

Alexander the Great, Pioneer of Globalization

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I have been fascinated by Alexander the Great ever since childhood. I always wondered how a young man in his twenties could conquer the empires of Persia, become the pharaoh of Egypt and command an army of 30,000 soldiers? Growing up in India I always wondered how did he march up to India from Macedonia fighting all the kingdoms and conquering everything on his way? In my opinion 'Veni, vidi, vici' applies more aptly to Alexander than Julius Caesar.

No single individual has so many cities named after him or her in the eastern hemisphere. (Columbus, probably, may have a similar claim in the western hemisphere). In India alone, almost every state has cities named after Alexander (pronounced Sikandar). Some of the famous cities named after Alexander are Alexandropolis in Greece, Alexandria in Egypt (where Alexander is buried), Iskandria in Afghanistan, Alexandria in Iraq (on the Tigris river), Alexandria in Pakistan (on Chenab), Iskenderum in Turkey, Golâshkerd in Iran. The list goes on and on. There is a town in India (now in Pakistan) named after his horse Bucephalus. The town is now known as Phalia. Alexander rode the horse across Asia.

The most intriguing aspect of Alexander was his vision of globalization and bringing people of all races together. Alexander the Great conquered and integrated almost half the world before his death at the age of 33. His motto is summed up in the following passage, "All mortals should live like one, united, and peacefully working towards the common good. You should regard the whole world as your country, a country where the best govern, with common laws, and no racial distinctions. I do not separate people, as many narrow-minded others do. I am not interested in the origin or race of citizens; I only distinguish them on the basis of their virtue. For my part, I consider all, whether they be white or black, equal."

Alexander's vision came from Aristotle who became his teacher when the former was 13 years old. Alexander understood the importance of

science from Aristotle. Alexander therefore included scientists, engineers and historians in his army. Alexander had a violent thirst and passion for learning, which increased as time went on. He was a lover of all kinds of reading and knowledge, and it was his delight, after a day of marching or fighting, to sit up half the night conversing with scholars and scientists.

The biggest achievement of Alexander was paving the way for globalization. Alexander the Great forged an eastward link with the King of India, Chandragupta Maurya (considered by some as the greatest Indian King and a boy genius similar to Alexander) for overland routes between the Mediterranean, Persia, India and Central Asia. Although his life was extremely short lived, he helped promote cultural interaction on the Eurasian continent. Even after his demise, the early globalization he helped produce remains intact. There are several different ways his expeditions helped connect the disparate people of Asia and Eastern Europe. When I think of globalization, I think of Alexander, my link to the childhood memories.

