

Ram Lila¹ and the Remaking of a New Caribbean Civilization: Nobel Prize Winner Derek Walcott

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¹ Ram Lila is the annual, folk, amateur, open-air enactment of the life of avatar Sree Ram, as told in Ramcharitmanas. It is a form of Vaishnava devotion and takes place in the sharad navratri period (Oct – Nov) during the popular and ecstatic festival of Navratri dedicated to Shakti or Devi worship (viz. deities of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga, in various manifestations). It runs for ten days with great battles and the grand burning/cremation of Ravan on the tenth day.

Trinidad² is a tiny, almost invisible island on the globe, and the larger of the twin island state of Trinidad and Tobago. It was Nobel Prize Winner Derek Walcott (born in St Lucia but lived many years in Trinidad) who, in 1992, brought this tiny island's open-air Ram Lila to international fame when he crafted his acceptance speech³ around the motif of the open-air Ram Lila. He recognized that this was no ordinary drama.

*People of Indian⁴ Origin (PIO)*⁵ in Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean are largely descendants of indentured laborers. These indentured laborers came from North and South India (though mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century to work on contract on colonial plantations. They expected to return at the end of their agreement/contract to what they called not Bharat desh or India (which was not yet born when they left) but which they lovingly referred to as 'muluk' or 'muluk desh.'

² Trinidad and Tobago lies between Latitude 10°37' N and Longitude 61°21'W, with an altitude of 15 m. The two islands lie off the northeast coast of South America. The larger of the two islands, Trinidad has an area of 5,128 km (1,981 miles), running 143 km (89 miles) north to south and 61 km (38 miles) east to west. The islands are bordered on the East by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Caribbean Sea. They have a tropical climate with two seasons – the wet (June to December) and the dry (January to May). The capital is Port of Spain.

³ Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992.
See http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1992/walcott-lecture.html

⁴ The term *Indian* has political, national and ethnic connotations. It may refer to nationals of India and, in an ethnic sense, to their descendants in the diaspora. The *Caribbean Indian* definition refers to descendants of indentured Indians who came from Hindustan (renamed *India* after Independence) to the Caribbean region during the indentureship period (1845-1917) and citizens of India who might have migrated subsequently. I will use *Hindustan* and *India* interchangeably. The label *East Indian* originated in academia but, generally, *local Indians* do not use it to describe themselves.

⁵ *People of Indian Origin (PIO)* is a term that was coined by Indrani Rampersad (this researcher) and Ravindra Dev (of Guyana) during the late 1980s at a meeting held by *Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)* in New York. We asserted the unique identity of the descendants of indentured Indians born in the diaspora compared with *Non Resident Indians (NRIs)* born in India and living in the diaspora. We determined that the term *NRI* was not relevant to our experience and so was born the term *People of Indian Origin* or *PIO*. It was Ravi Dev that suggested the term *PIO* and we both then agreed to take it forward. *GOPIO* subsequently adopted the term in the context in which we now use it.

Theirs is a story of largely deceptive⁶ labor schemes with contracts that kept them bonded to their plantation owners; of broken promises, broken dreams, and broken hearts; and of creativity, new beginnings, and new dreams. Scripture, literature, and the performing arts provided a major pillar of stability for the *jahaji-s*⁷ (also called *girmitiya-s* and indentured Indians) and their descendants. The Hindus brought the Srimad Bhagwat Purana, Shiva Purana, Sukh Sagar, Prem Sagar, Garuda Purana, and Ramcharitmanas⁸ and the Muslims brought the Holy Quran and Hadith. Hindus would later add other texts from India like the Bhagavad Gita, Vedas, Upanishads and other Puranas.⁹ They came with a rich oral, music, song and performance tradition with both Hindus and Muslims being experts in singing Indian songs like bhajans, qawwali, dhrupad, thumri, and ghazal, for example. They performed dramatizations in nautanki¹⁰ style and had long ten--day Lila-s. These ancestral traditions provided fertile ground on which the *jahaji-s* would forge a new Caribbean identity.

This paper looks at how Nobel Prize Winner Derek Walcott saw Ram Lila as reflecting a people, not in search of a “lost India,” but celebrating a real presence. He saw the remaking of a people and their culture as analogous to putting together the fragments of a broken jar with a love

⁶ Kapoor’s research shows that the indentured laborers in many cases did not know where they were going. Of the 324 Indians on the Salsette that left Calcutta for Trinidad in 1858, less than five knew their destination, purpose and length of stay (in Kumar, Murali, *India in the Caribbean* 2015, 43).

⁷ The *girmitiya-s/jahaji-s*/indentured Indians referred to their motherland as ‘muluk desh’ not Bharat desh or India (which was not yet born when they left).

⁸ Bhakti poet Goswami Tulsidas (c.1532-1623) who wrote the Ramcharitmanas is termed the “Father of Caribbean Hindu Dharma” because of the immense impact of the text and its traditions on the *jahaji-s* and their descendants. It is India’s famous epic written in the sixteenth century in the then popular Avadhi language. It is the story of Sree Ram, worshipped by many Hindus as an avatar of Lord Vishnu, and inspired by the original story as told by Sage Valmiki and called Ramayana.

⁹ Parasram, Rampersad Pandit, Dr. "Religious Texts that came with the Indentured Indians ." Telephone interview. 12 Feb. 2016.

¹⁰ a popular form of folk entertainment in North Indian villages. It incorporates music, dance, song, humor and drama and is based on popular folk themes.

that was stronger than that “which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole.” This metaphor parallels that of the Japanese art of *kintsugi* or golden joinery where broken pottery is put back together carefully with a mixture of gold and other elements. The philosophy is about embracing a broken history by making the repair process and new elements part of the history of the pot – not rejecting the broken pot – but of turning it into a new work of art. As Walcott had noted, the love in this process was stronger than the love for the unbroken pottery. He saw a similar process of life and creativity in Indians and Africans – all remaking themselves and, in the process, remaking a Caribbean civilization.

Derek Walcott put the Indian face of Trinidad and Tobago on the international stage when he used *Ram Lila* as a metaphor for re-making a new Caribbean civilization in the wake of European colonization. In an instant, he brought fame to this tiny island and the significant contribution that Indo-Trinidadians/Tobagonians were making in the process of identity formation in the region.

“Here in Trinidad I discovered that one of the greatest epics of the world was seasonally performed, not with that desperate resignation of preserving a culture, but with an openness of belief that was as steady as the wind bending the cane lances of the Caroni plain. . . . I am only one-eighth the writer I might have been had I contained all the fragmented languages of Trinidad.

“Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.

St Lucia born, Derek Walcott, 1992 Nobel Laureate in Literature. Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1992/walcott-lecture.html

“Deities were entering the field. What we generally call "Indian music" was blaring from the open platformed shed from which the epic would be narrated. Costumed actors were arriving. Princes and gods, I supposed. What an unfortunate confession! "Gods, I suppose" is the shrug that embodies our African and Asian diasporas. I had often thought of but never seen *Ramleela*, and had never seen this theatre, an open field, with village children as warriors, princes, and gods. I had no idea what the epic story was, who its hero was, what enemies he fought, yet I had recently adapted the *Odyssey* for a theatre in England, presuming that the audience knew the trials of Odysseus, hero of another Asia Minor epic, while nobody in Trinidad knew any more than I did about Rama, Kali, Shiva, Vishnu, apart from the Indians, a phrase I use pervertedly because that is the kind of remark you can still hear in Trinidad: "apart from the Indians".

St Lucia born, Derek Walcott, 1992 Nobel Laureate in Literature. Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992.
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“Everything in the *Ramlila* had been transported from India in the memories of people. And though as theatre it was crude, and there was much that I would have missed in the story, I believe I understood more and felt more that I had done during *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Sixty Glorious Years* at the local cinema. Those were the very first films I had seen, and I had never had an idea what I was watching. Whereas the *Ramlila* had given reality, and a lot of excitement, to what I had known of the *Ramayana*.

“The *Ramayana* was the essential Hindu story. It was the more approachable of our two epics, and it lived among us the way epics lived. It had a strong and fast and rich narrative and, even with the divine machinery, the matter was very human. The characters and their motives could always be discussed; the epic was like a moral education for us all. Everyone around me would have known the story at least in outline; some people knew some of the actual verses. I didn’t have to be taught it: the story of Rama’s unjust banishment to the dangerous forest was like something I had always known. It lay below the writing I was to get to know later in the city, the Andersen and Aesop I was to read on my own, and the things my father was to read to me.

“When my father got a job on the local paper we went to live in the city. It was only twelve miles away, but it was like going to another country. Our little rural Indian world, the disintegrating world of a remembered India, was left behind. I never returned to it; lost touch with the language; never saw another *Ramlila*.”

Trinidad born VS Naipaul, 2001
Nobel Laureate in Literature
In Naipaul, V. S., and Pankaj
Mishra. *Literary Occasions: Essays*. New
York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Here are two Nobel Laureates from the same part of the world, having lived in the same country, one an insider to the Ramayan Tradition (Naipaul), the other an outsider (Walcott), and each having a different perspective on the open-air Ram Lila. Walcott saw the LILA¹¹ style of telling the story of Ram, as not about recalling a “lost India” but, rather, as “a single gasp of gratitude,” and “celebrations of a real presence.” Naipaul acknowledged the personal impact of Ram Lila on him, but saw it as part of a “disintegrating world of a remembered India.” Nonetheless, he admitted that Ram Lila helped him to “feel” and “understand” more about the Ramayana than what he could “feel” or “understand” about the western films like “The Prince and the Pauper” and “Sixty Glorious Years”¹² that he had seen.

Tulsidas had taken the original Valmiki Ramayan and created a new and unique version, based on the old story, to suit *desh-kaal-paristithi* (geography, times, special circumstances). The new text was called the *Tulsi Krit Ramayan* or *Ramcharitmanas*. So too, Ram Lila reflects the re-creation of identity in time and space – of adapting and shaping an antecedent culture to suit diasporic space and time.

Liminal Ram Lila space became a healing space for the *jahaji-s*. Here they could experience their cosmic realities and physically travel through their *muluk desh*¹³ that was physically mapped out in the Lila Ground and walk in the footsteps of Sree Ram. When they

¹¹ In the LILA performance style, the story is presented through mime according to theatre conventions that are amateur, folk, simple and realistic for communicating meaning that cater to the tastes of the common folk (*lokadharmi*) and held in open-air performance sites. The performance is an act of Vaishnava (devotees of Lord Vishnu and the avatars) devotion and aimed at devotees. This is in contrast with the professional, dramatic/theatrical conventions of the proscenium stage, that use stylized movements, gestures and symbols for communicating meaning, and cater to connoisseurs (*natyadharmi*) who are not necessarily devotees.

¹² Naipaul, V. S.-, and Pankaj Mishra. *Literary Occasions: Essays*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

¹³ The *jahaji-s* referred to their motherland as ‘*muluk desh*’ not *Bharat desh* or *India* (which was not yet born when they left).

remembered their motherland with despair, sadness, and hopelessness, they could find solace in this Ram Lila space to which they made an annual pilgrimage, not having *seewala-s*¹⁴ and mandirs in early times. Just like Ram, they too were in exile, overcoming obstacles along the way. A major theme was always that of victory – of return to Ayodhya, of overcoming hardships.

For today's Indo-Trinidadians/Tobagonians, that "Ayodhya" is no longer the physical one of the *jahaji-s-s*. It is the "Ayodhya" that Naipaul reached when he appreciated how Ram Lila helped him to understand the Ramcharitmanas better. It is the "Ayodhya" that so many descendants of the *jahaji-s-s* reach when they can positively and psychologically connect with India as the ancestral land, and heal any psychic rupture that they might have.

Many *India Indians*¹⁵ tend to view *local Indians*¹⁶ (and others in the indentured diaspora) as a people frozen in the static memory of a nineteenth century rural Hindustan/India from where their ancestors came. It is an uneducated dismissal of the struggles, achievements, and creativity of the *jahaji-s* in lands cut off from India by time, distance and communication.

Dismissing the *girmitya-s* as stuck in some frozen mold is a form of elitism that looks down on and fails to see the vibrancy of the rural and folk traditions of India. This judgment embodies prejudices of *varna*¹⁷ and cultural differences since the vast majority of *jahaji-s* were


¹⁴ Seewaala is derived from shiva-alaya – the abode of Shiva. Early seewaala-s were humble structures of mud walls, dirt floor and thatched roofs, aesthetically in harmony with the rural environment. The deity of worship is Shiva.

¹⁵ *India Indians and India People* are terms that People of Indian origin in the Caribbean used to designate people who are born in India.

¹⁶ *Local Indian* is a term used to designate descendants of people born in India.

¹⁷ The terms *caste* and *varna* have not been translated adequately in the English language and in western academia, thereby distorting their meaning. See this attempt to correct distortions. "[T]he word "caste" should not be conflated with the indigenous Indic *jati / varna / kula* system. 'Caste' derives from the Portuguese word 'casta' and describes something distinct from the *jati / varna / kula* system, which is a complex and ancient socioeconomic ordering system that developed in various manifestations within Indian society over thousands of years. The European concept of "caste" is not an accurate term to describe this indigenous Indian system The *jati / varna/kula* is determined by a number of factors namely birth, clan, quality, conduct,

of the lower *varna*-s. A similar elitism exists amongst the *jahaji*-s, though caste/*varna* is no longer functional in most aspects of life, retaining a diminishing ritual status amongst the majority of Hindus in the Caribbean. It was the so-called lower castes/*varna*-s of the chamars, for example, that sustained the Indian folk culture and performing arts in the Caribbean.



It needs to be reinforced that Hinduism came to the West not with Swami Vivekananda (who went to Chicago in 1893) but with the indentured Indians/*girmitiya*-s/*jahaji*-s who first came to the Caribbean in 1838 (Guyana – 1838; Trinidad – 1845 and Suriname – 1873)

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spiritual knowledge and profession. It is not determined by birth alone as perceived in certain quarters.... The original system of jati / varna has been corrupted and distorted in practice over the course of history, primarily due to the destructive influence of colonialism and systemic destruction of traditional institutions of Dharma over many centuries” (Waves 2011).¹⁷ For more, see Jain, Pankaj. "Varna and Jati: Social Structure of Hindus." For more, see *Welcome to Dr. Pankaj Jain's Blog*. N.p., 10 Oct. 2010. Web. 24 Mar. 2009.

The tangible and intangible cultural elements of the *Caribbean Indians*¹⁸ are marked by factors of retention, change, adaptation, creativity and something deeply emotional and psychological. These factors have given *Caribbean Indians* their unique identity - connected to an India of the past and present, but rooted in the lands of their birth or domicile, be it in the Caribbean or the large, twice-removed, very visible diaspora in North America and parts of Europe (like Britain and Holland).

Walcott wrote:

“ It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.”¹⁹

The analogy parallels that of the Japanese art of *kintsugi* where the artist repairs a broken ceramic piece, using a lacquer based glue mixture of gold, silver or platinum. The aim is to integrate this glue into the object being repaired without seeking to disguise it, resulting in a new piece that is more beautiful than the original.²⁰ This process describes a similar “beauty” in the *Caribbean Indians* and *Africans* engaged in the post-colonial process of reassembling pieces of memories and practices broken off from colonial India and Africa.

When the *jahaji-s* in Trinidad started forming free communities in the 1800s after their indentureship ended, they relied on the memories of village India for their social, religious and political institutions, values and so on. It is a miracle that India needs to celebrate - when its poor

¹⁸ *Caribbean Indian* is a term that refers to People of Indian Origin who are citizens of any Caribbean country.

¹⁹ Walcott, 1992.

²⁰ Jobson, Christopher. "Kintsugi: The Art of Broken Pieces." *Colossal* (web log), May 8, 2014. Accessed January 15, 2017. <http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2014/05/kintsugi-the-art-of-broken-pieces/>.

and downtrodden of colonial times, mainly of the lower *varna-s*, could remake a life based on Indian values and culture in lands so far away.

The *jahaji-s* recouped core institutions like joint family²¹, *panchayat*²², *pandit*²³, *imam*²⁴, *jamaat*²⁵, *mandir*²⁶, *katha*²⁷, *yajna*²⁸, and performance traditions, for example. They used their traditional knowledge (like wet rice farming, pottery making, adobe hut construction, and brick making) and entrepreneurial spirit to catapult themselves into a business class. Women took to running small shops, selling crops from their kitchen gardens, and selling in what we call “the market” (a common place where farmers and vendors come to sell their “goods” to the public).

²¹ The joint family is a family structure where family members of three or more generations live together under the same roof with their spouses and children. The lifestyle is defined by cooperative living, shared incomes, common kitchen, and shared living space. Today, the joint family has given way to extended and nuclear styles of family structures but family members tend to remain emotionally close and continue to support each other, despite geographical distance.

²² The *panchayat* is an Indian social institution that the indentured Indians brought with them to the Caribbean. It is an assembly of five elders coming from within a community. This group not only mediated in conflicts but also ensured that social norms and cultural values were upheld by members and they would impose sanctions for breaking community rules. The *panchayat* no longer exists amongst Indians in the Caribbean.

²³ In the Caribbean, the “*pandit*” is a title given to one who performs rites and rituals (including lifecycle ones), who combines roles like a spiritual counsellor, personal spiritual guide or guru, singer, astrologer, and learned enough to read, interpret and teach from the sacred texts. In the latter role, the *pandit* is called a *vyasa*.

²⁴ The *imam* is a Muslim religious leader who leads the prayer in a *masjid/mosque*.

²⁵ In the Caribbean, *jamaat* usually refers to an assembly of Muslims in a geographical region. It may also refer to a “community,” “group” or “assembly” of Muslims not necessarily confined to a geographical area.

²⁶ *Mandir* is a Hindu place of worship and abode of a deity.

²⁷ *Katha* refers to a musical and ritual style of telling sacred narratives from scriptures like *Ramcharitmanas* and *Purana-s* to devotees. The narrative is told by a learned *pandit/vyas* who offers commentaries that reflect different levels of interpretation of the text. *Katha* also refers to rituals of fasting and sacred story telling like the *Satyanarayan vrat katha* that includes a fast and *puja* and commentaries by the *pandit*, after which a white *jhandi* is raised.

²⁸ *Yajna* is a sacred ritual performance dating to the Vedic *yajna* of offering grains, ghee, herbs, etc. to *Agni*, the sacred fire, for the benefit of environment, humanity, etc. and not for one’s self. *Yajna* also refers to the ritual reading and exposition from a scripture, by a learned *pandit/vyas*, and to a wide audience of devotees. In Trinidad, a *yajna* is usually accompanied by *puja*, *katha*, devotional singing, music, and communal sharing of meals.

As the indentured Indians and their descendants emerged from the sugarcane fields to embrace education, the wider society, the new economy, politics, and so on, their traditional rural life underwent yet another wave of challenge and change. The descendants of crab catchers, sugar cane workers, rice planters, farmers, leather workers, laborers, sweepers, shoemakers, cowherds, weavers, barbers, shopkeepers, moneylenders, potters, cooks, for example, rose significantly in social status. Some became prime ministers, presidents, heads of international agencies, Nobel Prize winners, business owners, and, also, occupied positions of power in a variety of national, regional and global entities. In the process, however, the Abrahamic thrust in post-colonial societies severely undermined the religions and self-esteem of religious and ethnic groups like the Hindus and Orishas, for example. Alcoholism remains a serious problem amongst Indians coming from a culture of sugarcane where the men got rum in exchange for working extra hours. Today, in Trinidad, that industry is now closed, but alcoholism remains endemic.

The early *jahaji-s* lived a life of great sacrifice, discipline and responsibility to lay a new foundation and make life better for their descendants. They purchased land; invested in gold via jewelry; built homes; educated, first, their sons, then their daughters²⁹; participated in politics and labor struggles; and laid the infrastructure for full participation in national life.

Land is one of the rich resources that the Indian ancestors bequeathed their descendants. The close connection between identity and land explains the Indian love for owning his/her land and home, as well as planting the land with flowers and food crops. Land is consecrated before it is occupied in traditional Indian culture. In the *jahaji* experience, the *jhandi* or tall bamboo with

²⁹ Since they initially lived in joint families, the head of the family would take care of all and that person was usually the eldest son. The sons would all jointly own property while the women shared in the family jewellery. The eldest son remained in the patrilocal residence and continued the traditions of the ancestors. Daughters, however, upon marriage, would leave this residence for that of the spouse and did not head the family. Economics therefore dictated that males be educated first. Later on, both males and females accessed education equally and today such discrimination does not exist. Women now head homes and ancestral property is usually divided with equity.

flags flying atop is a sacred axis mundi or cosmic pole that, as a final ritual of the puja, is ritually planted in the east of northeast of the homestead amidst sacred flowers and plants. The *jhandi* signifies the cosmic connection between individual, earth and the wider cosmos. The Hindu locates his human presence within an astrological framework that pinpoints details like time, space, the position of the stars, and so on during the performance of any sacred ritual. The home is the center of the Hindu's world. Land, therefore, has a sacred and ritual significance to most Indians, and the earth finds its way in almost all Hindu rituals.

Similarities between the *Jahaji's* Journey and Ram's Journey

Jahaji Ayana	Ram Ayana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Left loved ones in muluk desh, hoping to return at the end of their indentureship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sree Ram left Ayodhya for 14 years of exile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They moved from North to South barefooted on a boat across the seas to their destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram moved from North to South barefooted through forests and across rivers and seas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions were strange and hostile for these simple, peasant folks. They learned to adapt and live with the peoples there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forest environment was strange and hostile, and they learned to adapt and live with the peoples and animals there.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They approached their condition with a sense of karma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram approached the exile with a sense of dharma or duty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grand plot of their lives was also one of separation from their motherland. The <i>jahaji-s</i> who were predominantly Hindus saw their "spiritual self" as being separated from God and the purpose of life as reuniting with God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grand plot of the story centers on the meta-narrative of Ram being separated from his shakti/Sita. <p>Ram was separated from Ayodhya during his exile</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They worked and lived and raised new families while privately grieving for the motherland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram performed his duties as an ideal ruler and son while grieving for Sita.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>jahaji-s</i> were forming new families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram made the whole animal kingdom part of his family while on the journey to free Sita; he also expanded his family of bhakta-s on his journey from north to south India.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environment was hostile to their traditional Hindu culture and forms of spirituality, as the forces of the state and Christian church saw them as despised pagans who needed to be saved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rakshasa-s living in the forests were hostile to the spiritual traditions such as the yajna of the rishi-s living there and destroyed the yajna-s when they were being performed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Jahaji-s</i> had to confront the colonial hegemonic political, economic, social and cultural forces that oppressed and suppressed them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram had to confront powerful King Ravan who wielded great power both as a devotee of Shiva and as a political ruler.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They restored their Indian values and cultural, folk expressions in their new environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram restored order/dharma in society through Ram Rajya and his lila-s on earth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>jahaji</i> story shaped the culture of the indentured diaspora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram's story shaped the culture of India

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