

# EDITORIAL

## *We Are Better Off Being A Divided Nation by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'*

I have two close friends with opposite views. One labels himself a rightist and the other a leftist. They don't seem to agree on any political or economic issues. My rightist friend cares more about efficiency, and the leftist cares more about equality. My rightist friend is more religious and the leftist is secular. To my mind, what separates them is mere emotion, not logic. For example, my leftist friend is critical of market outcomes no matter how good market outcomes be. On the contrary, my rightist friend believes that good market outcomes only come from laissez-faire.

Surprisingly, both my friends are very intelligent and highly educated. Still, their minds think differently. We perceive the same reality in different ways and form different notions depending on how our minds perceive them.

In our engineering school, we were required to take one class on humanity. I chose philosophy. There I learned that the world is not what it seems. There are stars always in the sky, but the light of the sun makes them disappear during the day. Similarly, animals don't see what we see depending upon the structure of their lenses and how

their nervous system processes the same image. Our perception is not the only perception.

Every generation is asked to believe that our nation is deeply divided never like before., This is not true. People's thoughts and perceptions of the same reality have always been divided. In that context, America has always been divided. In her 244-year history, the U.S. has endured deep divisions between its political parties, and over industrialization, the Civil War, immigration in the late 1800s, women's suffrage, whether to enter the first and second world wars, civil rights and anti-war protests in the 1960s, gay rights, abortion rights, and numerous other battles.

There are advantages to having different points of view (POV). The most obvious advantage is that using multiple POVs allows us to see the world from more than one set of eyes. We don't want to become a totally homogeneous nation all having to have uniform views. We don't want to become another Russia, China, or North Kora. We are better off the way we are.

