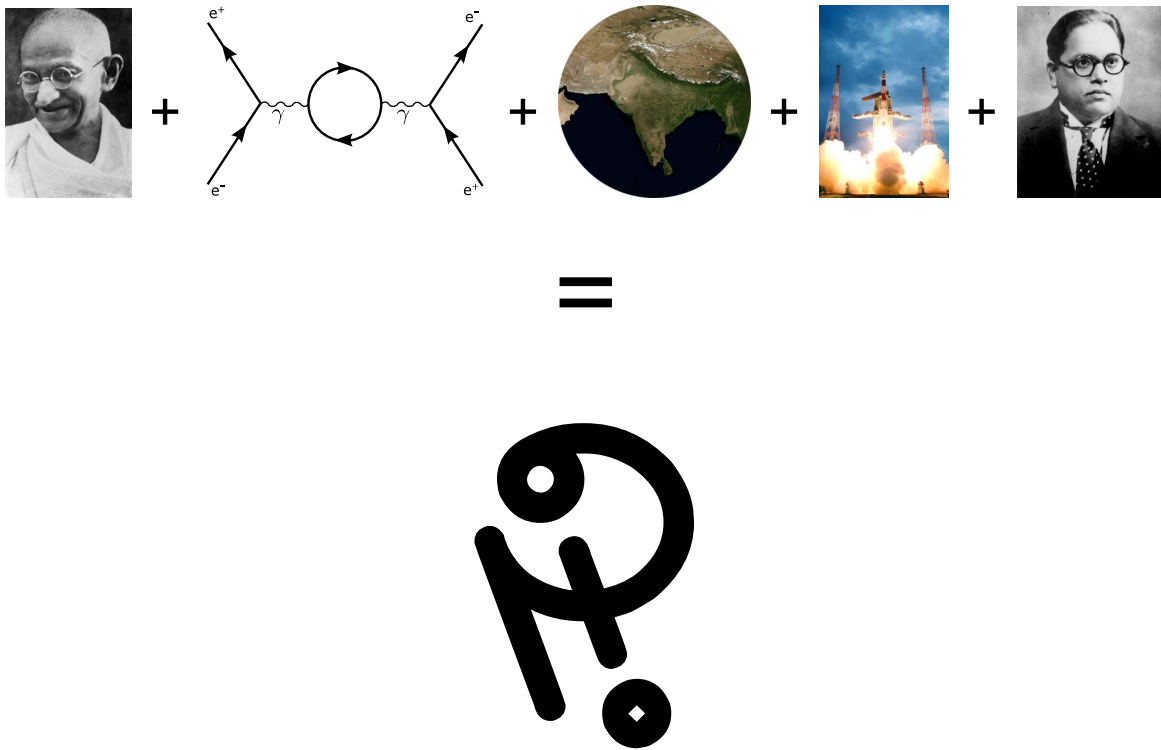


Purée:



Proposal For A New Rupee Symbol

by
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A printable copy of this document is available on:
<http://www.arunsagar.com/Purée.pdf>.

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Unicode letter U+20A8 is assigned to the Indian Rupee symbol, whose current glyph "Rs" is formed by the concatenation of two Latin characters. There are also regional variations for the Rupee symbol like U+09F2(₹) & U+09F3(₹) (Bengali), U+0AF1(₹) (Gujarati) and U+0BF9(₹) (Tamil); but they are not widely recognized.

This is a proposal for a new symbol that has the following properties:

- R1.** Practical. It should be easily typed on a normal keyboard. It should also be easy to write using long hand.
- R2.** Distinct & Unique. It should readily be recognized as the currency symbol for Rupee.
- R3.** Unambiguous. It should not be confused with any other symbol, alphabetic or numerical.
- R4.** Symbolize India. It must reflect and project something positive about what India stands for.

A cursory look at some of the major currency glyphs present in Unicode:



highlights two major motifs:

- 1. They are derived from recognizable Latin characters.
- 2. They are further marked by a single or double bar strokes.

There are no recognizable symbolic meaning attached to these glyphs.

The proposal is to use the following glyph for U+20A8, nicknamed 'Purée':



Superficially, this is a modification of the U+003F Question mark character ('?'). But it is heavily laden with Indian symbolism. The rest of the document explains how it fulfills R1-R4.

R1. The '?' symbol is easily accessible on every keyboard as a convenient shortcut when the actual Unicode character U+20A8 is not available. As the basic geometry of the glyph is close to how most Indic characters are hand written, it is also easy to write.

R2. No currency symbol uses any shape resembling '₹'. Yet, the symbol has vague resemblance to the existing Latin abbreviation "Rs." This makes its adoption more palatable.

R3. There is no visual conflict with glyphs in most Indic scripts. Even though it vaguely, and intentionally, resembles the ₹-like glyphs (e.g., ર (Gujarati), ૜ (Gurmukhi), ூ (Tamil), འ (Tibetan)) in Indic scripts, and the Latin 'R' itself; it is sufficiently distinct to not be confused with them. It also does not conflict with the symbol used for the numeral TWO (e.g., 2 (Latin), २ (Devanagari), ર (Gujarati), ২ (Bengali), ੨ (Gurmukhi), ೨ (Kannada), ூ (Tamil), འ (Tibetan)) used in Indic scripts.

R4. Possibly the most important criterion is the symbolism of the shape. Readily apparent is the universally recognized meaning of the symbol "?" -- whose presence in written form tells us that a question is being asked. I propose that this be the primary motif of ૜ -- of Freedom that is apparent when one is free to ask any question.

For a long time, the people of India have lived as subjects, slaves, chattels or worse of dacoits of various stripes and skin color. In 1947, the Indian people finally got rid of that lot through collective effort and gained their most fundamental human rights. The very essence of being modern Indian is to be Free. Free to think. Free to act. Free to ask. Of being inquisitive of their life and the world around them. To ask questions from our friends, parents, teachers, leaders and most of all ourselves so that we can become better than we are. To not be afraid of the answers that are given so that we may ask even more. Once you know that you have that freedom, you are confident of the answers that you receive. This confidence inspires Trust. Trust is ultimately the basis of all fruitful economic activity, whose instrument is money. Hence, a symbol of Freedom ultimately inspires Trust in the robustness of a currency.

Additionally:

1. The overall shape is supposed to resemble a profile of Mahatma Gandhi as he led the Salt *Satyagraha* of 1930 with nothing but a *laathi* in his hand and the idea of Freedom in his head. It can be argued that he asked a basic question of the *dakoos* of that era -- "Why should the people suffer taxation without representation?" The answer was the Salt March with which the people of India concurred whole heartedly and marked their unwillingness to suffer economic slavery.

The rhombus shape embedded in a disk at the bottom is meant to be a 2D projection of salt's octahedral crystalline structure. It is suggestive of an inquisitive scientific mind looking under a microscope and seeing the true nature of NaCl.

2. The basic elements of the ૜ glyph are derived from various Indian scripts. The circular loops are a common occurrence in South Indian scripts; the ₹ like shape is also present in most North Indian scripts and the numeral '2'. The circular dot at the bottom is supposed to echo the *anusvara* also

present in many Indic scripts. Many North Indian glyphs that resemble ₹ also sound like the beginning of the word "Rupee" as it is voiced.

This adds up to the pan Indian theme of the symbol reflecting that the country may have many languages and cultures, but we all work together to build a single united nation and economy. Since the nation is a wonderful blend of diverse people, hence the name "Purée" for ₹.

3. The glyph contains two parallel line strokes, just like other major currencies. This highlights India's willingness to participate in the global economy by adhering to fair and equitable Rule of Law.
4. The rhombus in the bottom dot is also meant to reflect the geographical boundary of India. Like a diamond placed on the surface of the planet. The dimensions of the shape are meant to be the profile of Earth when India is placed in the center.
The alignment of India is upright, not bent to follow the angle of the double lines. This is to symbolize that while India adheres to global standards, it is sovereign and will always stand up to do what is right like a good model world citizen.
5. Continuing the "bottom dot is Earth" metaphor, lines that rise and curve around represent the path a spacecraft will take when launched from Earth. The slanted straight lines are the path taken by the launch vehicle, the elliptical path is the trajectory around the Sun to obtain a gravity boost and the circular loop at the end is the orbit achieved in a remote celestial body after achieving a successful atmospheric injection. This symbolizes the Space faring aspirations of humanity of which India is playing an important role.
6. The loops, curves and line strokes are evocative of patterns observed when conducting experiments in sub-atomic high energy Physics.
7. The loop at the top and the dot at the bottom are hollow and shaped like the symbol for Zero, which is recognized as a contribution made by some ancient resident of India to Mathematics.
8. The major shape can also be interpreted as resembling a plough or a sickle, reflecting India's agrarian roots.
9. The dot at the end also resembles a square drive screw head as viewed from the top. This is to salute the manufacturing industry that is the backbone of any economy. It is highly symbolic that a bolt keeps a machine together, just like a trusted currency keeps a free nation unified.

Last, but not the least, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar remarked that the progress of India will depend on how much we rise above petty sectarian and religious differences and embrace Science and Technology. The design of Purée is meant to reflect that.

Samples

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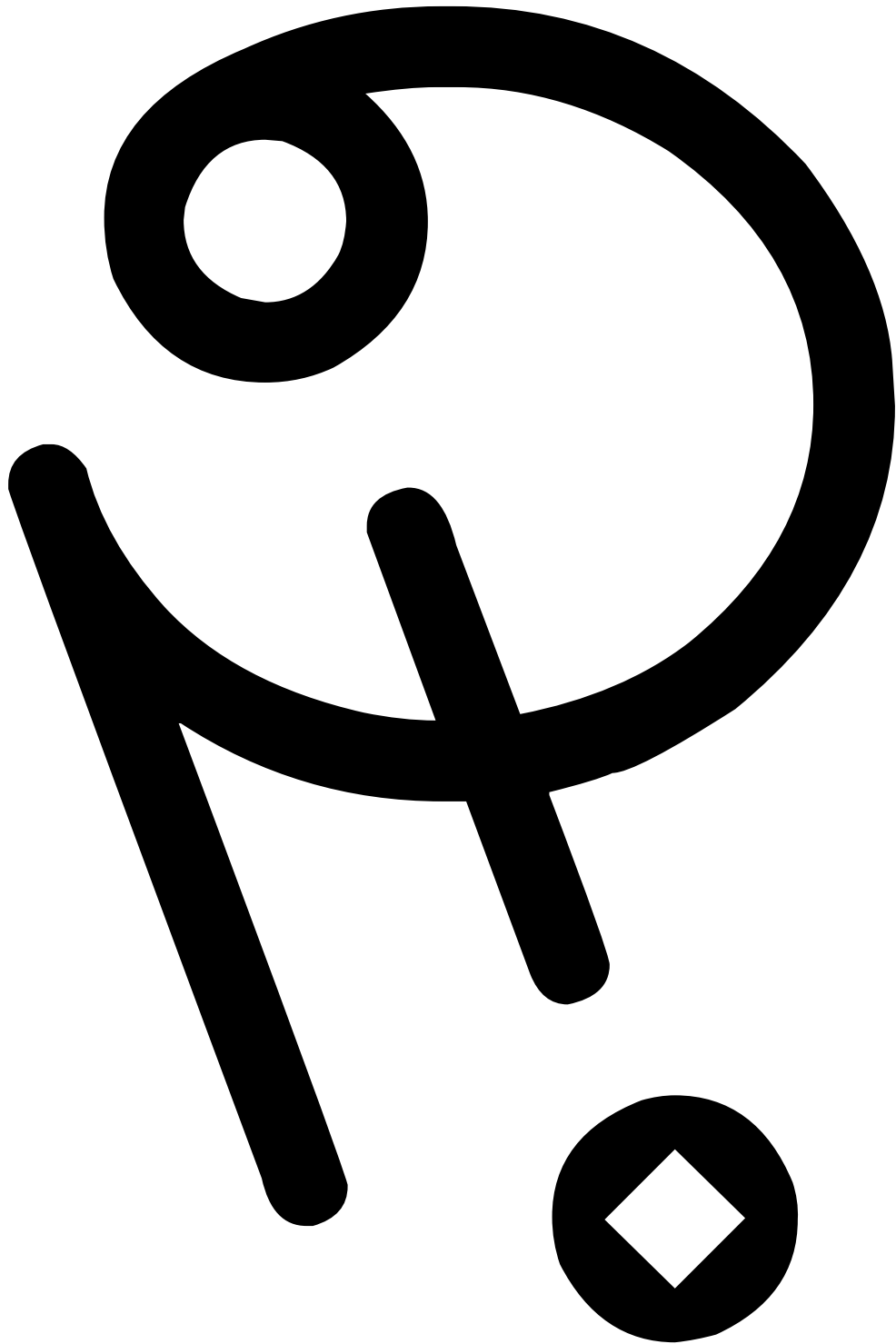
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About the Author

Arun Sagar writes computer software for fun and profit. He has no formal qualifications in any subject. But he is always learning on the Internet with an open and enquiring mind.



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