program-- where he focuses on improving police conduct towards drug users.

But in an exciting development-- he's about to be the strategy unit's new senior program manager in charge of managing all the shared frameworks. (BEEP) So congratulations to Sanjay. Prior to joining O.S.F. he worked as a consultant for U.N.D.P.'s-- police reform program in Bangladesh and has worked extensively on the issue of-- police reform in South Asia.

He's also helped set up the Rule of Law Program of South Asia-- for the International Commission of Jurists, and previously served as legal counsel to the commission of inquiry into the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher-- Arar. With that, I would like to turn it over to Sanjay, who can-- who'll be moderating today's event and who can also introduce our guest, Harsh Mander, who is joining us from India, in fact, has just flown in this morning. So we appreciate Harsh being here-- after a very

exhausting, long plane ride, I'm sure.

SANJAY PATIL:

Thank you, Bipasha (PH). So for those of you who don't know Harsh-- he is a social worker and a writer who is direction of the Center for Equity Studies, focuses on issues such as hunger-- and the right to food, homelessness and poverty, mass violence, and marginalized communities. He's a founding member of the national campaign for the People's Right to Information and previously served on India's National Advisory Council. And-- and somehow in all of that, he finds time to write.

In addition to having a column-- with *The Hindu*-- called *Barefoot*, which I highly recommend all of you read, if you haven't had a chance to look at his columns before. He also writes prolifically in terms of books. And the latest boo-- that-- sort of discuss issues related to social justice. And the latest book that he's written-- is called, *Looking Away: Inequality, Prejudice and Indifference in New India*. And it's made a lot of waves in the media in India. And he's given a number of interviews discussing the book.

And we thought-- that his-- examination of the middle class in India, specifically in terms of how-- there's this contestation of ideas when it comes to governance in India. There's one model of free markets that the economically liberal argument you see in many places, not just in India. But it's starting to really take root in India as a predominating frame.

And then, this other idea of government, you know, really for the people, which is the ethos of how India was founded and sort of h-- how India has deviated from that in the last few years-- in favor of sort of a more economically liberal narrative. And so, the idea here is to look at that question. And Harsh will give an initial ten-minute spiel on that, and then I'll ask some pointed questions to tease out some additional themes from his book-- which is available on Amazon-- Kindle version. So again, I highly recommend people read it after this lecture.

But the idea is to have this be more of a conversation. So I'll ask a few pointed questions, but then we'll open it up to the floor, as well as those on the phone to ask any-- questions, hoping to end at 1:30 knowing that Harsh has-- another commitment. So Harsh. I hand it over to you.

HARSH MANDER:

And Sanjay-- it's a pleasure to be with all of you. (THROAT CLEARING) If I sound fuzzy-- in the course of the next 15 minutes, my excuse is that-- I'm just off a 14-hour flight. But-- but delighted to be among all of you. To go straight into-- you know-- just leap right center into the deep end of the discussion really. Let me say that I think, not just India, but probably every country in the world in the 21st century-- has to deal I think, two really critical questions.

One is, "How are we going to deal with inequality?" And the other is, "How are we going to deal with diversity?" The latter-- the former because-- the kind of-- growth model which is sort of-- almost universal-- in-- you know-- across the world-- which is centered around markets-- with just a few exceptions. There is no doubt that one byproduct-- of it is increasing inequality.

But diversity is also an extremely important question, because more and more populations are moving across borders. And so many countries which are far more homogeneous are actually having to deal with people who look different-- worship differently, dress differently, and-- in many countries I think it is causing a kind of (UNINTEL) alarm. And leading to-- kind of a journey-- about how to be-- you know-- how to be-- live together-- when we are so different. India has actually civilizationally-- perhaps the strongest, longest-- and in many ways-- the finest traditions of-- of living with diversity.

It's-- it's-- it's a civilization-- over the last two to 3,000 years where every major religion has-- has found place. You know, Christianity went-- went-- went to India a thousand years-- before it came to Europe. Islam came shortly after the prophet's death. And so on and so forth. And all of these are religions that have found root in India. And-- and-- and-- people have-- you know, left to themselves, people live together with-- with-- high degree of respect for diversity.

But on the other hand, India's civilization and engagement-- with inequality has been-- has-- you know-- in-- in fact, India's, you know-- civilization which has culturally sanctioned inequality more than most-- as legitimate. And in independent India, I find that-- both of these challenges-- have, you know-- on the-- on-- on the other ha-- on the one hand-- our-- our s-- civilization and engagement with-- with diversity is-- is deeply threatened-- by a new kind of politics-- which is ga-- which has gained strength.

But also the questions of inequality and, you know-- could talk about it later, but my central worry-- in the book that I wrote Sanjay spoke about was what I call "inequality with indifference." The-- the-- not just the facts of growing inequality, but the fact that-- people of privilege-- care less and less. There's much less outreach-- about this inequality. It's being normalized as something that is-- that is-- at least inevitable, if not actually l-- legitimate and-- and-- and even desirable.

All of this is, you know, to-- to-- to sort of-- move towards a subject-- that we were-- that Sanjay suggested that we discuss today. I think we-- we-- we're dealing with a very new imagination of the good state. It's something that has really dramatically altered-- in many parts of the world-- in the course of-- one generation more or less.

I was-- part of a s-- the Indian Civil Service-- bit after the Gujarat-- in-- in Gujarat-- there was a massacre of Muslims, in which the state was complicit. The present prime minister-- was actually the chief minister. And I-- I wrote that it was a state-sponsored massacre, and I felt that I needed to-- stand outside government. But I spent 20 years in government.

And when I entered the Civil Service, there was no doubt that the theory of

government, of good government was that government was best which took sides with the poor-- and the marginalized and-- and the minority, with defended upheld. The rights language was not y-- yet in currency, but-- but the idea of (BACKGROUND VOICE) you know, which-- Mahatma Ghandi-- described once as "wiping a deep te-- tear from every eye--" was I think the central imagination of a good state.

To me, the idea of a good state has altered, you know, almost turned on its head. Because the idea of the good state today is that state is best-- that government is best which-- which works well, best for b-- big business. And-- and we've internalized this almost as an axiom. And perhaps not interrogated the implications of this different understanding. And it permeates, you know, through much of our discourse-- often I think without being adequately interrogated.

Just to take one example, Transparency International when it-- when it-- identifies which are the most corrupt governments-- and it's a very influential-- s-- rating. And India often comes pretty low. Most people don't ask-- "How-- how did you make this calculation?" And-- and first pee-- people don't realize that it is a perception index, rather than based on objective criteria.

But more interestingly, whose perception? And it's entirely a business perception (COUGH) index. And it's also not even-- you know, the street vendor or the small producer-- because they also-- are business. It's really big, formal-- globalized business, and their perceptions. It-- it's as if the principal client of the state today is big business.

And I think that it is that-- that dramatically altered transformation in the idea, in the imagination of the good state that-- as each-- each of our peoples-- in different parts of the world deal with these two principal challenges of inequality and diversity must come to terms with. Must interrogate-- afresh.

In India, you know-- and since, we talk about India-- in different ways, I try to think about how did this really dramatic transformation in the imagination of-- of-- of the good state occur? And somewhere I think, you know-- one way of looking at it is that-- the old ideas of good government actually-- got lost in the rubble of three major demolitions. The first was the demolition of the Berlin Wall. And-- you know, with that-- you know-- un-- under the-- the rubble of that wall-- collapsed not just the most ambitious experiment in human history to build a just and equal society, which collapsed and ended for I think very good reasons.

What was-- what it was interpreted to represent was not the dem-- you know, the dis-- the-- the failure of that-- of that experiment, but the failure of those ideas themselves. That the ideas of justice and inequality seemed to fall into disrepute-- for a whole generation. The second, and that is much more specific to India and (COUGH) local people-- from India or South Asia would understand-- what-- what that is, and I won't spend too much time. But a (UNINTEL) mosque called the Badri Masjid-- was brought down by a mob of Indian nationalists-- and-- and who subsequently came to political power and-- and have come once again-- to political power at the center.

Why that was significant was that really there was a dispute about whether that mosque-- should be replaced with a temple-- a Hindu temple. And-- that became symbolic of actually the terms on which religious minorities-- should live-- in India. And I think that the Indian idea of secularism-- is very different from-- it's closer to the American idea, I think, but quite different from the European idea of secularism.

Secularism in India is not really the denial of faith, but equal respect for every faith. Equal rights of every person to-- to be themselves but also to practice and propagate their faiths. That the state would treat-- you know, it-- that-- you know, in-- in-- in France or in many parts of Europe-- the secular idea would be-- perhaps not to welcome-- woman wearing a Hijab in-- in a (UNINTEL) of this time. In India it would be to defend her as she wear it-- wear the Hijab, regardless of whether you wish to wear it or not.

And therefore, one-- one must recognize that when we use the word secularism-- it-- it has a very different quality. And the-- the-- you know, the-- the movement to bring down that mosque, because it was being-- interrogated by the-- by the courts, and the courts should have decided. And as they decided, everyone should have adhered to it.

But instead-- a mob was mobilized. There was a movement-- a social movement, which brought down-- which killed-- reli-- resulted in-- in-- in deaths and-- and violence between two communities across India and finally the-- the mosque was brought down. Many of us regard that the most tragic day in Indian modern-- Indian history after independence, after-- after Mahatma Gandhi's killing. And so that was the second-- idea-- demolition that I think changed the idea of-- of-- of-- of good government for me.

And the third was-- was right here in this city, the demolition of the two-- twin towers. And I think in that-- in the-- in the rubble of that third demolition, we actually saw-- you know, the rise of militarism-- the-- the rationalization of pulling back, you know-- democratic freedoms and-- and-- and so on in the name of the larger global war on terror.

So-- so we have this new imagination of the good state. And-- and-- and-- and the alternative-- notion that-- that states which are good for markets are-- are good for oil. It is not my claim-- that this is necessarily a crony capitalist idea-- and-- and so on. I mean, a lot of it does translate actually into crony capitalism, into the military-industrial sort of-- complex influencing-- political decisions and so on.

But even at its-- you know-- you know, taking it completely on its face value, the idea is really-- that-- that governments when they try to provision public goods-- to people have always tended to fail-- which has led to corruption and inefficiency. And-- instead, if-- if markets are allowed to flourish at their best-- it will create wealth and it will create jobs in India. And everybody will be better off. And people will have more money in their hands, and then they could buy whatever education and healthcare-- the state was so inefficiently providing in the past. There is that kind of-- of rationalization of that idea.

Empirically-- you know, those ideas have now-- the evidence that s-- many of those assumptions don't-- haven't been borne out by actual-- practice is being recognized in-- unl-- in unexpected circles. I mean, if you read some of the speeches of the-- I.M.F.-- head-- you know, it sounds like-- you know, some left loony-- like myself is sort of making ideological comments.

But actually-- you find that she's saying that, you know, "We were wrong. And we were ideological when we felt that the state withdrawing from the provision of health and education is-- is all right. And it has led to disastrous consequences," for instance. And-- one other thing that-- that I think needs-- (COUGH) needs to be said is that-- in India's, you know, to me the-- one of the most-- the-- the biggest failures of-- this assumption has been-- in-- in the creation of jobs.

In the years 2004 to 2010, India was-- you know, the high noon of India's economic growth. It's really striking that in those six years, the total number of jobs that were-- added were just 3 million, and the number of people added to the workforce was 57 million. Today the number of young people being added to our workforce every month is 1 million. You know, just-- just to-- to-- we're the youngest country in the world. Every second Indian is below the age of 25.

It's a moment that will never be repeated in history, because families are gonna get smaller. I think that, you know, it's-- India's been, you know, once the oldest and-- and the youngest countries at the same time is-- is something (NOISE) that we need to-- to understand. But the important thing is that (COUGH) the years of high economic growth has actually yielded next to no jobs.

And the few jobs that were created have-- I mean, women's employment has actually gone down substantially, for reasons that we haven't fully understood yet. And most of the jobs that have been created have been-- you know, not for-- formal sector jobs but casualized contract labor kinds, (COUGH) very new in-kind of work-- and-- and so on, so forth.

So I think that-- that central assumption and promise that markets are going to in themselves yield jobs and through that people will be better off has not been borne out by the experience. I think that-- that-- that reality is not being adequately-- addressed. And in India-- you know, the-- the reason government-- that was elected last year represents to me actually the convergence of-- of a number of fundamentalisms.

And coming together there rose a particularly-- difficult kind of-- challenge-- to my mind. Because you see the convergence of a certain kind of market fundamentalism. And-- Mr. Modi-- who has become the prime minister, as chief minister actually believed very strongly in-- in-- in-- in a more-- in a greater-- an extreme kind of market fundamentalism. So just to give you one illustration-- the Tartars-- were invited in. You know, there was a long agitation against a small car that the-- that they were building in-- in-- in-- in one of our states-- against land acquisition, et cetera.

So-- Mr. Modi said, you know, "You're welcome. You come in here. I'll give you land

in one month and you can start your factory." And they actually delivered that-- which was quite exceptional. But, you know, through R.T.I. applications people found out the terms. And we found that the tart-- you know, that the kind of investment-- you know, Tartar was investing say X-- X amount of money. Three X was given to him-- given to them-- from public funds-- at 0.1% rate of interest, repayable after 20 years-- and along with free land, water, this one, that one.

You know, one calculation is that 50% of the cost of that small car was actually public money. And-- and therefore not surprisingly, Gujarat was one of the lowest-- the state was one of the lowest in its expenditures in health and education ministries. And if we describe the situation of hunger in Gujarat as being alarming-- you know, much-- just close to India's poorest states-- and this is one of the wealthiest states.

So you know, I think the model-- its implications for both good and bad were-- were dramatically illustrated. But-- you know, a lot of people have lined up behind. I mean, m-- Mr. Obama-- did this very special gesture of writing in-- in *Time Magazine*, which apparently, you know-- an ode to-- Mr. Modi-- recently, for instance. We have most of the European Union.

And-- and, you know, what-- what-- what-- what is being obscured is not just the implications of this model, but also-- which-- which is an even deeper worry, is that this majority in India is not coming alone. You know, it's like one of those deals that you get in a mall where you buy one and you get two free, except that there's a special, you know, deal here that you cannot buy one without buying the other two. You know-- whether you want it or you-- or you don't.

And the other two is-- so there's a market fundamentalism combined with a majority religious fundamentalism, which is the very opposite of the idea of India at-- which I-- I would say is civilizationist-- but which is also-- represented best by Mahatma Gandhi's leadership-- whe-- which is-- in which the majority of Indians, both Hindu and Muslim supported that idea.

That India would be a country where it would not matter which God you worship or if you worship no God-- whether you are man or woman, whether you are rich or poor-- this caste, this language, this community, you would be fully equal-- in-- human being and citizen. And the state would protect you equally.

That is-- you know, that is completely-- the-- you know, the opposite of what the current politics stands for. And-- Amartya Sen somewhere had actually very interestingly said that-- he thinks that-- "One thing that Indian politics desperately needs and-- is-- is-- is actually-- a right-wing, you know, market-oriented political party, which is not-- which is secular." And he said that to somebody on the left-- to-- to say that this is one of the most important things.

Because in India, we actually have-- you know, this majority religion-- and-- and the market fundamentalist thing is going together with a kind of militarist-- yeah-- with a kind of militarist kind of-- so-- so those are the three-- fundamentalism as well, which is a much more ma-- ma-- mature kind of, you know-- "I'll go to war with Pakistan," and-- and so on, so forth. So all of this is come together. And I think it

represents-- and for a segment in-- people in India, but also significantly-- in-- in-- in the nor-- in the countries of the North.

This is the best thing that has happened to India. And-- but-- also it's important to remember we have a first past the post kind of confusing educa-- political-- sorry, electoral system. So only one in three Indians voted in support of this-- these politics. Two voted against. Yet we-- they have an overwhelming majority-- because of the first past the post system.

So-- to my mind, you know, the last point-- and you-- we could carry on. I'm not suggesting that there is actually a contradiction inherent in these two imaginations. I haven't quite figured out whether we can really-- you know, what is a kind of-- of ec-- ec-- economic growth model that is not centered around markets. But I do believe that-- that-- that-- that we-- you know, the idea that what a country needs is-- you know, large, foreign investors coming in and get-- getting the kinds of terms that Tartar got is going to be great news for everybody.

I think that-- that-- that we need to int-- that we need to interrogate that much more carefully. Otherwise the world will change-- beyond recognition very-- very quickly, as it has already done since the collapse of the Berlin Wall. And-- but my feeling is that, at least globally and within my country, we need to decide that-- that there should be at least a floor of human dignity below which no one should be allowed to fall.

And we can debate that socially, culturally-- you know, no-- no child should have to sleep hungry. No child should have to sleep under the open sky. No child should have to go out to work instead of-- in-- in a good school. No old person should have to struggle-- without-- to-- to eat food-- to their last dying day. Some basic things like this. And-- and-- and you-- universal framework of-- of social and economic rights, if you'd like to call it that.

You know, some economists have calculated it would cost about 10% of India's G.D.P. Our tax-to-G.D.P. ratio today is about 14%. It's one of the lowest in the world. And it's-- much of it is in direct taxes, not taxing the rich. So I there's a huge scope to actually-- so even if it went up to 24%, it would still be probably lower than the tax-to-G.D.P. ratio, say, in the U.S. And-- and it's some-- it's a direction that we need to go, I-- I-- I believe. And-- and-- and we need somewhere to reclaim-- the imagination of-- of the good state as being a just and caring state.

SANJAY PATIL:

Great. Thank you Harsh. That was wonderful. And no one would ever imagine you're jet-lagged, based on that very cogent-- presentation. So I think the idea now is for 15 minutes, I'm just gonna ask a few pointed questions, and then we'll open up the floor. So one of the things that-- came out in-- in the talk you just gave is this notion of a good state.

And-- you know, this notion that less government is better government is not

something that has been a unique phenomenon to India. So we see this economic liberalization taking place in a number of different contexts, including this country. And there is a shift in the debate that has occurred. And I-- I liked the way you linked some of these themes to the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the babri masjid, and the twin towers.

But I guess my question is-- you know, to-- in the spirit of this idea of contested spaces that Bipasha-- opened with-- how would you respond to those individuals who would say, "Well, if you look at the economic growth model that's centered on markets; if you look at-- say, even India and how the middle class has increased-- so if you look at what people have access to in terms of-- basic access to food and water-- those essentials has improved since economic liberalization in the early '90s."

So has it reached to all of the people? You outline in your book or even in your discussion today-- no. That there are people who've been absent from reaping those benefits. But one cannot-- turn away from the fact that literally tens if not hundreds of millions of people's livelihood has improved in India now, as compared to the early '90s. So is there not something to be said about just giving this project enough time that-- that if you stick with it, that there will be this equalization that takes place?

HARSH MANDER:

That people's lives have changed since India became free-- is without doubt. We-- life expectancy when the British left in 1947-- the average life expectancy was 35 years. Today it's about 66-- 67 years. But how much of that has happened in the last 20 years? And how much of that happened before is something that needs to be-- looked-- looked at.

And how much of what has happened even in the last 20 years, ha-- has it happened because we still have a counter-veiling-- set of-- political forces, which have tot-- which have built up-- framework of-- of rights-- the right to food, the right to education, the right to work? And how much of it has been the result of markets? I think needs to be much more carefully interrogated.

But, you know, the former-- finance minister, Chidambaram, who is also a very-- sort of avid market-- believer in markets-- as-- as the solution-- was asked, "How long will it take for India's-- you know, through markets how long will it take before poverty goes?" And one mu-- I-- I must underline that the poverty line in India is, to my mind, scandalous. It-- it--

SANJAY PATIL:

The way they define it.

HARSH MANDER:

The way they've defined it. The poverty line is-- you know, 25 rupees a day, which is--

SANJAY PATIL:

Fifty cents.

HARSH MANDER:

Yeah, 50 cents. But-- but more importantly, what it translates into. For instance, is one rupee a day-- on medicine for instance. You can't buy an aspirin for a headache with that amount of money. I think it's built around a normative framework, where you believe it's okay for the poor to live-- live in-- you know, on standards very-- very different from something that is inconceivable to us.

So-- so-- you know, but to come back, he was asked-- so he was talking about that kind of poverty. So let's say, he was saying, the starvation-line poverty-- quite unproblematically he said, "The year 2040." So s-- even the promise, at its best is that this poverty is gonna go by the year 2040. And-- and-- all of us have to think whether that's-- that's good enough-- and fast enough.

It's-- means that almost every living poor person today, we're not even promising them that-- that their lives are going to change in the-- within the-- these lifetimes significantly. The number of people left out of India's growth story is about 800-- 900 million people. The fact that the middle class is 200 million people or so-- which is larger than-- perhaps-- Europe-- et cetera-- it makes India-- that part of India's story attractive for-- for big investment. But what about life for the rest?

And, you know, in my book I've tried to really talk about (NOISE) the consequences of living that unequal life. One-- one of the most painful conversations I think I've ever had in my life is with a group of Dalit women in rural Uttar Pradesh where-- where-- where they were saying the most painful lesson of all that they have to teach their children is the lesson of how to sleep hungry. And-- and that they will be, because, "There'll be many days every month-- every year through the rest of your life when you'll have to sleep hungry."

And-- I mean, just thinking about what that means-- it's not acceptable. And I-- I-- I really feel that-- that the normative frameworks within which we justify this inequality-- as we celebrate markets is what we need to start thinking about. Why is it okay? That India today, alone-- you know, without help from anyone else in the world, India grows enough food and has enough wealth to insure that no one-- should be hungry or malnourished. Still, every second child in India today still remains malnourished despite runaway-- you know, high levels of economic growth. Is that acceptable? Or-- or do we need to-- you know, reimagine?

And it comes to-- you know-- I keep bringing back the normative-- I just illustrate with the discussions. You know, I-- in the National Advisory Council, I was-- I was a member. And-- I was convening the group which drafted the food bill, the National Food Security Act. And so when the act finally reached parliament, a much more watered-down version than what we had hoped for, but still very significant-- 'cause it-- ensures 25 kilos of almost free grain-- to 800 million people-- and free school meals to every child-- maternity benefits for every woman-- across the country-- it-- it was significant-- historical in many ways.

But you know, the-- the week that it was being debated in parliament, there was virtually-- almost no one except Sonia Gandhi I think, who even within the political system of the Congress actually believed-- in-- in the act. That is some of the ironies. So I found myself-- standing-- sitting before television cameras-- almost every night-- that week, trying to defend the bill.

And I found that was fasting-- facing, you know, so much rage from the middle class, including the anchors, who are otherwise okay. And I remember one of the conversations, for instance, was with this-- very, you know, otherwise quite a decent business woman-- who otherwise is quite reasonable and measured. And she turned to me in exasperation and said, "What's wrong with having made money? I've made money-- 'cause I've worked hard. We've done nothing to harm the economy. Why should we be taxed to feed the poor?"

And to my mind, that-- that-- that-- that's really the core question. And I had to-- I responded saying that, "I'm sorry, but the poor work hard-- much harder. They've done even less to harm the economy. And in a good society, people of wealth should be happy to be-- to share some of it, in order to insure that life is more bearable for other people."

But I think that, you know, what has happened-- is-- is-- is the idea of wel-- you know, people who have wealth believe more and more that it is an entitlement. It is not privilege, but entitlement. That they deserve to have it, and those who don't deserve not to have it. And, you know, when I was last here in the U.S., I was talking to somebody who was saying that there's a discussion here about two kinds of Americans. The givers and the takers.

And I think that it's a similar kind of idea-- that-- that people-- you know, who-- who have benefited from-- from this present grow-- growth model-- deserve to be where they are. And those who have been left behind are somehow-- responsible for that. They're the undeserving poor. And-- and-- and I think that-- that-- that-- that the core idea of the equal worth of every human being-- needs to be reclaimed.

And-- Noam Chomsky-- actually said something, which I really liked. He-- he was-- talking about-- social protection. And ultimately we're talking about universal social protection, really. And he said, "The idea of social protection is ultimately the idea that we should take care of each other." And I cannot think of a better definition. (NOISE) And-- you know-- and-- and the book that I've written is actually a defense of the idea that we should take care of each other.

But he goes on to say-- Chomsky goes on to say that, "How will we live in times where this is considered an extremely dangerous and subversive idea?" The idea that we should take care of each other has become a very dangerous and subversive idea, which needs to be crushed at all costs. And-- and-- I know-- and-- and I understand that. So today to write a book which is centered on say the notion of public compassion, it's considered a very sort of-- very sort of brave thing to say. And also s-- deeply subversive. And-- and-- and-- and-- and-- and-- and antagonistic to-- conventional common sense.

And I think that-- that-- you know, what-- when I was growing up in college-- very different times. You know, everybody was some kind of a socialist and used to discuss which kind. And-- and-- you know, because I used to still even then talk about-- socialism with-- in the context of what I call "public compassion" or solidarity or fraternity or-- you know, it was-- humanism. It was considered-- rather soft version and not radical enough.

And that-- that conviction has only deepened. But the world has moved so far that-- that today it's now seen as an extremely radical idea. This idea of social protection. And-- and-- and-- and-- I think that-- that-- that-- that if we believe that we would as human society take care of each other-- we would imagine a different kind of society. And-- and a different kind of state.

SANJAY PATIL:

So I'll ask one more question before I open it up to the floor. And-- and that-- I want to pick up on something you just mentioned here, which is this idea of public compassion. And one of the things you talk about in your book is, "You can't have a just and caring government unless you have a just and caring society." And so one of the things I wanted to ask you is about that. And how do you do that? How do you create the conditions by which society becomes more just and caring?

And, you know, one of the things that people, some people here my know. You know, one of the things I've often said, having worked in South Asia-- and seeing how society sort of orients itself, looks at itself, looks at one another-- it strikes me as odd that a foundation, even like Open Society Foundations typically doesn't really do that much on the changing of hearts and minds of sort of the average individual.

So in tr-- trying to create conditions of-- a just and caring society. And so one of the things I observed in South Asia is, you can v-- very rarely have a conversation that touches on such issues, without talking about faith, without talking about religion. Because that is the way in which people perceive their world and understand their world. And so, you know, interestingly in your book, you don't mention-- you mention caste, but you don't mention karma.

And so this idea of deserving. Like, at least in the Indian context, there is this idea that you have sort of cultivated-- enough good merit that if you're born into a rich context or a rich family, that is the deserving. You've deserved it because of your

previous good deeds. And if you have-- a life of poverty, it's because you've accumulated that lack of merit, in order to justify that.

And so, it seems to me that to create the just and caring society, it seems that you have to touch on people's perceptions of the other through this lens of faith. And I'm just curious what you think about that. Whether foundations, like, O.S.F. or Ford have a role to play in-- in doing any of that work-- in a context like India.

HARSH MANDER:

That's a great question. And as I said, you know, as you also said, I think that's central to some of the questions that I tried to struggle with in-- in-- in this book of mine. What I've said is that this, you know-- I-- I wrote this book for many reasons, but one of the-- the-- the two major sort of-- changes in-- in the way that I understood the world-- which I talk about here-- I've said that up to-- most of my adult life-- in many different capacities-- when I look at-- when I observed an injustice-- I would look at what changes in law and policy-- should-- shu-- shu-- should be brought about in order to change this injustice.

And I said that I continue to-- I would continue to do this. But I realized (THROAT CLEARING) you know, the new realization is that a just and caring state can only be located within a just and caring society. And-- and (COUGH) Michael Sandel right here-- has-- has said that, you know, "We went in for a market economy, and what we are building is a market society." The human relationships are valued in-- in terms of profit and loss.

Now-- a just and caring society-- we-- what we see-- this business about looking at-- at suffering and injustice around us and just turning our faces away-- the-- the loss of any sense of-- of outrage. The conviction that this (UNINTEL) should be changed-- rep-- represents to me many things. But I think that-- you know-- you talked about-- the Indian karma and-- and caste.

I think the Indian middle class represents actually not one but three different normative systems which justify inequality. One of them is the idea of-- of caste and karma, as you say. Basically simply that, the accident of where you are born legitimately would de-- should determine-- the rest of your life, actually. Whether you'll-- will be able to study, how much you'll be able to study, what quality or what kind of jobs are open to you, et cetera, et cetera. And that also includes whether as a m-- man and boy or a girl. So that's one idea.

The second idea is the British class-- idea of the British class system, which we've also absorbed in the middle class. The idea of, you know, ol-- old wealth representing culture and-- and-- and refinement-- compared to, you know, the boorish, sort of uncultured poor. So that's a second set of ideas.

And the third is-- is this new-- newer liberal idea that greed is good, and why should we be ashamed of, you know, flaunting our wealth? So I recall my-- childhood where, you know, it was considered really vulgar to-- to flash-- to wear flashy things, to show

off your car, and to-- Azim Premji, who's like India's Bill Gates-- his wife was once-- we were talking.

I was-- saying something like this somewhere. And she came up to me and she said that when her-- she was born in a rich family. Her-- you know, parents insisted on sending her in a car to school. And she used to feel so embarrassed that she'd get the car stopped a couple of blocks away and pretend she was also walking to school like the others.

Today you'd like to-- you know, show off-- your most expensive car to your c-- classmates. In-- in many different ways-- you know, something, you know, your-- mom-- it was considered elegant to wear a slightly patched suit-- you know, rather than-- you know, there was-- these were ways of-- of-- of-- of at least recognizing that-- your-- that your privilege-- with-- with-- with some humility and with some sense of responsibility-- and-- and-- and respect for people around. Your mother would say, "Don't waste food, because there are hungry kids outside," et cetera.

So those things, you know, we've created a normative framework where we become less and less-- we feel less-- less and-- less of a sense of responsibility. So towards-- you know, the argument that I'm making for what I call public compassion. Firstly, the word compassion I-- I'd like to underline. I'm talking about what I would call egalitarian compassion. Com-- egalitarian compassion is really-- it's not about somebody being up here and somebody being down here and giving. But it's about two equal human beings-- who relate to each other. And one's just had a very difficult life. And you recognize that and you engage and you feel a sense of responsibility with that.

I-- I-- I talk about empathy. And I think empathy needs to be understood. I-- I think we-- you know, the way we are raising young people, and we have one really young one here. I think we need to be really conscious about the conversations we have with young people. I'm having lunch with-- friend here in n-- New York University. I'd come here about a year back and was talking about the homeless. And he was sitting with me. And he said something very interesting.

He said that he'd been teaching-- social work students for 30 years. (BACKGROUND VOICE) And he-- one of the questions he asked them is, "How did your parents introduce you to the homeless?" And-- and he said that, "Predominantly the main-- the-- the-- the dominant way that parents would, is that you see a homeless person and you sort of take your child and protectively sort of communicate that these are dangerous folks--" who, you know-- who you have to be careful about.

Of course, he said there are other examples. Like, some would use it as an opportunity to say, "That's where you'll end up if you get bad grades." (LAUGH) Or something. But-- but, you know, how do we-- in India the way we raise-- the domestic help who-- who works within most middle class homes. I-- it really strikes me, like-- you know, at the age of four, a parent says, "Touch the feet of all the elders." That's a gesture that we do. How that child of four know that all the elders doesn't include the domestic help? And this is that you can treat one set of adults

disrespectfully or command them, et cetera.

You know, we teach inequality-- in-- in-- in a way. So and-- and empathy to me is-- is-- is what breaks down. Empathy is not-- is-- is firstly an act of imagination. And then an act of feeling. You know, the-- what would it be like to be a mother who has to teach her child how to sleep hungry? What would it-- would it really be like for to be a child-- on a cold, winter night in-- in streets of Delhi-- 50,000 kids, not a small number, who sleep under the open sky. You know-- molested through the night. Finding her food in a rubbish heap. What-- what would life look like in those circumstances?

Are we even-- even be-- is-- is that imagination-- at all part of even our discussions? And-- and-- and so on. I think we-- we're raising in-- in India very dramatically so-- the middle class is ha-- you know, we've created a bubble. And we say this often, but-- Arundati Roy said this very wonderfully. She said that, "There's been only one successful secession movement," because we have some violent secession movements-- in India, "And that is the secession of the middle class from the rest of India."

You know, we just created-- you know, we built our gated colonies. We-- you know-- a young child-- today-- will shop in malls, watch films in expensive multiplexes-- go in-- in, you know, very protected-- won't use public transport to go to school or to go anywhere else, would be in these-- you know, very s-- elite schools. Actually, you-- you-- you-- we've created-- a world in which the only poor people that-- that a young-- middle class Indian would encounter would be people whose job is to serve them. Not as-- as equals in any other kind of way. And I think that-- that's-- that's hugely dangerous.

And so the breakdown of-- of empathy. And therefore, you know, we can call it public compassion. We can call it also fraternity. And when-- when India's constitution was written-- Ambedkar who-- who-- who-- who talk-- he said that "We talk about liberty and equality."

But actually, perhaps the most critical of all is the idea of fraternity. The idea-- that we belong to each other. And somewhere that being central to the democratic idea has got lost. And I think we need to reclaim it everywhere in the world.

SANJAY PATIL:

Great. Thank you, Harsh. So-- before we open it up here in New York, I want to give a chance to anyone on the line-- on-- on the phone line to ask a question. We'll take three, and then Harsh can answer them sort of in a consolidated fashion. Does anyone have a question on the phone? No. Okay. So anyone here-- have a question? Yes.

PRASHANT:

Sorry, Sanjay. Can I jump in? I think my phone was on mute.

SANJAY PATIL:

Oh, okay. Sure, Prashant (PH). Go ahead first and then-- we'll go here in New York. So go ahead Prashant.

PRASHANT:

Yeah, sorry-- sorry about that. Just-- just tell me-- I mean, very-- very-- was super interesting Harsh to hear some of his thoughts. I haven't had the fortune to read the book yet. I'm looking forward to it. One thing which-- one-- one of the things that you said right at the beginning. You know, when you give all scale of-- you know-- the-- time.

I mean, you're look-- talking about, you know, processes between cultures and contracts which are thousands of years old. And so what kind of-- I mean, when we start imagining change and social change particularly, what kind of timeframe have we look-- look-- looked at to make sense of some of these things? Because-- I mean, of course when one looks at, you know, five years, ten years, but things look-- things-- things appear in-- in a certain way. When you start looking at things on 50-year perspective, things start looking somewhat different. When you start looking at things from-- 100-year perspective, things are looking very different.

So because in many ways-- I mean, some of-- I think the perspective allows us also to help us think about what can be our-- action as well as expectation. Expectations and actions. So it's just something that would be interesting to hear his thoughts on something like that.

SANJAY PATIL:

Great. Thank you, Prashant. And over here?

FEMALE VOICE:

Oh, my question was-- related to your initial conversation towards the end when you had mentioned that currently India's G.D.-- taxation is 14%. And you were kind of advocating for an increase in that. And I'm curious, how do you imagine that sort of public by-in towards that, given the sort of perceptions of India and the sort of-- management (LAUGH) of-- state funds. And you've kind of wove in throughout your talk the various examples of kind of misuse and abuse of funds. I'm wondering, how do you imagine that sort of public by-in for an increase in taxation?

SANJAY PATIL:

Okay. That's a very good question. Kadip (PH)?

FEMALE VOICE #2:

I'll add one more. And-- and it ties a little bit to the perspective in time. I-- so, like, part of me is always torn, because I grew up in a Communist country and still have some of those scars. And now we struggle so much-- especially in access to healthcare with our new, neoliberal way of-- of doing things. So I'm somewhere stuck in the middle-- torn between the scars left over and the new, very-- very big problems that we face-- especially in access to medicines and public health, which is what I cover. So, in terms of perspective and timeline, how would you-- reconcile some of those leftover feelings and new feelings of sorts? (LAUGH)

SANJAY PATIL:

And Bipasha, go ahead.

BIPASHA:

And I think to add to the other ques-- great questions that were asked as well, and thank you Harsh for this-- very-- interesting conversation. You talk about in the book, and I have to admit I haven't read your full book yet. But I've read-- some parts of it. And you talk about-- the lack of shared spaces between the-- the rich and the middle class and the poor-- especially in the urban context.

In the-- in the ways in which we see inequality-- increasing all over the world-- certainly in very heterog-- heterogeneous-- societies-- diverse societies, how-- do you have thoughts on how to build up-- more shared spaces? Shared-- not just going to schools together and-- and having teachers from diverse communities and so on, but building up true communal spaces that do serve the middle class and the poor? And how do you curb this-- increasing gatedness of the middle class in urban India?

HARSH MANDER:

Thank you.

SANJAY PATIL:

Okay. Those are four very good questions. Harsh, I'll leave it to you to decide whether you want to deal with them separately or sort of combine them in one

comprehensive answer. And just to-- to piggyback on what Bipasha was saying, you flag in your book that the Delhi Metro is, like, one of the few examples of a public shared space. So maybe other examples that are sort of along those lines that maybe answers Bipasha's question.

HARSH MANDER:

Yeah. Well, thanks for very-- very thoughtful questions. I'll really take the last one first, because it's most specific. And-- and the others are-- are-- are much larger. So, yeah, I-- I, you know-- again from my childhood-- just-- my-- my father studied in-- you know, in my father's generation, people studied in common schools, by and large. And maybe, you know, the-- the lowest caste people didn't study at that time. But other people studied together.

That ha-- has completely changed. And-- you know, by the time-- I was growing up, we studied in elite schools. But even though I was in Saint Stevens College, we used public buses. The cinema was a place where-- people-- you know, there was a mixing of classes. There were many contexts in which-- people met together. We really now-- I was-- I teach a course in my old college. They'd asked me, so I tried to take some time off. I've called it *Engaging With Unequal India*. And I remember, you know, in one of the early classes, I said-- "How many of you have been inside a slum?" Really to start a conversation. And zero hands went up.

So then I was-- so I said, "Oh-- well, how many of you have seen a slum?" And I was really amazed that less than half the hands went up, which mean-- I mean, you cannot live in-- in-- in Delhi and not-- not see a slum. But the fact that it doesn't even register to you that this is a set of people living difficult lives-- you know, there's no curiosity, there's no-- that's really where-- where the problem is.

So-- you know, and if-- if-- if I was made prime minister for one day, which is never going to happen-- (LAUGH) probably for the good-- you know, there-- if there was only one thing I could do, I would really-- in India, I would create-- common school system. And I really think that we have to have places where children of, you know, my help-- my-- my-- my daughter and my domestic help's daughter and a street girl should actually grow up together. Hindu and Muslims should grow up together. It is completely, you know, got more and more segregated.

And just because we're here in the U.S.-- there was a very interesting moment-- few-- three-- three or four years ago-- because we passed a Right to Education law, which had a very modest clause. It mostly placed the responsibilities on the government, which says that "Private schools should reserve 25% of their seats for children from disadvantaged backgrounds." And there was such an uproar by-- all the elite schools, which pooled together a huge amount of money, employed-- you know, a battery of the country's most expensive lawyers, to oppose this very modest measure.

And I-- I-- I was really abhorred. And then I found when-- you know, I looked carefully at the arguments. And it was very close to the arguments in the '60s-- when

the desegregation-- of schools happened here. And in a sense that was a moment of desegregation of our elite schools-- in-- de facto. And what-- the arguments that-- you know, were three-- of three kinds. One was that, it-- it-- it-- it's good for, you know, we're-- "We're really worried about the despondent child. They will not be able to adjust-- in-- elite schools, so let's have separate places for them."

The-- there's a huge problem with that, because why should it be the burden only of the disadvantaged child to adjust-- for example. And if you throw children together, there will be problems. But if-- if the-- school really believes in the idea of equality, you can create a genuinely-- e-- equal kind of culture.

The second even more dangerous-- argument, and again was used in the U.S.-- was that, "It'll dilute the merit of-- of-- of these schools." As if merit is something that is sort of the gen-- genetic-- monopoly of-- of-- well-to-do people and that by poor children coming in-- like with black children coming in-- it's going to d-- dilute the merit of these schools. That fact that we are having that kind of argument.

And the third was that, it's the-- you know-- "Private schools are for-- are for profit, and why should the government be imposing its duties on them?" As if selling education and selling soap is sort of not different from each other. But-- so-- so that-- - so-- I-- I do feel that we'll have to start there. And that-- and of course, many other-- - spaces. But I would still say scoo-- schooling, the common school system is-- is where we need to go.

Prashant had talked about the timeframe, and I thought that was-- very thoughtful question. To me, the timeframe has to be with a sense of urgency. I-- I don't think that we can keep telling generations that, "We'll have to wait longer and longer-- for this wonderful outcome." So-- so India, wi-- with the present government-- labor reforms. That's a very interesting word, reforms. We-- we spent much of the 20th century understanding labor reforms to be increasing the protections of people at work. Today that word reforms, labor reform means dismantling those protections-- rapidly. And-- and-- and that was one of the early things that the new government did.

But to put-- put it in perspective, you know-- 90% of India's workforce is still in the informal sector. So we're talking about just 10% work governed by any kind of labor protection. Of that, 6% is government. So we're talking about 4% of the workers actually being protected in any kind of way, very weakly by a very sort of-- poorly-- staffed, and-- and trained-- enforcement machinery.

Why is big capital saying they want even those protections to go, as a condition? I mean, it's basically a condition-- that-- that we want labor reforms. The second thing is that we want-- even less taxation. And-- and really we have much higher indirect taxes. The poor pay far more taxes-- in India than the rich. And the third is that they don't want environmental-- you know, those environmental laws need to be diluted.

Fourth is land acquisition. You know, taking land forcefully. We're a very densely populated country. There's little land. So then, you have to set up industry and urbanize. You have to take away people's lands and on what terms. So that is now

today, in fact, being-- be-- being politically-- debated. So the whole-- the-- this whole idea that-- that we have to-- that the poor will have to keep-- you know, that we're doing labor reforms actually for the benefit of labor.

We're doing-- we're taking away farmer's lands, actually for their own benefit. We're taxing the poor actually for their own benefit, and so on. I think the-- these are arguments that we need to-- you know, to actually interrogate and challenge. And I believe that-- you know, I-- I-- I-- I try to do sort of academic work alongside my writing and my other work directly with people. But the-- I'm really compelled to work on the model case for social protection.

I think that, you know, we really have to work at-- at-- at that level. Why is it-- because, you know, it is easy to make an economic argument that in India, it's really easy and it's-- it-- it-- because if-- our demographic dividend. I mean, if-- if half of in-- India is below the age of 25. But every second person entering the workforce actually is malnourished. And-- and-- and poorly educated. We're losing much of the economic benefit that we could. So equity's actually-- necessary-- even to sustain growth.

I mean, I can make that argument quite easily and compellingly. But I worry about making that argument. Because I'm worried about those people who neither are seen to produce nor to consume and nor to conform. What about those people-- who, for their lifestyle, sexualities-- cultures which are not acceptable to the majority, those who are seen as neither being productive nor-- nor consumers?

So you have to make a moral case about the equal worth of everybody. And-- and the duty of the state towards them. So-- so-- I-- I'm my timeframe is-- is pretty-- is pretty urgent. I-- I-- I-- how many generations are we going to say, "Live with preventable suffering." I've quoted-- study, which somebody asked this question-- an anthropologist in U.C.L.A.-- Akhil Gupta, who asked a very interesting question. "How many people die in India every year of entirely preventable causes, just because they don't have enough food or healthcare, et cetera?" He came up with a conservative figure of 2 million.

Now just to put that in perspective, the number of people who died in the last-- great famine in India when the British were there in '43 was 3 million. So we're talking about 2 million people. The total number of people who die of all natural calamities across the world is about half a million. So is that-- you know, and the fact that there's no outrage. Those lives need to be protected, need to be saved, when we have the resources.

I think that-- that we-- we-- we mustn't talk about, you know, 2040 for starvation to-- to disappear and say "That's all right." And the feasibility of it. You know, the-- some of these ideas and-- I don't know if we have time, but I'll just-- I'd like to talk about, you know, somewhere the middle class in India has-- also forgotten our old ways of giving. And there were some very wonderful cultural ways we haven't learned anew. So we're-- we're-- we-- we're particularly ungiving-- at-- at this moment.

There was the idea of the langar, which-- which really came with the Sufis and then

the Sikhs. It's-- it's-- it's a great idea, because it's basically people share-- and-- it is a community f-- contributions for feeding-- the hungry. But that's-- that's not what is important about it. What is important is that it has to be done with respect and dignity. You have to treat the person who comes in-- and who's hungry-- who may be a beggar-- with the respect that you would give-- give-- give a guest. You have to eat alongside them, and so on.

And these are very beautiful ideas. And of brotherhood and sisterhood and equality, of the 13th and the-- 15th, 16th centuries. Today-- the Sikh temples in-- in-- in Delhi, as I work with the homeless and discovered this and now we've sort of checked it out. We discovered that the destitute are now today not being allowed into these temples. And I wrote about it. And there was a lot of discussion and-- and so on.

And finally-- some of the managers of the Sikh temples said, "You know, you don't understand-- you know, these people, the poor. They s-- smoke and they take drugs. And they drink. And they-- they are dirty. And they defile the temple. How can we allow them in?" And my question to them was, "Were they different--" when-- the first guru was Guru Nanak, who-- "Were they dif-- were the poor different in Guru Nanak's time? And if he felt that the temple was not defiled by their presence, what has changed in 21st century Republican-Democratic egalitarian India?"

So I think that it's not so difficult to find those ideas, even within-- our species. We need to-- and I somehow feel that-- that India-- when we talk about a freedom struggle. I think that the new freedom struggle has to be in the hearts and minds. It's has to be in the conversations we have with our kids. It has to be about the prejudice-- (COUGH) and the indifference that we-- regenerate in new India knowingly-- in-- in-- in the way we raise our young people.

The public by-in for high-- higher tax-- taxation. I think that it has to be firstly that we have to demand it. That I am not prepared to raise-- my child-- so uncaring of what is happening. So I have a stake in the fact that we have a more equal society, for the sake of my own child. You know, there has to be firstly that-- that by-in.

But second, you know, the whole issue of corruption. I think it's really important. I-- I-- I-- I had-- that was one of the many things that I kept-- you know, when I was facing the television cameras. The-- the point was that people say, "What's the point when there's so much corruption and all of it is (UNINTEL)?" So I said, "Okay, there was corruption in defense days. Have we said, let's stop buying armaments until we sort out corruption? Or-- or-- or there's corruption in coal mining, so have we said, let's stop building power plants or drilling oil till we sort out corruption, et cetera?" We-- when there's corruption, we say (NOISE) we use it to veto programs for the poor.

But the rest of all-- dow-- of-- of course we need to deal with corruption. But we are de-- deal with it across. I mean, I think that-- the meltdown-- the economic meltdown in the U.S. was a spectacular example of-- corruption-- you know, I think which has few-- which is-- difficult to match. And-- and so we have to deal with corruption, but we cannot use it to veto programs only for the poor. And I think

that-- that's-- that's-- that's something that I'd-- I'd really like to see. And she went to--

SANJAY PATIL:

She had another meeting.

HARSH MANDER:

She had to have another meeting. So but I'll still try to-- very briefly respond to that. I think that, you know, the failure of the-- the Communist idea was something that I can find answers for in-- in-- Gandhi. Because Gandhi said-- that, "The means have to be compatible with the aim that you're trying to achieve." So we were trying to create the most just and equal society in-- in history by means which were the most unjust and inhuman. And I think it was doomed to f-- to-- to fail.

But those ideas were not flawed in any kind of way. And that we have to reclaim in this, when, you know, picking from the rubble that I spoke about. We have to pick up exactly those ideas and rebuild. But be sure that we have to find ways of achieving justice and equality by means that are just and-- and egalitarian. And that's-- that's really the challenge. And-- and-- and-- and-- and the new shortcuts to this. And-- and I think-- the-- in that the perspective.

And-- I-- I-- you know, I've had Marxist scholars-- you would-- you'd know, Prabhat Patnaik, for instance, we were together. And I-- I was reading, you know-- 'cause he's very hardcore Marxist-- as an economist. And he was talking about universal social protection and I was quite delighted. And this 10% of G.D.P. was his calculation. And-- and he said, "Social protection is a new form of class struggle."

And-- and I said, "Wow. That's-- that's good." And-- you know-- I think that we need to-- let's perhaps agree of-- of looking at this idea that we owe a common responsibility to-- to all. Rich and poor. You know, there's no one who's undeserving. And when I see-- a homeless, mentally ill woman with matted hair and, you know, saliva dripping and covered with grime and lost to the world-- to recognize that intrinsically she has the same dignity as my mother. It's just that my mother had an easier life. And if she was here, and she was there-- you know, this. So I think that this-- this conviction that each human being is-- has an intrinsic equal worth-- is perhaps a beginning point. And compassion and comp-- empathy-- and egalitarian compassion.

SANJAY PATIL:

Well, thank you so much, Harsh. This has been great. I know you had a very fruitful meeting with colleagues-- from the India Program just yesterday in Delhi. And they wish they could've participated, but they weren't able to. So -- but we really

appreciate you-- on a day of travel coming in and speaking with us. So thank you.

HARSH MANDER:

Thank you. And thank you-- thank you, all of you for this. (APPLAUSE)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *