

11-Oct-09

Dear Family,

Greetings. We arrived in Lucknow (4.5 hours ahead of BST) yesterday afternoon after a couple of fairly uneventful flights. I watched 2 films on the flight to Delhi, 'Terminator Salvation' (which is dreadful) and 'Moon' (which is tremendous). Unlike last time, all our luggage has arrived here with us, and no breakages. Daytime temperature 34 deg C, low humidity, so it's nice and hot. Everyone here seems well and happy, and our arrival hasn't triggered any domestic crises... so far, so good! I've got into young Robert's good books (literally) by reading Winnie-the-Pooh to him at bed-time. (For those who don't know, Robert is Sunita's 6-year-old adopted son.) By the time I'd got to Pooh's song about 'How sweet to be a cloud', Robert was asleep. Ha! Currently (6.45pm) Geeta is attending a conference of schoolmasters that has been organised by Sunita, which I have escaped from by dint of accompanying Naniji (Mrs Gandhi) on her own social round. It is a convenient excuse, rather enjoyable and not at all onerous. Sometimes I feel like I'm impersonating Prince Philip or Denis Thatcher!

I hope you're all well,

Much love from Roger xxx

14-Oct-09

Dear family,

I'm still alive! And no illnesses yet, touch wood.

We've just had a typical conversation with Gandhiji. He suggests that we get up at 4am tomorrow in order to do yoga exercises with him. Geeta points out that this might make us a wee bit short of sleep. He says we should go to bed at 8pm. Geeta enthusiastically asks me whether this is possible. I point out that it is 8.15pm and we haven't yet had dinner. Next I expect the clocks will magically gain an hour. So it goes.

Another anecdote. There is a rather seedy cinema near to one of the CMS branches. Gandhiji wants CMS schoolchildren to go to the cinema (for free) to see morally healthy and spiritually uplifting films (possibly of him lecturing to camera, but I may be wrong about that). But the cinema is quite dilapidated, reflecting the type of film usually shown there. So Gandhiji cuts a deal with the cinema owner, in which he refurbishes the cinema at his own expense - new seats, toilets, decor - in return for a free matinee performance of his choice, plus the placing of posters bearing healthy moral sentiments around the cinema. So now the manager of this sleazy (ex-)flea-pit has a big sign on the wall above his desk proclaiming the evils of watching porno films. So it goes.

Much love from Roger xxx

16-Oct-09

Roger's first experience of yoga, 15th October 2009

We got up at 4.45am, left the house in two big air-conditioned 4x4s at 5.15am, arrived at the Gomti Nagar Branch of CMS at 5.30am. The yoga session had already been running since 5am. A large open space under a high corrugated iron roof was occupied with regular rows and columns of willing subjects, about 30 in total. There were several spaces at the front for us (me, Geeta, her parents, and the sleeping Robert, who comes along because he doesn't like to wake in an empty bed). On a dais were sitting cross-legged four gentlemen dressed in white khadi (homespun cotton) demonstrating the various yoga positions. One had a microphone, he told us what to do and what was its significance in relation to the cosmos. I was told afterwards that this man was the local bank manager, and indeed he did have some of the characteristics of Mr Mainwaring. The exercises (as far as I remember them) were as follows:

- (1) Sitting cross-legged, breath in and out making a whooshy noise. Repeat several times while contemplating the immensity of space.
- (2) Sit with the soles of your feet together and hands grasping your toes (the butterfly position). Flap your knees up and down rapidly until you levitate and/or feel at one with the universe.
- (3) Sitting with your legs straight and ankles together, flap your feet around for a bit. Repeat. I missed the significance of this.
- (4) Sitting cross-legged, alternately breath in through one nostril and out through the other, by using (prescribed) fingers to pinch the other nostril closed. Repeat with increasing vigour until both of your neighbours are covered with mucus.
- (5) Sitting cross-legged, place both fists in your diaphragm and collapse forward over it, expelling your breath. This position represents death. Repeat until dead.
- (6) Lying on your back, lift your straight legs up singly and in combination. I could do this move quite easily, and Mr Mainwaring could see this, so he quickly moved on to another exercise having greater cosmological significance.
- (7) Lying on your back, pedal your feet through the air rapidly (without the use of hands to support your back). Repeat, backpedalling. This move represents the fundamental futility of life.
- (8) Lying on your front, grab your ankles and attempt to dislocate several vertebrae. Repeat until successful.
- (9) Lying on your front, attempt several pushups without stiffening your back. This is, of course, impossible. Repeat until stuck.
- (10) Repeat exercise 1. This represents the lack of imagination on the part of Mr Mainwaring.
- (11) Sitting cross-legged, stretch out your hands in front of you and twiddle your fingers. This represents you saying goodbye to the last vestiges of dignity.
- (12) Sitting cross-legged, tie your arms in knots behind your head. Pull the knot tight until you fart involuntarily (several did) and/or your arms come out of their sockets. This position represents the pain beyond which there is no passing.
- (13) Synchronised gnu-honking and expectoration. I'm afraid that Geeta and I got the giggles at this point.
- (14) Sticking out your tongue (haka-style) and staring at Mr Mainwaring, make a scary noise. This is the lion position. It represents dementia.
- (15) Laugh in a desperate Father Christmas ho-ho-ho fashion, flinging up your arms as if to say 'I surrender'. This is the hyena position. It represents hysteria.
- (16) Sing Om in a hummy kind of way, until you hit the precise note of your tinnitus and your head explodes.
- (17) Listen to Mr Mainwaring and his pals sing Om Shanti Shanti Om, clapping the beat using palms stretched open, as if you are trying to catch flies. If you do catch any flies then perform 20 Om Shantis until they are reincarnated as 40W lightbulbs.

(18) Repeat exercise 2 (butterfly position) while saying quack, until Mr Mainwaring remembers what comes next.

(19) Sit cross-legged very still and with eyes closed while Mr Mainwaring attempts to talk you into an out-of-body trance. Basically you have to imagine that you are in a long narrow aisle in Woolworths that is closed off at both ends by the local retards who have been let out for the day. One set of shelves contains plastic weapons of mass destruction and the other contains 'Now That's What I Call Music 101' CDs. Your task is to escape from this aisle of death using whatever powers are left to you following your yoga experience. This represents enlightenment.

(20) Greet the sun. This involves rapidly switching between ten postures, each portraying the dramatic death throes of screen villains such as wicked Sir Guy of Gisbourne, Bill Sykes, Mary Poppins, and so on.

(21) It's 7am and you're saved by the bell. Wander around trying to look innocent and pain-free and nod interestedly when all manner of self-appointed experts tell you where you went wrong. Apparently my lion-roar was inadequate, I didn't stick out my tongue sufficiently. And clearly I shouldn't have left my right arm lying on the ground where anyone could have tripped over it.

After that we went back and recovered with several hours sleep (for Geeta) or several cups of coffee (for me). That was yesterday and my shoulders are still hurting. Geeta refused to repeat the experience this morning. The good news is that there's little wrong with her parents, since they can do all these exercises without any loss of limbs or senses.

Much love from Roger xxx

20-Oct-09

Dear family,

The last four days has been the Diwali (pr. 'Dee-Var-Lee') holiday, featuring more and bigger fireworks than one can possibly imagine, all day and all night, continually for several days. Every household, it seems, had acquired a ton of explosives and set them off from their flat roofs. Every household, that is, except our own. In view of the immense number of explosion-related casualties at this time of year, the government has laid down a number of restrictions, that (of course) everyone ignores except (of course) ourselves. Young Robert got a packet of sparklers but even that came in for disapproval from his grandfather. But, not to be outdone, at midnight Geeta took Robert outside and they watched other people's firework displays for free. Ha!

Young Robert is named after Sunita's great friend Bob Saunders, who is visiting here at the moment...

It's relatively quiet here today, as Robert has gone back to school after his 10-day holiday. In fact there is now a regular pattern and rhythm here that the rest of us would take as normal but here it is entirely novel, in my experience. I think this regularity began a couple of years ago when Mr Gandhi started getting up at 4am in order to undertake yoga exercises. That is now a fixed point in the schedule and to keep it up both Mr & Mrs G go to bed at a relatively sensible time, and they have daytime siestas. In comparison, on every previous visit I have only ever seen a completely haphazard 24-hr pattern of sleeping and working. It also helps that (it turns out) October is a less-busy month here. This is a new experience for Geeta and me, as we have never visited India at this time (since October is usually our busiest time at home). This is Geeta's first Diwali in India for 31 years. Anyway, the upshot is that we are seeing an entirely new aspect of life in 12 Station Road, and it is encouraging to see that it is not as desperate as we had previously thought.

...

Over the last four days Geeta has been accompanying her father, and I have been accompanying her mother, in visiting all the big shots of Lucknow, giving each a present (nicely-wrapped nuts and sultanas) on the occasion of Diwali. My job has been to smile and to flatter each host with compliments that are reasonably-defensible, albeit grossly-exaggerated. And of course one has to eat and drink something lest they force-feed you. I've come to the conclusion that this 'meritorious felicitation' (as Arjun and Roshan are wont to call it) is the Indian version of 'waterboarding'. Still, it's all over now and I'm still alive!

I hope all's well with you,

Much love from Roger.

24-Oct-09

Dear family,

All's well here. On Wednesday the local representative of Allied Publishers turned up and we discussed how best to publicise my book. He suggested that Allied writes to a number of universities and research institutes around the country, announcing that I am ready & willing to visit and give a talk on the subject. So if this happens I may get to see some other places in India, which would be nice. My conversation with the publisher was marred somewhat by the appearance of a large rat on a side table just behind him. Fortunately I was able to keep up an entertaining repartee at the same time as giving the rat a hard stare, so the rat got the message and cleared off without my publisher noticing. Phew. The ayahs have since put down some disinfectant in the vain hope that the rat dislikes the hospital smell and instead goes off to Vinay's side of the house.

Encouraged by this visit from my publisher, I have spent the last 3 days putting together presentation slides for 3 talks that I plan to give at the IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) in Kanpur (about 50 miles away – the Brits used to call it 'Cawnpore' and there was an infamous massacre there during the 1857 revolt – I hope it's improved since then!). The first talk is about my Slam program that I wrote for my MSc thesis, the second is the review of cognitive architectures that I did at Easter, and the third is about the ideas in my book. I hope to give the talks in that sequence, one per week or fortnight, starting on Monday. My publisher will make copies of my book available in the IIT campus bookshop.

Robert went back to school on Tuesday, after a long holiday, but I think the shock was a bit too much for him so by Wednesday evening he'd developed a temperature of 104 deg and so had good reason to stay here and watch TV for 3 days solid. This morning he seems OK again, but I bet his temperature will come back on Monday morning.

Gandhiji went to Delhi on Thursday night, he will return tonight on the sleeper train. He is holding a press conference and various meetings with VVIPs (as Self-Important People are known) in order to impress on the nation the urgent need for a World Government, and India's obligation (under article 51c of the constitution) to bring this about through consultation with the other nations of the world. As it says on the side of the many bright yellow CMS buses that ferry children around the city, "World Unity Education is the need [sic] of the hour". On a different level (but no less important, perhaps) Geeta is having considerable success with her own Unity Education project, viz., getting the various members of the family to talk to one another nicely. Chiefly this involves her reading books to Robert and me helping Sagar with his physics revision. If the children are happy then the parents will be happy...

I hope all's well with you,

Much love from Roger.

27-Oct-09

Dear family,

All's well here... with the usual exception of young Robert, who seemingly can elevate his temperature at will, so he still hasn't returned to school even though he seems perfectly all right at all times except when his temperature is taken. Yesterday I went to Kanpur which indeed has not improved since 1857. The roads are terrible... it's no more than 50 miles, but the drive took 2.5 hrs there and 3.5 hrs back. Part of the drive, through Kanpur itself, was on the 'GT' (the Grand Trunk Road, famously described by Kipling in 'Kim')... imagine a herd of elephants rampaging up and down the potholed track between Tregudda and Lellissick... the elephants are the trucks (trumpeting continually, as per the notice painted on the rear of each, 'Horn Please'), and the potholed track is the GT. Fortunately the IIT is an oasis, a veritable Arcadia, a Garden of Eden amidst this chaotic squalor. It is a completely self-contained campus, well away from the GT, modern buildings surrounded by trees and grass and birdies going tweet tweet tweet... they have a decent water supply and a decent electricity supply and proper offices (one per person!) and computers and SCIENTISTS who aren't frauds or psychos! Amazing, really. So I was able to give my talk on my Slam program under 'normal' conditions, my audience (of about 12-15 staff and students) were able to appreciate it in the normal way, and they invited me back in 2 weeks time to give my other talks, including the one about the ideas in my book. Mission completed.

Tomorrow evening we're off to Jaipur (by overnight train) for a couple of days, in order to attend the wedding of Astha Joshi, aka Anu, who is the daughter of Madhu, who is one of Geeta's cousins. Geeta and I and Vinay and Mona are going. The wedding is scheduled for 8pm till 4am on the 29th - 30th, so not too drawn-out then. I intend to take a good book.

Much love from Roger xxx

30-Oct-09

Dear family,

Yesterday Geeta and I flew to Jaipur via Delhi in order to attend the all-night wedding of Astha Joshi, who is the daughter of Geeta's cousin Madhu. Vinay and Mona also attended, but they travelled by overnight train. We were intending to go by train as well, but there were no berths available. On arrival in Jaipur it became clear why the trains were so busy: there were several hundred weddings taking place in the city that night! Apparently the planets are all in the right places making it a propitious time for getting hitched. So on the way to our wedding venue we saw at least 4 or 5 others in progress, and plenty of fireworks. (In more ways than one: we learnt afterwards that as we arrived in Jaipur a big fuel depot in the city caught fire, killing at least 5 and injuring many others.) While in Lucknow there are always a good number of buffalo pulling heavy carts around, in Jaipur they use camels. Also on this occasion we saw a couple of elephants, but they weren't pulling anything, I think they were on wedding duty (and no pulling gets done at an Indian wedding, oh dear me no.)

So, the wedding went like this:

(1) At about 8pm we gathered to greet the assorted guests. This wasn't a matter of ticking names off a list and making small-talk... oh no... this was a matter of the bride's party (us) standing at the main entrance to a large open space, observing a stream of people coming and going. Whether they were bride's side or groom's side or just freeloaders looking for a wedding with the best food, we had no idea. Eventually the number of guests stabilised at around 300, quite modest really.

(2) At about 9.30pm the food was served, and everyone stuffed their faces as much as possible. This was completely unnecessary as food continued to be available until the ceremony began at around 1am.

(3) At around 10pm the groom's entourage came into view 100yds away, only 30 mins late. The entourage comprised: The groom riding a chestnut nag that had seen better days; A couple of drummers and a trumpeter; A film crew with very powerful hand-held art lights; And a whole bunch of his rellies banghra-dancing whenever they thought they were being filmed. Banghra is a very fast beat popular in NW India, Punjab in particular, and the dancing involves very rapid and fairly uncoordinated movement of arms and legs. The overall impression was of a nervous man on an old horse surrounded by people having epileptic fits that were apparently set off by arc lights. I expected ululation but apparently that's more of a Middle-Eastern thing.

(4) At around 10.30pm the groom's entourage (now 1hr late) finally reached the front entrance. Here they continued to dance for a further 20 minutes, and we joined in a little. As usual all eyes were on me as the token English twit giving it a go for the sake of harmonious community relations. It did cross my mind that I should have worn johdpurs (named after a nearby city), a pith helmet and a monocle, but I needn't have worried. Although most of the men wore Western attire I was the only one with a tie, which was a clear sign of distinction - quite apart from the fact that I was the tallest man there (and the women are all midgets, except circumferentially of course).

(5) At around 11pm the groom finally arrived in the room set aside for photos. Next it took around 20 minutes for the bride to make it the 20yds from her boudoir to the groom's side. More drumming and dancing, 2 steps forward, 3 steps back. They'd have got there faster if they'd walked backwards.

(6) From around 11.20pm to 12.15am: photos. Those guests not interested in photos continued to stuff their faces with food.

(7) From around 12.15am to 1am: The wedding party had their food. Meanwhile most of the guests offered their hearty congratulations and departed (possibly to attend another wedding).

(8) From 1am to 4am: The wedding ceremony. This involved the happy couple and the bride's parents sitting round a pile of burning dried holy cow dung with two pandits (priests). I imagined that they had two pandits because they had specialised roles, one was mainly involved with keeping the holy shit alight, while the other did the Om Shantis... but no, Geeta told me afterwards that one pandit represented the bride and the other represented the groom, presumably to ensure fair play. In any case, the ceremony involved: (i) Making sure that God (in his various male manifestations) is happy; (ii) Making sure that the father of the bride is happy; (iii) Making sure that the brothers and male cousins of the bride are happy; (iv) Making sure that the groom is happy; (v) Making sure that the father of the groom is happy; (vi) Etc etc etc (you get the idea); (xxxix) AT LAST, making sure that the bride is of sound mind and that she is capable of making a rational choice between slavery to her father and slavery to the groom; (xv) The bride leads the groom a merry dance round the fire seven times... well, not so much a dance as a creep... it took at least 20 minutes, with intervals; (xvi) The bride is invited to swap places with the groom, so that he now sits between her and her father. This represents the moment she accepts her fate; (xvii) The groom garlands the bride, which I am told is the precise point of no return; (xviii) There is another 40mins or so of garlanding, present-giving, and what-have-you. NOW, throughout this entire ritual the pandits are Om Shanti-ing and getting the various parties to give each other (and the fire, representing God) various symbolic goods, including a hankie lightly drizzled with holy cow wee, grains of rice, coins, red powder, yellow powder, several bananas, etc etc. But they don't do it for free, oh no. Because with each small transaction there has to be a token payment of 11 Rupees (i.e. a 10 Rupee note and a 1 Rupee coin) to each pundit. So it goes something like this: "Om Shanti Shanti Om, give him the banana, now give me 11 Rupees, plus the same again for me old mucker, thank you, Om Shanti, now take the banana back again, that's another 11 Rupees each, ch-ching!, now let me sprinkle the banana with holy cow wee, that's another 11 for me and 11 for him, thank you, Om Shanti..." etc etc etc. Of course it's the bride's side that has to come up with all these 11 Rupees.

(9) At about 3.30am the bride and groom are allowed to move in the general direction of their waiting car, 20yrs away. Of course this takes some time because someone has hidden the groom's shoes (oh isn't this funny at this time of night, that's another 11 Rupees to get them back again, ch-ching), the groom's mobile phone (oh my sides are splitting with this merriment, 11 Rupees, thank you, ch-ching), etc etc. Then when they get to the car the bride finally breaks down in traditional hysterics. Apparently to dry her eyes, but in fact to egg her on, she is passed from person to person in the bride's family (me included), a bit like Aunt Pettitoes passing round the hankie when Pigling Bland and his hopelessly volatile brother Alexander ("wee wee wee!") were sent to market, except in this case the hankie is the bride herself. She would have got quite damp from all the tears shed over her, were it not for the fact that the arc lights of the still-present camera crew did a grand job of evaporating the moisture. So at around 4am the bride (still gently steaming) collapsed into the car and the happy couple departed for pastures new.

(10) We turned in around 4.30am, secure in the knowledge that we had given the bride a good send-off. Our part was done: her part, however, was not yet over, for I understand that around the same time we were going to bed, the bride and groom were arriving at his parent's house (where they were to live), for another hour or two of welcoming ceremony.

So there you have it. Geeta and I got up at 8.30am and flew back to Lucknow this morning. By coincidence the veteran BBC correspondent Mark Tully was on our flight from Jaipur to Delhi, so at Delhi airport we got into conversation with him, and he and Geeta swapped business cards. He

invited us for drinks when we were next passing through Delhi, “which was nice”, as they say on the Fast Show.

Much love from Roger.

2-Nov-09

Dear family,

Herewith a few (fairly random) observations.

You'll be pleased to know that the large rat has been found dead. Also a couple of mice that were racketing around Komal's bedroom have disappeared. I suspect the benign intervention of a feral cat that has been seen stalking around.

Cats are not seen as household pets here. Instead the maids hiss at them to make them go away. Possibly for this reason, cats here don't behave in the same manner as Jupi, they skulk around trying to be as invisible as possible. Also they meow in a different accent. The meow of an Indian cat is quite rapid and of the same high pitch, a bit like a little dog yapping, whereas Jupi's meows are more considered, conversational, and generally lower pitch.

Coincidentally, perhaps, children here talk in a higher pitch than English children. Indians consider a high-pitched child's voice to be rather sweet, but I'm afraid it sets my teeth on edge. About 5 minutes of young Robert is enough for me, any more than that and I have to betake myself to another room.

There are plenty of bathrooms in this place, but two members of the household, Gandhiji and young Robert, have their favourite bathrooms and, if I happen to be in occupation at the time, they have each been known to disturb my meditations by knocking on the door and asking 'Khon hae?' ('Who's there?'). I don't mind Gandhiji doing it, it's his house after all, but I find it hard to take when I'm sitting there contemplating the infinity of the cosmos only to be interrupted by continual rapping on the door and this little squeaky voice asking me who I am. It's enough to give me existential angst. Who am I, anyway?

I mentioned that cats are not seen as household pets here. Rats, or at least mice, are treated more hospitably. The story goes that the elephant-headed god Ganesh, who is the bringer of wealth and good fortune, and likes his food, had some luddos stolen by a mouse from under his nose (or trunk, I should say). Apparently Ganesh didn't squash the mouse, nor did he run away trumpeting, but he just sat and smiled and had another luddoo himself. That's how it's portrayed in all the pictures and carvings, anyway. Accordingly no-one here showed any concern about the rodents when I reported them. (Indeed, I wouldn't have been at all surprised if someone had put down a saucer of milk for them.) But, as I say, it's fortunate that the local feline has intervened.

Please write back with your news – it doesn't need to be lengthy or momentous – just something to let me know that you're still alive and well and you haven't forgotten me!

Much love from Roger xxx

5-Nov-09

Dear family,

A day spent with Mr Gandhi.

Yesterday Geeta agreed with her father's suggestion to go to the Capitol cinema this morning to watch the children's film put on for free courtesy CMS. In the event Geeta woke up late (because last night she worked till 3:45am), so we only got to see the ending of the film, just before 12 noon. The film was rather exciting. From the little we saw, it seemed that several gundas (bad men) had stolen a gold statue from a village temple and some children were endeavouring to get it back again. There was a chase in boats around very authentic swampland which culminated in a cobra dropping from a tree into the children's boat, but one of them deftly threw it into the gundas' boat, whereupon they panicked and fell into the water. The gold statue was returned to general rejoicing. I think the audience enjoyed the film, there were enthusiastic cheers all round when the cobra unshipped the gundas! Afterwards I was told that many of the audience had been bussed in (by free CMS transport) from surrounding villages, and this would have been their first ever experience of a cinema. And indeed it was clean, tidy, with new seats, and every inch of wall-space covered with posters exhorting right thoughts and deeds. The manager was very happy because with the advent of multi-channel TV very few people were coming to his cinema, but now CMS fills all 825 seats every morning. After the film we waited outside for a while watching some of the children being interviewed for CMS TV, and gave a few encouraging sound bites ourselves.

After the trip to the cinema I was expecting to return to Head Office, but Gandhiji gently suggested that we first visit Lucknow University in order to greet the newly-appointed Vice-Chancellor and invite him to a CMS function. On the way there he said that afterwards we might as well drop in on a CMS press conference in Clarks Avadh Hotel. Right...

At the university, to get to the Vice Chancellor one has to go along a crowded, filthy corridor with walls stained with paan (the Indian equivalent of chewing tobacco) and smelling of urine. His rooms were considerably better, but still the poor fellow looked shell-shocked. He has only recently been appointed, on the basis of academic merit, to a place where (for example) the computing department proudly announces "We have computer"! (And what do they use it for? The university payroll spreadsheet.) He was very pleased to see us, presumably because we can obviously read and write and talk and listen, unlike most of his students and staff.

On the way to Clarks Avadh Gandhiji suggested that afterwards we go to see his yoga guru, Baba Ramdev, who would be making a flying visit to Lucknow later on. Right...

The press conference at Clarks Avadh was to publicise next week's big CMS function, the 15th international 'Quanta' competition for science and technology. Children will be coming from 44 countries. There were a lot of journalists there – 60 or more – because they know that they will get (i) A free lunch, (ii) A free gift (tupperware or a plastic effigy of a god or some such thing), (iii) A pre-prepared press release suitable for putting directly into their newspapers. Geeta suspects that many of the journalists are bogus. Still, it was an impressive turnout. After speeches by Gandhiji and the CMS Principal in charge of this particular event, Geeta and I were put in front of the cameras for another couple of sound bites. Then we joined the feeding frenzy with the rat pack.

On the way to seeing Baba Ramdev we just dropped in to CMS Gomti Nagar branch to have a quick word with the Principal there. Right...

Baba Ramdev is a proper swami dressed in regulation saffron robes. He has a big black bushy beard which disguises his rather horsey teeth and slack jaw. I was a bit suspicious of him, having seen him on the TV having an acrimonious argument with the Indian equivalent of Jeremy Paxman, but in the flesh he was very pleasant and spoke gently and didn't make any outrageous claims. His thing is yoga, and he hasn't branched out into levitation or prophecy or mystic healing – yet. He has a lot of followers, even in the UK: a few months ago they bought him a small island in the Clyde estuary (between Bute and the mainland) for £2m, I remember there was a photo of him blessing the island by performing a yoga handstand (in saffron robes) in the middle of this patch of grass entirely surrounded by water. Under Baba Ramdev's influence Gandhiji restarted 'proper' yoga a couple of years ago, and I must say that he looks very healthy on it. Somehow I don't think it's for me, however.

On the way back to Head Office (at, by now, 6pm) Gandhiji said he would take us to a wedding this evening. Right...

This wedding was quite unusual. It was held at a pleasure palace and gardens about the size of Hyde Park, owned and constructed by the multimillionaire owner of Sahara airlines (the Indian equivalent of Richard Branson). There must have been over 5000 people there. Our entry ticket was Gandhiji himself: he just walked in and we followed, ending up in the VVIP suite with the politicians and mafiosi, with everyone and their granny lining up to greet him and (if he let them) touch his feet. Gandhiji is indeed highly respected here. The 'wedding' comprised an outdoor stage show of dancing girls and lasers, with quantities of very good food: I suspect the Om Shanti bit of it had been done earlier in the day. After dinner Vinay and I went for a walking tour of the premises, we walked for 40 mins and didn't see the half of it. And all lit up like the fleet at Spithead. Meanwhile outside there are limbless beggars. India remains a place of extremes.

Other things that happened in the last day:

(1) Sunita secured her first two contracts for her latest business venture, setting up 'affiliations' with landowners, they provide the school buildings, she provides the trained teachers. This is a big break for her, and hopefully the start of a successful period in her life.

(2) One of the maids, Gyan, was amazed to see me drink coffee without milk. She wondered how it was that my skin was so white, still? (In India people are led to believe that plenty of milk in your tea or coffee lightens your complexion – which is thought to be a good thing.) I answered that my heart was black, which made her laugh. Obviously she thought I didn't mean it.

(3) I have finished reading my stack of William Golding books and sent my verdict to John Carey. Basically, they all confirm what I'm saying in my book: there are five main character-types.

Much love from Roger xxx

8-Nov-13

Dear family,

It's amazing to think that we've been here 4 weeks already. I don't think I've been here this long in a single stretch since 1983 or possibly 1985. And no stomach upsets yet, touch-wood. Geeta has caught a cold, a regular snorter, but it's not flu, thank goodness.

I was in the bathroom recently reflecting on the fact that the Indian equivalent of Armitage Shanks is called 'Hind Ware'. There's a double meaning there, I thought. Then I noticed that we use a brand of toilet paper called 'Spruce-Up'. I checked the wrapper to see if it was made from conifer trees (think about it...), but all I learnt was that it claimed to be "The best way to clean". I don't like to think of the alternatives.

This afternoon I'm off to IIT Kanpur for 3 nights, returning Wednesday pm. I'm giving one talk on Monday am and another on Tuesday am. I'm rather looking forward to it. I'll tell you about it on my return.

Much love from Roger xxx

13-Nov-13

Dear Mum and Dad,

All's well here. I got back from Kanpur on Weds eve., dog-tired from the journey, and I spent yesterday writing a review of 'The God Delusion' for 'The Bahai Studies Review'. It rained yesterday for the first time in weeks, this has cleared the smog out of the air and so we can see the sun again. The smog is caused by the road vehicles and, before it rained, it was the worst I have ever known. Another worrying sign of environmental stress is the rapidly-descending water table. There is a deep tube-well at Head Office that supplies our water. Geeta tells me that it descends 200 ft, but even so, in recent times it has been known to run dry. At IIT Kanpur they have a couple of tube-wells that descend 300 ft. This country is running out of water and one day, perhaps sooner rather than later, there's going to be an almighty crisis.

I told you about the IIT in a previous email, but here's a brief resumee. 'IIT' stands for 'Indian Institute of Technology', there are several of them in various places throughout India. They are elite technical universities and they uphold a world-class standard of teaching and research. IIT Kanpur has a self-contained campus with its own accommodation (including houses for the staff), shops, and visitors hostel. The hostel is very good, equivalent to a decent mid-range hotel in the UK, with en-suite bathroom, TV, kettle, and 3 good meals a day. This is quite unprecedented in India. And the campus is huge, with plenty of space for mature trees and many birds - peacocks, 'babblers' (which are like fat little thrushes, but they hop on both legs, boing boing boing, and go round in gangs, ceaselessly twittering to one another) and mynahs, etc.

My second talk at IIT, on Tuesday, was directly on some of the ideas in my book. The talk went well but sadly the audience was small... just 3 people, of which, 2 were my hosts! Somehow I don't think the campus bookshop will sell many of the 25 copies of my book that my publisher had sent for the occasion. In the end, just before leaving I went and bought 5 copies, just to make the statistics a bit more respectable. Am I disheartened? Not a bit. I have had another very nice email from Professor John Carey (you remember, William Golding's biographer) in which he describes my analysis of Golding's novel 'Darkness Visible' as "very, very perceptive". He sent this email on Tuesday, and on Wednesday he was going to open the Leicester Literary Festival with his own review of 'Darkness Visible'! Some doors close, others open...

Geeta is well, but busy. Yesterday she had an interview with a reporter from the Hindustan Times regarding some of her recent research findings. These are based on a survey undertaken for Geeta that shows that in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar less than half of the primary school teachers can write the correct spelling of words that their pupils are expected to learn, and only 20% of teachers can get the correct answers to their pupils' sums. Quite rightly, this interview has made the front page of today's newspaper.

Much love from Roger xxx

17-Nov-09

Dear family,

Greetings. All's well here. Nothing much has happened here in the last few days, apart from a bit of rain. I see you've had stormy weather, however. And our lodgers in Abingdon tell us that one of our fences has blown over - again. (It's all in hand: we have agreed to pay for a new fence if our lodger engages the services of a local fencing company.) And I see that the actor Edward Woodward, who died recently, resided at Hawker's Cove. I remember he played the central character in a 1970s TV 'dystopian' drama series called "1990" - I was quite hooked at the time. And of course he was in "The Wicker Man" - v. scary movie. I wonder - maybe one of the Hawker's Cove cottages will be put up for sale in the next few months? Not that we could afford it: I see that the old Kingdon family homestead of East Leigh in Coldridge has sold, presumably not far from the advertised price of £595,000. Interesting how house prices are keeping up despite the recession.

Vinay organised a party of us to go and see the movie '2012' last night. This is an extraordinarily predictable but spectacular disaster movie in which most of mankind are wiped out in a flood of Biblical proportions. All the stereotypes are there:

- * The bedraggled middle-aged male intellectual divorcee who is roused reluctantly from his sleep by an alarm / phonecall near the beginning of the film. As soon as this happened I said to Geeta, "Now, he will be the surviving hero-figure." And indeed he was. Check.
- * The crazy loon, who was right all along, but who dies a noble and fearless death. Check.
- * The father-son tearful parting. In this instance it was conducted by phone. As soon as I heard "I love you, Dad" I said to Geeta, "I love you too, son", and indeed it came to pass. Check.
- * The dog that survives. Oh yes, the dog. You just know it has to be there. (See also Independence Day, Pearl Harbor,...) Check.
- * The perfect couple that discover they love one another (cue, lingering kiss) and, by implication, become the new Adam and Eve. Check.
- * The President of the United States of America, a.k.a. Captain Noah. Check.

These films have become consciously self-parodying. But the CGI (computer generated images) are spectacular!

Much love from Roger xxx

20-Nov-09

Morning all!

I learned this morning that I got a Merit for my MSc. This was largely on the strength of my thesis and my two ISOs: my exam results weren't so good, preventing me from getting a Distinction. I thought I did well in the exams, but the truth is that in each exam I wrote down plenty of 'interesting' stuff that didn't answer the question! There is a clear trend, the more I enjoyed the exam (because I was writing interesting stuff), the less well I did in the exam. Still, a Merit's not bad, eh!

Yesterday I accompanied Geeta for a talk she was giving to the Education Dept of the Uttar Pradesh state government. It went well, by the end she had them hanging on every word. We shall see what happens.

The temperature has dropped and it's now relatively cold here. Still not cold enough for socks or a jumper, but quite different from only a few days ago. Everyone is well and happy.

Much love from Roger xxx

25-Nov-09

Dear family,

All's well here. It is 11:09am local time according to my wristwatch or 5:39am GMT according to my computer. I am sitting in the huge auditorium of the CMS LDA branch. ('LDA' stands for 'Lucknow Development Agency', which refers to a large recently-built colony built on the outskirts of Lucknow, between the city and the airport.) The function under way is the CMS-hosted annual conference of schools whose pupils take the ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations. The auditorium is full, there must be at least 1000 schools represented here. The show so far:

(1) The all-religion prayer, featuring CMS children representing Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism and the Bahai Faith. Really rather moving.

(2) A prayer dance by CMS girls, featuring different forms of Indian folk and formal dance including kathak, which involves precise hand movements, foot thumping and eye rolling. Quite sensational when undertaken by 50-plus ten-to-fifteen-year-olds in spectacular costumes and facepaint.

(3) World peace prayer ceremony. 100-plus CMS children in authentic costumes of the different countries of the world, carrying the national flags of the same, parading around to a marching tune.

(4) The lighting of the lamp of learning by the chief guest, Professor Govinda, vice-chancellor of NUEPA (National University of Education Planning and Administration), which is the Indian equivalent of the Institute of Education where Geeta works. Prof Govinda is here at Geeta's request. The lighting of the lamp is followed by music from a marching brass band, helium balloons, garlands, bouquets, and a row of party poppers along the front of the stage, each as big as a siege mortar, let off in a tremendous barrage of noise and smoke. (I am not exaggerating. I am sitting in the front row, and it is terrifying.) On a previous occasion they released live doves which fluttered around the stage, fortunately they didn't do that on this occasion. Although I guess the party poppers would have dealt with them pretty effectively.

(5) Speech by Prof Govinda, describing the recent Right to Education Act, which he helped to draft. Quite interesting!

(6) Speech by a VVIP (i.e. a brain-dead nonentity) who was invited by mistake (not by Geeta), and proved it by speaking on a totally different topic of her own devising.

(7) Speech by Mrs Vrinda Sarup, until recently the Joint Secretary of Elementary Education in the Indian Government – another of Geeta's invitees. Again, very interesting. All to do with current and future education policy and its specific implementation in schools. There is a growing emphasis on 'quality' education rather than (or as well as) 'quantity' education. i.e. not just getting children into schools, but also teaching them something when they're there. (Yes, it is as basic as that.) This new emphasis is due in part to Geeta's research.

(8) It's 11:40am, I'm recording in 'real time', and it's Geeta's talk! So I'll stop typing and listen. (30 minutes later) Well that was good! Of course, that's my girl. Content: Specific evidence from India and elsewhere setting out how to provide quality education. e.g. it helps if the teacher turns up at the school, and it helps if the teacher understands what the children are required to learn, according to the curriculum. Unfortunately, however, regular teachers in government primary schools are

AWOL 25% of the time, and when Geeta tested their performance with questions based on their own pupil's curricula, their average score was very low (below 50%, typically).

(9) 12:10pm (local time). Tea break, 45 minutes behind schedule.

(10) 12:52pm, resumption. Mr Gandhi's speech on the topic of 'Social Responsibility of a Modern School'. He asks: So, what type of people do we want? Education is also responsible for the bad things in the world. As Jesus said on the cross, "They know not what they do". A proper education has material, human and divine aspects. 'Material' is the learning of facts. 'Human' is the learning of behaviours. 'Divine' is the learning of values and goals.

(11) 1:12pm. Slide 2. I know (but the audience does not) that Mr Gandhi's audio-visual presentation has at least 30 slides, so at this rate we should be finished in around 10 hours, i.e. by midnight. Content: recapitulation of (10).

(12) 1:23pm. Slide 6. Estimated time of completion (ETC) 4pm. Content: recapitulation of (10).

(13) 1:36pm. Slide 11. ETC 3:30pm. Content: recapitulation of (10).

(14) 1:52pm. Slide 16. ETC 3pm. Content: recapitulation of (10).

(15) 1:57pm. Slide 21. Now Mr Gandhi is talking so fast that each word is joined to the next and it's impossible to understand what he says. Fortunately he's reciting directly from the screen, so we can read for ourselves. Currently he's reading at 1 slide per minute (another world record for CMS, maybe), so ETC 2:10pm. Content: recapitulation of (10).

(16) 2:04pm. Slide 31. Phenomenal progress, but how many more slides?

(17) 2:05pm. Slide 33. Mr Gandhi says this is his last slide. It is a long prayer in small writing. There is an audible collective groan from the audience.

(18) 2:07pm. Slide 34. More prayers, in even smaller writing. A big groan but no missiles (yet).

(19) 2:08pm. Slide 35. Another prayer. Mr Gandhi offers to let the audience read this slide by themselves, whereupon some people applaud, which he takes as encouragement, so he reads it to them anyway. There is a low rumbling, like that of thunder, or the rolling of tumbrils.

(20) 2:10pm. Slide 36 and the end of Mr Gandhi's talk. A standing ovation! No, my mistake, it's a stampede for the lunch queue, 70 minutes behind schedule. But from experience I know it could have been much worse. And why complain? The entertainment was spectacular (especially the bit where the token white sahib in the front row jumped out of his skin when the big bazookas went off, oh yes, ho ho, very funny), the chairs are comfy, the free food is good...

I'll sign off here and leave the rest of the programme to your imagination!

Much love from Roger xxx

30-Nov-09

Dear Mum and Dad,

I have to go out shortly but I have time for a few quick anecdotes.

(1) Geeta has undertaken a study which shows that, until recently, the average wage of a state primary school teacher was 12,000 Rupees per month. (£1 = Rs 75, so Rs 12,000 = £160.) A 'para' or contract-teacher got Rs 3,000/month, and a private school teacher (in rural areas) got Rs 900/month. But 6 months ago the national pay commission decided that all state employees, including state school teachers, should partake of the nation's increase in wealth, and state school teachers received a pay increase of 115%, backdated by 2 years. Para-teachers get a 20% increase, and private school teachers, nothing at all.

(2) The national 'poverty line' wage is set at Rs 1800/month. If you are below this poverty line you can claim the 'BPL card' which entitles you to discounts on food etc. The only problem is, to get the BPL card you have to pay Rs 2000.

(3) Sunita has just agreed school affiliations with two tannery businesses in Kanpur. One business is called 'Super tanneries'. The other is run by Mr Dooper. Super dooper!

Much love from Roger xxx

2-Dec-09

Dear Family,

All's well here. Geeta is in Delhi for a couple of days (returning tomorrow evening), working hard. My work is of a different kind. As I write this, I am sitting in the front row of the audience of the opening ceremony of the 12th International Conference on Students Quality Control Circle (ICSQCC 2009). 'Quality Control' is an idea from (Japanese) manufacturing that Mr Gandhi realised could be applied to education, to produce what he calls 'Total Quality People' or 'TQP' (i.e. people with right thoughts, right words, right deeds, right values and right aims – the whole package, as it were). This idea has caught on, particularly in the East, and there are 48 different schools plus several dozen people from the manufacturing sector of many different countries represented here. The idea has taken off particularly in Mauritius, which has 200+ schools undertaking some kind of TQP programme. Mauritius has also provided the chief guest of this event, their President, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. The all religion prayer has just finished, performed by 300 junior school children, and now for the prayer dance performed by the same number of senior school children, followed by the world peace prayer ceremony. The 1000-seat auditorium isn't big enough for this event, so we're outside, with the performances on a large floodlit field the size of a cricket pitch. The full moon has risen, currently it looks a bit sick because of the smog, but later when it's higher in the sky it'll be a fine sight. Earlier today in the full auditorium there was a press conference given by Mr Gandhi and The President. The President gave a pretty amazing speech in which he said that the world's problems will be solved only if all children are given quality education emphasising a global consciousness and a commitment to peace, learning, and the solution of problems through collective responsibility and consultation. He proposed Mauritius as model of the kind of multicultural tolerant integrated society that we need throughout the globe.

So now the parading is over and I'm writing in real time again. First, Mr Gandhi's opening speech, mercifully short and to the point (and quite informative, too). Next, the President and his wife light the lamp of learning. Next, the President and his wife, and young Robert (who has run on to the stage wearing a spiderman outfit) let loose the helium balloons. Then the doves. Then the explosions and the brass band, mercifully not under our noses. (Though I notice, with trepidation, that there is a long row of loaded mortars/party poppers 20 ft in front of me all along the front of the audience. They are further away than last time, but on the other hand there are many more of them.) Now the photographs (again). Meanwhile the field is filling with hundreds of tiny tots dressed like fondant fancies. A good time to make my escape, I think!

Much love from Roger xxx

3-Dec-09

Dear Dad and Mum,

...

Today I went with Geeta's parents to meet the Speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in his rooms in the British-built state assembly building. We were with the Speaker for about an hour and a half, he sat there dozing while Mr Gandhi told him (three times over!) about the need for a World Government etc. Eventually the Speaker's secretary said that Mr Gandhi should have been the Speaker, instead of his boss, who hadn't said a word! Afterwards we took a look inside the assembly chamber, many tiers of wood panel seating in a big semicircle under a huge dome - very impressive!

Geeta came back from Delhi this evening, I collected her from the airport at 8pm. She's fine.

Much love from Roger xxx

13-Dec-09

Dear family,

All's well here. There is one more day to go for the Chief Justices Conference, which is Mr Gandhi's big annual event (now in its 9th year). There are chief justices and supreme court judges here from 30 or 40 countries, including many African and Asian countries. The Egyptian deputy chief justice has come for the second year running, and for the first time there are judges from Israel, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Qatar, Benin and South Africa. We have spent quite a lot of time with the Israeli supreme court judge, Mr Elyakim Rubinstein. He has had a quite eventful life. All of his family except him and his parents were killed by the Nazis, and all of his wife's relatives were sent to Treblinka and were seen no more. He has been a senior judge and civil servant for nearly 50 years, and was chief of staff to Moshe Dayan, and Attorney General during Ariel Sharon's government. He was chief negotiator for the Israel-Jordan peace treaty and participated in other peace negotiations with Egypt (successful), Syria (unsuccessful) and Lebanon (unsuccessful). In addition he was instrumental in negotiating a special status for the Bahai International Community in Haifa that is the next-best-thing to independent sovereignty. And he's a great raconteur. For example:

* Eastern European Jews have an expression, "Kill a Turk and rest", meaning (roughly) "Take it easy" or "Sleep on it". This expression comes from a Jewish joke dating from the Turko-Russian war of the 1870s. In those days there were many Jews in the Russian Army. Apparently one of these complained to his mother that he wasn't getting much rest, what with all the fighting and killing. His mother advised, "Take it easy, son. Kill a Turk then rest; then kill another Turk then rest; and so on. You'll be just fine." But her son asked, "What if the Turks try to kill me while I'm resting?" The mother replied, "Now why would they want to do that? You're a good boy, you've done nothing wrong!" That's the joke, anyway. Now the personal anecdote. During the peace negotiations with Egypt the discussions were getting nowhere, and one of the Israeli negotiators inadvertently said to his Egyptian counterpart, "Oh, kill a Turk and rest!". The Egyptian was very surprised. "Why would I want to do that? The Turks are our friends!" Fortunately Mr Rubinstein intervened quickly to say that his countryman meant "Kill a turkey and rest", i.e. after taking on such a big achievement as killing a turkey (metaphorically) one should take a break. Fortunately the Egyptian seemed to accept this interpretation.

* Yesterday afternoon I participated in a discussion aimed at framing a conference resolution suitable for the judges' approval. We got to a particular impasse and the Egyptian deputy chief justice (called Omar Sherif, of course!) suggested that we "sleep on it". So I leaned over to Mr Rubinstein and whispered in his ear, "But don't forget to kill the Turk!"

* Yesterday's resolution-framing discussion was really very interesting. Normally the conference resolutions are extremely vague and 'aspirational' (i.e. either already achieved or completely unachievable, depending on your interpretation), but on this occasion we may do a little better. Last week I drafted a resolution which made some quite specific recommendations, and yesterday Geeta brilliantly got me first on the agenda by (a) circulating copies of my resolution just as the introductory statements were grinding to a halt, (b) suggesting to the chairman that I talk about my resolution, just as the chairman himself was wondering out loud what came next. Anyway, I got my say and that got the ball rolling, then Mr Rubinstein added some constructive comments, then we were off. It was a tremendous discussion. The final resolution won't look anything like my initial draft, but I don't mind at all about that, I'm just very pleased that the various judges were able to get involved in a way that hasn't happened before.

* On one occasion I asked Mr Rubinstein whether he'd seen the 'Lotus temple' (i.e. the Bahai House of Worship in New Delhi, which has the shape of a lotus flower). No. But it reminded him of the following anecdote. As part of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty it was agreed that there should be scheduled passenger flights between Tel Aviv and Cairo. To this end it was agreed to set up a little new airline, because it would be inflammatory to have Egypt Air planes in Tel Aviv or El Al planes in Cairo. The Egyptians suggested calling the new airline 'Lotus Air'. Unfortunately, however, 'Lotus' means 'Can't fly' in Hebrew! So by mutual agreement the name 'Sinai Air' was chosen.

* During yesterday's discussions there was a lengthy period when one of the venerable octogenarians got hold of the mike and couldn't be dislodged. Geeta doodled a swan and a female head with mid-length hair (as usual), and Mr Rubinstein doodled a square man with a square wife and square kids etc. Still no end to the venerable octogenarian's ruminations. So Mr Rubinstein composed a limerick:

All participants each
Yearn to make a speech
But while they so try
Time goes by
And nobody knows who or which.

I'm not quite sure what he means by the last line, it doesn't seem to scan properly or make too much sense, but the rest of it looks good, eh?

Much love from Roger xxx

16-Dec-09

Dear family,

All's well here. Tomorrow we are flying to Delhi where we will spend two nights before returning to the UK. On Friday Geeta is giving a talk at an economics conference. Komal is travelling with us so I expect that she and I will go shopping while Geeta's otherwise engaged. It makes me feel young and groovy to be taken shopping by a streetwise ten-year-old niece!

The Chief Justices Conference has ended in a blaze of publicity - as usual - but for good reason on this occasion, because the conference resolution reached by their lordships is quite special, in my view. For your interest I've copied it below.

I expect that I won't have internet access in Delhi, so this is it until Sunday! We've had a very good time here but we will be very happy to get back home.

All my love,

Roger xxx

RESOLUTION 2009

Unanimously passed by the Chief Justices & Judges of the world attending the 10th International Conference of the Chief Justices of the World held from 11th to 14th December 2009 at City Montessori School Lucknow (India)

WHEREAS, the present world scenario is grim due to the problems of terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental degradation and conflicts between nations and stockpile of nuclear weapons capable of destroying the world;

AND WHEREAS, on one hand, huge resources are being squandered on production of armaments of mass destruction and on other war preparedness, on the other hand, owing to paucity of resources children all over the world are divested of their rights to education, food, shelter and clothing etc and to live-in peace and security to enable them to work for a glorious future;

AND WHEREAS, in spite of the efforts of the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation, there has been large scale violence and wars in which millions of people have suffered heavily;

AND WHEREAS, solution of the present day problems is urgently required and we crave for a peaceful atmosphere, full of love, unity, brotherhood and understanding and a safe future for our own sake and for future generations;

AND WHEREAS, the general assembly of United Nations in its 53rd session was of the consensus that a new political and economic order be established.

Now, therefore we the judges from different countries of the world who have assembled at the 10th International Conference of the Chief Justices of the World at Lucknow, India, from 11th to 14th December 2009, organized by City Montessori School, Lucknow, India having more than 37,000 students on roll in a single city, hereby REAFFIRM the Resolutions and Declaration passed in the previous International Conferences in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008.

AND RESOLVE as follows:-

1. To apprise all the Heads of state/Heads of government to take effective steps to enforce the spirit of the provisions of Article 51 of the Constitution of India without any further delay, and thereby take a lead in creating peaceful and harmonious International conditions.
2. That efforts should be made to revisit the UN Charter with a view to making the UN fully democratic, representative and effective institution for maintenance of peace and security of mankind with the ultimate goal to create one World Government.
3. That all World Laws should be enacted by an elected World Parliament.
4. That a World Court of Justice should be established to enforce the World Laws passed by the World Parliament.
5. That the judges will take steps permissible within their jurisdiction to ensure that the courts should actively champion the protection and enforcement of basic human rights of citizens, especially the rights of children, women and down trodden and ensure through their judgments, seminars, debates etc that the spirit of this conference is accelerated, to bring in awareness amongst the citizens of the world, with special attention to human rights, rights of children, peace education, basic needs of humanity, terrorism, trafficking, environment etc.
6. That the ultimate goal should be to create Universal Brotherhood of Humankind to put an end to all wars, local conflicts, terrorism and any form of violence.