

## **Ashoka (Diodotus-I) and Jalaluddin Rumi, as Icons of Peace**

By Ranajit Pal

Abstract presented at the 2010 Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, Columbia University, New York, December 9-10, 2010

This presentation suggests that a world free of conflicts and humiliation can be attained only if our attitude to others is motivated by greater compassion (Karuna). Our education system must aim at re-enactment of the old concept of Paradise in some form. Rumi's Mathnavi relates to a lost Paradise and should be in the curriculum not only in Iran, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, but all over the world. Excerpts from the Edicts of Diodotus-I (Ashoka) who ushered in the Hellenistic renaissance and promoted Buddhism should also be a must read for all. This was a golden era in world history and whether Ashoka's experiment did not endure due to excessive commercialism, or other factors should be carefully examined by peace activists.

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## **Alexander the Great, Brotherhood and the Statue of Liberty**

By Ranajit Pal

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The treatment of Porus by Alexander the Great is a telling evidence of his realization that humiliation negates peace. Alexander first conceived the idea of a United Nations in his speech at the Banquet at Opis. The Statue of Liberty which is known to have been inspired by the Sun-god of Rhodes also has a unique iconic significance. The Rhodes stalwart is said to have been fashioned after Alexander. The Statue of Liberty should, therefore, be seen also as an emblem of Brotherhood and Peace and Alexander should be a fitting icon of the United Nations.

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## **Terah and the Early Jews in Indo-Iran and Compassionate Judaism of the Kabbala – A Reappraisal**

By Ranajit Pal

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This presentation asserts that nothing can douse the flames of sectarianism better than the realization that all the major world-religions have a common origin. This vindicates Max Muller's idea of a Ur-religion. It is suggested that the religion of Abraham had much in common with that of his forefathers who were the Yadus of India. Early Judaism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism all had a common origin in the Indus area, Southeast Iran and Afghanistan. The religion of Jesus Christ cannot be adequately explained on the basis of the Judaism of the Old Testament alone. There were many cross-currents and Jewish religion of the period of the second temple, which has been described as a form of Hellenistic Mystery Religion by Leslie L. Grabbe, is akin to Buddhism and the Judaism of the Kabbala.