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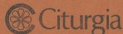
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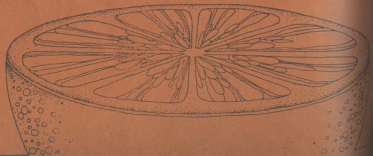
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Gandhians, RSS and Communists : A Perspective

By : Sailendra Nath Ghosh

THERE IS dedication and a spirit of selfless service among the non-establishment Gandhians, the RSS cadres, and the majority of communist activists. Can they unite ?

Their perspective and mode of thinking—particularly of the last two schools—are so very different on certain aspects that any thought of their unity would appear wishful thinking bordering on fantasy. Yet, they have to unite if their *prime* ideals are to be achieved and each would have to shed a good deal of its blinkers.

When I talk of the *prime* ideal, I mean the original and the basic ideal, separated from accessorial objectives. Accessorial objectives are those which these people assume to be *supportive* of their main objective but which on acute analysis, would turn out to be hindrances and have, nevertheless, an illusive spell on their believers.

A study of (i) the deeper urges and prime ideals of each of these national streams, (ii) the manner in which their ideals got vitiated by certain angularities; and (iii) the reasons why each must cast aside its blinkers which impede the viewing of the positive potential of the other, has convinced this author that there is a sound basis for unity.

LET ME take up the RSS first. Let me also state frankly that I had deep prejudices against RSS. I was, therefore, surprised beyond measure—and puzzled—when during a discussion with Nanaji Deshmukh in 1984 I found that he agreed totally with my interpretation of Hinduism. I was saying that "Hinduism is not a religion." It is a

1. The proclaimed *prime* ideal of RSS is "nourishing the spirit of nationalism purged of communal and divisive mentality," "bringing round the Muslims into the nationalist current" and "moulding of man as the chief instrument of national formation". The prime ideal of Karl Marx, who inspired the Communists of all shades, was the "leap of man into the realm of freedom", for which he wanted to free man from the prospect of hunger and from a structure of society in which the freedom of the mind was being repressed. Gandhism's ideal is 'Sarvodaya', the all-round (i. e. physical, mental and spiritual) development of all people, which in the first phase should begin with 'Antyodaya', the development of the poorest and the lowliest people in the society.

2. A religion has one faith, one mode of worship. Hinduism admits of many faiths. Even one disbelieving in the existence of God can be a Hindu.

In India, there is a concept of *dharma* which has little to do with institutionalised religions. *Dharma* is a set of principles which holds together the individual and the society, the intellect and the emotion and also reconciles justice with compassion. *Dharma* but later came to be institutionalised like other religions. Hence it became easier for others to confuse religion with *dharma*.

In any case, Hinduism defied institutionalisation and sought to hold together not only the above-mentioned aspects but all the religious communities, all mankind, and all other forms of life and protect the inanimate environment. Hence it deserves to be placed in a separate category. It is a way of life and philosophy of life in all its aspects—material as well as spiritual.

culture, a way of life, accommodating many faiths and many world views. It is an over-arching umbrella providing shelter and a common bind to all religions." To which Nanaji spontaneously responded with an emphatic affirmation. "Exactly so. These fellows who claim to be Hindus but disregard the legitimate interests of Muslims are not genuine Hindus." He went on to say "Hinduism is no uni-religious order. In this respect Bipin Chandra Pal's understanding was very correct."

I was finding it difficult to believe my ears. If this was the understanding of an RSS man, what right do we have to denounce the RSS as an organisation of rank communalists? At any rate, can we blame RSS wholesale?

Subsequently, I came to know closely several other 'Sanghis'—Shri K. R. Malkani, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Shri Yadav Rao Deshmukh and Shri Mahesh Chandra Sharma, all of whom are connected with the Deendayal Research Institute. I did not find a trace of communalism in them. I experienced yet another pleasant surprise when Shri Mahesh Chandra Sharma treated me to a verse from Tulsiidas's Ramayan in the highest tradition of cosmopolitanism and found in it a message potent for resolving the current Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy. In the context of conflicts between the devotees of Lord Shiva and his own worshippers, Lord Rama had admonished: "Shiva-drohis (haters of Lord Shiva) would have no access to me." Which should mean", Maheshji continued, "that Allah-drohis will not have access to Lord Rama. and *vice versa*". Only a person free from communal prejudice could say this.

After these experiences, my endeavour was to find out the proportion of people with such humanistic outlook in RSS. Although Shri Malkani and several others perceive that they account for a sizeable percentage—implying thereby some 30-40 percent—I have come to feel that they account for a much smaller percentage. But even if they are only 15-20 percent, there are reasons to hope that the people of this trend will grow steadily within the RSS fold. The deep-seated cosmopolitan outlook of mainstream Hinduism should favour the growth of this trend in the coming period.

There is no doubt that RSS, in seeking to counter (i) the rabid Muslimism which speaks in the name of Islam, and (ii) the arrogance of the West which parades as a superior civilization, has imbibed several negative features of its adversaries. History teaches us that when a movement is launched primarily to counter certain trends, it invariably imbibes those very trends in some measure. Its 'coping mechanism'

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demands this. This is the reason why anti-communist organizations have come to internalise those very totalitarian methods, hatred for which had earlier inspired their launching.

Hinduism's ideal is: "happiness to all, health to all" (सर्वे सुखिनः सन्तु सर्वे मन्तु निरामयाः) A Hindu cannot wish for anything but bliss for people of any faiths. Hinduism believes that the universe is based on complementarity principle. Hence, Hindus sincerely believe that one religion is complementary to another and that the universe of faiths would be the poorer if the pristine values of Islam, Christianity or Shaivism (or any faith) or any mode of worship which gives inner peace to its believers, were to disappear. Many RSS members have forgotten these principles and come to regard themselves as fighters against Muslim excesses and Christian tricks—as defenders of the "Hindu faith". What they defend is "Hinduism" minus its principle of universal love.

*A reactive movement comes to imbibे
the qualities of the very trend
it seeks to counter*

Why, then, should RSS, the majority of whose members suffer from a distorted concept of Hinduism, at all grow, rather than fade away? Why should anybody wish for its reform and metamorphosis, rather than its extinction? The answer to this lies in its several positive features which are not to be found in any other organisation in India at present.

While other organisations have come to be controlled by 'Washington Patriots', 'Moscow Patriots', 'Beijing Patriots' or 'Arabia Patriots' the RSS cadres remain staunchly Indian and seek to find their roots in Indian culture. While glorification of everything of India's past is not a healthy sign, India's rebirth is plainly impossible without an understanding of its traditions. Revival of interest in the past is the pre-condition for rejuvenation of every nation. In India's case, there is an even more compelling reason. Her agricultural and all other cultural practices were interwoven with Nature and hence the most ecological. Her philosophical thoughts were the most profound, as the nations of the west are now realizing. When an organisation seeks to answer this positive need—even if partially, by reviving an interest in the past in order to retain its sound practices, the basis for its growth cannot be wished away.

RSS reminds me of an aphorism which I heard forty years back but whose authorship I do not know. It said: "If you are in peril, trust

yourself to either a catholic or a communist." In the Indian context, as a guideline to personal safety, it could be said: "In perilous situations, trust yourself to an RSS member or a true Gandhian or a communist of the old genre." (Most of the latter-day recruits to communism have allowed their humanistic traits to be eclipsed by their partisan interests.) In the crusades for caste equality, women's honour, service to the distressed and in civil defence during periods of national emergencies, too, the RSS cadres' record is excellent. Mahatma Gandhi's testimony (on 25th December, 1934) that RSS conducts its work with "noble sentiments" and Jayaprakash Narain's testimony (in Patna on 3rd November, 1977) that "RSS is a revolutionary organisation", confirm my own experience of RSS work in my neighbourhood in Delhi. (Incidentally, JP, too, like myself, had long-standing prejudice against RSS previously.) It is well-known that in the struggle led by JP in the seventies against authoritarianism and corruption, the RSS as an organised force played a most fruitful role. Jointly, the Gandhians, the 'Sanghis' and spontaneous movements of indignant students and farmers checkmated for some time the dictatorial trends in this country. There will be need for broader alliances in future.

The RSS would, however, need to realize (i) that the battle for national integrity and political and social democracy cannot succeed unless it is joined by battles for economic democracy and (ii) that the glory of Hinduism cannot be resurrected by abandoning its core principle.

Swami Vivekananda had prophesied that the rebirth of India would be heralded by the awakening of the *shudras* and the toiling masses. If there is less enthusiasm to rouse the toiling people for fear that it may alienate the propertied classes and disrupt the 'cultural unity of the Hindus', the conditions for India's rebirth in the new times will not be met. Major limbs of the Indian society will remain repressed. Of course, the awakening of the down-trodden does not require fire-eating militancy or perpetual strife. Understanding Nature's ways and initiation into the secrets of her bounteousness can be a powerful aid to loosening the grip of vested interests and undermining their power base. Which means, a high level of consciousness about (i) ecological principles and (ii) the dire consequences of continuing disregard of Nature's laws in pursuit of elite-oriented prosperity would go a long way to softening the resistance of the vested interests and reducing the intensity of class struggles. Today even localised voluntary organisations are finding that their efforts at building people-oriented infrastructural facilities are being resisted by vested interests. If the National Volunteer Organisation—which the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha with its far-flung network undoubtedly is—lends support to the efforts of the small, localised voluntary agencies, it will be far easier to tilt the balance in favour of the common people.

Then, as regards Hinduism, I feel that majority of RSS activists do not bother about Hinduism's core principles. Although RSS says in theory that anybody who regards India as his or her *matribhumi* and hence as *punyabhumi* (i.e. motherland, hence sacred land) is a Hindu, the RSS members in general, in their other pronouncements, come to exclude the Muslims and the Christians *en masse* as non-Hindus. This causes great hurt to those Muslims and Christians who are staunch nationalists and ardent patriots. Such switching of language—sometimes using the word 'Hindu' in its original, all-inclusive sense, and at other times, using the term in its exclusivist and communal sense—is self-deception, to say the least.

I would agree that for a large majority of Indian Muslims, their spiritual home lies outside India. Even then, indulgence in this semantic anarchy is impermissible. Many of the great maestros of Indian music have been, and are, Muslims; and the number of Indian-to-the-core Muslim scholars, scientists, commentators, film artistes and security personnel is rising fast. Not to see their potential is blindness; to alienate them by confusing terminologies, is to disrupt the patriotic forces—a crime against the motherland.

*"If you are in peril, trust yourself to an
RSS worker, a true Gandhian
or old type Communist"*

In the November 1988 issue of the *Manthan*, I had discussed in depth the question of 'True Versus False Hinduism' (page 55-58). Here I would only like to reiterate that Hinduism is a unifying principle. It is a principle of recognising distinct identities and their individualities and of promoting thereby a sense of belonging to one organic whole. How our ancient Rishis unified the different tribes can be gauged from the following examples.

The mythology that fifty-one parts of Parvati's lifeless body, dismembered by Lord Vishnu's *Sudarshan Chakra*, fell at as many places, and that temples with different names were built over these dispersed limbs—among them, the temples of Kamakhya in Assam, Nainadevi in Himachal Pradesh, Jwala Devi in Kangra (also in Himachal Pradesh), Hinglaj Devi in Baluchistan, Vindhayavasi in Mirzapur (UP), Ambaji (in Gujarat), Ambabai in Kolhapur, Alopi Devi in Allahabad—served to unify, at one stroke, fifty-one sects, the worshippers of deities with fifty-one names.

Another mythology—that Parvati (Sati), angered by her consort Lord Shiva's refusal to let her go to her parental home, assumed ten

forms in quick succession—served to unify ten different sects, the worshippers of Mahakali, Tara, Shodashi (षोडशी) Bhubaneswari, Chhinnamasta, Tripurabhairavi, Dhoomavati, Bagala, Matangi and Kamla.

There have been numerous such stories which unified the various sects and tribes.

This was Hinduism—a constant search for reconciliation of differences, a striving for synthesis at higher and yet higher levels. Now, if we are unable to unify our *entire* population in the present age, we cannot really claim to be inheritors of Hinduism.

No doubt, unifying the psyches of followers of different faiths is much more difficult now, when there are followers of religions which originated outside India under very different environments (such as Christianity, and Islam) and which lay great emphasis on proselytising, rather than on experiencing the Infinite within.

It is also true that the basic cause of the above-mentioned semantic confusion was a historical circumstance. Before the Moslem rule in India, the West Asians used to describe the way of life of the entire population residing on the vast spaces to the east of the river Sindhu (Indus) as Hinduism. Yet, when some West Asian powers came to India as conquerors and stepped up the conversion of local people to Islam, the same West Asians came to use the word 'Hindu' in a restricted, communal sense.

From the side of the local inhabitants, too, there must have been a perplexing problem. Before Islam came as a *power* to India, the give-and-take between the pre-existing religions such as Shaivism, Vishnavism, Sakti-ism, Jainism, Buddhism, had reached such an advanced stage that each Indian had become a bit each of a Shaiva, a Vaishnav, a Sakta, a Jain or a Buddhist and therefore, defied categorisation in sectarian terms—that is, in terms of the ancient particularistic faiths. In the eyes of the followers of the semitic faiths, all those in India who refused to belong *exclusively* to their belief system by discarding their previous faiths, came to be known as Hindus. Thus, the semantic confusion was in fact created by the immigrants and their converts in India.

But to say that foreign-induced elements landed us into a semantic confusion and that we could not get over it, is to accept defeat and abandon a rich heritage. Even if others tried to limit Hinduism by calling it the religion of the non-Muslim, non-Christian population of India, there was, and is, the need to reassert that Hinduism is the *ideology* of co-existence of all faiths—the principle on which the future World

Commonwealth of Religions will have to come up. Thus stated, Hinduism as an *ideology* could spread to other parts of the world. A Christian in Mexico believing in the co-existence of all religions could call himself a Mexican Hindu Christian, a Nigerian Muslim sharing the same ideology could call herself a Nigerian Hindu Muslim in the same manner as a member of Tagore family in Calcutta used to describe himself as a Bengali Hindu Christian, meaning thereby that he was an Indian Christian from Bengal. The only difference that this projection would have made was that Hinduism, *instead of remaining a cultural concept limited to a geographical area, would have become an ideological, hence cultural, concept open to all parts of the world.* While previously, Hindu was a synonym of 'Indian', it would have, in the new concept, become a short-hand expression of a believer in the ideology of the co-existence of all faiths. This would have done justice to Hinduism, for it, indeed is an ideology.

Co-existence of faiths is the Hindu principle on which the future Commonwealth of Religions must rest

Hinduism, however, was not—and is not—merely an ideology of co-existence of all faiths. It is also a philosophy of (i) interrelatedness of all forms of life (whereby human and all animal species, plant species and micro-organisms are bound by complementarity principle) and (ii) relatedness of the animate and the inanimate world. By soaring once again to the heights of these truths validated by the latest in biological and environmental sciences, and by spreading globally these ancient messages of Hinduism, India could not only solve her internal conflict situations but also contribute to resolving the world's spiritual-cum-existential crisis.

Faithful presentation of Hinduism's truths on the above lines could call forth new terms with their meanings and a new kind of consciousness in India and the world. A new term such as "Hindusthani Hindus" could mean all those Indians who believe in Hinduism's above philosophy of existence and, therefore, regard the mode of worship as too personal a matter to be advertised, and too deep a matter to be exposed to public gaze. This may give rise to the emergence of German Hindus, Spanish Hindus, and the like. Whether or not they describe themselves in these terms, does not matter. Without renouncing their faiths, they can be our kindred souls and partners in this philosophy. A global movement based on this philosophy of life could engulf and overcome all narrow-minded separatism everywhere. But the basic condition is that Hinduism, with its principle of universal love, has to be lived, not merely preached.

Until RSS and the other pre-sectarian claimants to Hinduism's mantle wake up to this vision, they will continue to move within the narrow limits of Indian realities and feel haunted. They will continue to practise inconsistencies by sometimes describing Hinduism as a culture accepting all faiths, and sometimes implying that it was a mere conglomeration of the religions that originated in India. At the bottom of this inconsistency is the failure to understand that Hinduism is *basically a unifying principle* which is valid and vital even today, provided the claimants to this legacy breathe its true spirit. The hidden feeling that the unifying principle, which worked in the past ages, will not work in the presence of semitic faiths, is defeatist. This defeatism comes from the lack of world vision.

RSS must understand that its talk about the Hindus to the exclusion of the Muslims and the Christians, limits Hinduism and disables it. This suits the bigots of all religions. By so doing, it reduces Hinduism to the position of an adversary to Islam and Christianity and surrenders Hinduism's global role.

Most passionately, RSS wants an India purged of all disunities and divisiveness. Its basis, then, has to be the union of hearts of all people. India's Muslim population is about 10 crores and its Christian population is about 2 crores. These numbers are greater than the entire populations of many countries. Can RSS simply disregard them because they occasionally become frenzied under instigation from the fanatics within their faith? What is RSS's message to the Muslim masses? How does RSS plan to win the people from the clutches of the fanatics? RSS needs to answer these questions.

RSS falls into a great error when it calls India a 'Hindu nation'. The arguments that are often advanced are as follows. If democratic Britain could be a 'Christian' nation despite its millions of non-Christian citizens, if Malaysia could declare Islam as its state religion despite considerable percentage of non-Muslim population, if Egypt could be a 'Muslim nation' despite the Coptic Christians who constitute ten percent of its population, why cannot India be a Hindu nation?

As a what-others-are-doing type of argument, it could possibly pass. But, this again, is reducing Hinduism to a creedal religion like Islam and Christianity and stripping Hinduism of the very principle which it alone is privileged to contribute towards a global commonwealth of religions for universal peace and spiritual bliss. Besides, does not this kind of reasoning show that RSS considers Hinduism as religion and thereby contradicts its own other statement that Hinduism is a culture? Even the plea that Hinduism is a *dharma*, though not a religion, will not hold because *dharma* is not an order, it is a set of principles.

When all confusion can be cleared by calling ourselves the 'Hindustani nation', is it necessary to insist on describing us as a 'Hindu nation'? Any slogan must take into account the psyches and levels of consciousness of different segments of the population at the given time. If there is a slogan which unifies all without sacrificing any principle, why insist on another which divides the nation and makes the task more difficult?

From the conversations I have had with many local-level RSS members, I get the impression that the RSS does not want to deny the Muslims or the Christians participation in the democratic process. What it wants is a 'Hindu ethos-led nation'. Instead of using a word which has been much abused by both its votaries as well as 'adversaries', would it not be better to spell out the various aspects of this ethos? If RSS spells out the values it wants to see ingrained in our people's lives, possibly all communities will cooperate in fulfilling these objectives. So far I understand, values such as love, non-violence, sincerity, selflessness, non-possession, hospitality, fidelity, freedom of thought and expression, chivalry, respect for women are important positive aspects of Hindu ethos. None will possibly object to these. If these are assiduously cultivated, the negative aspects of certain sectarian cultures would tend to disappear.

What is the RSS message to Muslim masses? RSS must reach them over fanatical heads

RSS's emphasis on Hindu ethos probably stems from yet another source—from its anxiety to avoid the 'western-type modernism' which has been producing denationalised creatures, far removed from the heart-throb of the common people. If the purpose is to build a nation rooted in Indian culture and to insure against soul-less westernism—which destroys all national cultures by building up fantasies about conquering Nature—why not say this explicitly by specifying the ills of modernism which need to be guarded against? There, again, simply sermons will not do because 'modern' technology is loaded with certain undesirable values such as greed, selfishness, parasitism, cruelty and destruction of life. Hence there would be the need to define which kind of technology is to be avoided. This needs very deep thinking.

I appreciate that national goals are best defined by one-or-two-word expressions. My own preference is for declaring 'cosmic humanism.'

* Cosmic humanism is integral humanism *plus* the awareness that man can be happy only if the other forms of life (the plant and animal kingdoms) are protected and the inanimate environment safeguarded. Normally, integral humanism means the all-round (i.e. physical, mental and spiritual) development of all constituents of a society and of mankind. Cosmic humanism adds another dimension by including concern for the welfare of the plant and animal species and the inanimate environment. Some people believe that the meaning of integral humanism can be extended to cover these aspects too. But in that case it should be specifically stated.

The meanings of "antyodaya" and "Sarvodaya" have been spelt out in footnote no. 1, as our goal.

If that sounds too philosophical, we may accept 'Antyodayee Rashtra' (सर्वोदयी राष्ट्र) as the goal for the next fifty years and 'Sarvodayee Samaj' (सर्वोदयी समाज) thereafter. But that is an issue which can be discussed separately.

I have many a time posed the question : Can Hinduism be protected by de-Hinduising Hinduism? To this question RSS cadre usually answers back by pointing to the failure of Gandhian approach towards communal amity. "It pampered the Muslims and fuelled their separatist tendencies", is the stock answer. Although this is not a straight answer, it is a pointer to a traumatic experience, which needs to be discussed, for it is this experience that has caused a great mental blockage.

Undoubtedly, Gandhiji had begun tackling the communal problem the wrong way, by taking the Indian Muslims' obscurantist demand as his cause. His espousal of Khilafat was unprincipled. It could only fuel religious fanaticism and pan-Islamism, whose delayed effect was Partition. But in fairness to Gandhi, he did not commit any such unprincipled pampering in later years. What he did was to make a series of large-hearted gestures to inspire the Muslims' confidence in the Congress. If these could not stop Partition, their influence could certainly work later to undo the Partition, if only we followed his advice in political structuring and economic development and carried out social reforms soulfully and fullheartedly in his pattern, and held nation-wide, continuing inter-religious dialogues.

Moreover, time is a great teacher. The common Muslim people in Pakistan, Bangladesh and today's Indian Union must have learnt by now that they would have been better off if they had remained in one undivided India. The great sufferings of the people of 'East Pakistan' at the hands of the Pakistani armed forces, the current sufferings of the muhajirs in Pakistan, the virtual enslavement of Sindhis and Baluchis at the hands of the Punjabi junta, must have made large sections of Muslims search their hearts as to what they got by partitioning India. If, at this time, we could help in various ways this process of rethinking, it should be possible to get over the separatist tendencies of the Muslims.

This is not to underestimate the force of the subsisting fanaticism in Islam which, in the name of building solidarity with fellow-religionists in the world, keeps erecting barriers between themselves and the neighbours from other faiths. Besides, among the Muslim communities of the world, the Indian Muslims have been perhaps the most obscurantist and fanatical. Suffering from a 'minority complex', they have developed a psyche of utmost suspicion. "If you cannot love your fellow beings, it

does not matter : if you hate the Hindus, you are a good Muslim"—this has been the psychology. Moreover, the West Asian petro-dollars are refuelling their fanaticism. Even then, the problem is to be solved and can be solved.

A correct application of Hinduism's unifying principle would be a three-pronged approach :

- (i) Engagement in inter-religious dialogues;
- (ii) Practice of universal love and
- (iii) *Determined opposition to appeasement, but in a language which strikes the chord in the hearts of the Muslim masses and awakens their healthy instincts or, for that matter, the good sense of all communities.*

We must aim at Cosmic Humanism that is Integral Humanism plus love of all Nature

Let us take up the last point first.

Opposition to (i) undue claims and the seeking of over-indulgence and (ii) the habit of bribing by appeasement is essential for long-term national well-being. Genuine love never appeases, for it is the appeased who ultimately loses much more than the appeaser. Appeasement is the outcome of tactics, not of love. Pampering kills the target community's potential for growth and spoils irrevocably its relations with all other communities.

RSS errs by taking an overly militant posture from the very beginning. To be able to win the hearts of the members of the community which is making excessive demands, it is necessary to keep explaining why such demands are against their own ultimate spiritual and secular interests. All this explaining should bear loving concern for those people whose undue claims are being resisted. A confrontationist posture from the very beginning impedes the mobilisation of people of goodwill from within the target community and breeds mutual hatred.

RSS's eagerness to resist appeasement is not matched by its practice of universal love. Herein lies the flaw. If there is hatred for any community, that will not help build the unity of others; and if any apparent unity is built on this basis, it will not last. 'Hate the sin, not the sinner' is a cardinal Hindu precept. Hence, 'hate separatism, not the separatists' should be the motto. If there is hatred for anybody or

any community, that hatred remains deep within and bounces back later to wreck the forces it seeks now to consolidate. Negative approach contains within itself the seed of its early negation. Only a positive approach can rise by synthesising at higher and still higher levels

Take the cases of (i) Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute; and (ii) the Meerut massacre by the Police Armed Constabulary of U. P. Of course, the police started retaliatory action only after the initial provocation by arrogant Muslim miscreants, which included attacking the police and the killing of persons whom even the Muslims respected.

No court should be asked to give a verdict on such disputes. And there was no need to ask the government to settle the Janmabhumi-Masjid dispute if only RSS could, over the heads of the Babri Masjid Committee fanatics, appeal to the Muslim masses to appreciate that a Janmabhumi cannot be shifted, while a mosque can be. It can even now appeal to the Muslims to cooperate in fulfilling the religious aspirations of the devout Hindus and in undoing the harmful effects of vandalism by a Mughal emperor in the past. Would the Muslims gain in religiosity by denying the devotees of Lord Rama their place of worship? Such direct appeals to the Muslim masses by RSS, plus offers to contribute towards the construction of a mosque in the neighbourhood, could cut the ground from under the feet of the Babri Masjid Committee and build up communal amity.

Then, granting that some Muslim miscreants were the original culprits in Meerut, the Armed Constabulary had no business to slaughter innocent Muslims. When the constables ran amuck, if only an organisation like the RSS had intervened to stop the carnage, it would have changed the communal situation overnight. If the RSS had protected the Muslims from slaughter in Meerut, Muslims all over India would have sought security in alliance with RSS. That the RSS could not act in this manner was a great failure of its vision.

Evidently, there is a reason behind this inaction. The RSS feels—not without reason—that India is now under a siege and that the siege is from the Muslims within and without, who are being sedulously aided by imperialist powers as well as by a country to our north ruled by 'socialist grabbers'. It also fails to see the newly emerging trend of liberalism within the Indian Islamic community, of which the Indian Muslim Youth Conference is a fine specimen. I would like to ask what is the strength of Indian culture if it fails to catalyse such gentle waves of non-communalism into a mighty tidal wave?

We must all note :

(i) The fanaticism of Muslim-ism has now led to utmost turmoil between the Muslim countries and the Muslim sects themselves. This high intensity of conflict should lead to a more humane Islam. If it does not, it cannot last long.

(ii) The awakening of Muslim women the world over would force a reinterpretation of the Koran and the Shariat in humanistic terms, in which case, Islam purged of its impurities, will be better able to co-exist with other religions.

Without belittling the gravity of the siege by internal and external forces, Indian patriots and the upholders of Indian culture must also read the opportunities in the new situation. Today, in the West, a new realization is growing about the unity of all life. Simultaneously, a new respect is growing about Hindu philosophy, for reasons we have mentioned earlier—namely, (i) the unity of all life; (ii) the relatedness between the Animate and the Inanimate. The West is now slowly realizing (i) that their own anthropocentric concept of the world—according to which all other forms of life exist for the enjoyment of man—was erroneous and (ii) that what they had once decried as 'animism'

RSS eagerness to resist appeasement is not matched by its practice of universal love

in Indian culture was a means of folk education for inculcation of ecological practices. The kind of desacrilisation of Nature which was embedded in the Semitic tradition is now a source of embarrassment to the followers of these faiths. This is the time when people of the whole world will be avid receptors of Hinduism's message. Those, who see only the 'siege' and indulge in panicky reactions, fail to see how Hinduism could now capture the world mind.

RSS and all those who talk about Hinduism must also recognise Hinduism's allies on the global scale. These are :

- (i) the fast-growing ecology movement all over the world;
- (ii) the 'Liberation Theology' movement within Christianity;
- (iii) the various reform movements within the Islamic world; and

- (iv) the women's movements in the world, with a new emphasis on feminine principle which, in essence, means the principle of love (as distinct from the masculine principle of power). This includes the movements of women in Islamic countries who face great hazards.

RSS is in deep love with the word 'Hindu'. It needs to love more Hinduism's core principles, which our Rishis had bequeathed to us. It should love more the teachings of the seers and sages of later centuries—Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramdas, Gorakhnath, Guru Nanak, Kabir, Baba Farid, Bulhe Shah, Shah Abdul Latif, Lalan Fakir, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Ramana Maharshi, Sai Baba of Shirdi, and others, who preached the message of universal love and showed the winning power of love.

Hinduism can be promoted much better by (i) the publication of the messages of India's ancient scriptures and comparing their truths with the latest insights from physical, biological and psychological sciences and (ii) making these available in all Indian languages and the major languages of the world. If these deep philosophical thoughts and principles are lucidly explained and their applications in the present-day life situations illustrated, the world will eagerly convert to the Hindu principles. That will be Hinduism's hour of triumph on the world scale.

If RSS can see this perspective, it should agree to drop the terminology of 'Hindu nation' which clouds many people's vision and wait for the day when the Indian Muslims and the Christians will themselves sing paeans to the Hindu philosophy to share in their common forefathers' glory.

RSS must open its doors to the Muslims. I am told there is no bar to their entry. But an open welcome to the 'patriots and non-communal elements' of all faiths, would be preferable.

RSS and similar socio-cultural organisations, for that matter anybody who cares for national integrity and communal harmony, will have to give high importance to mutual understanding through inter-religious dialogues. The RSS, with its far-flung organisational network, can certainly take the initiative in this direction, with an openness and loving concern. The Muslims need to be helped to perceive (i) that the 'Hindus' are no idolaters, (ii) that the images they supposedly worship are the manifestations of aspects which they contemplate; (iii) that unlike in Arabia of the 7th century, the deities here were considered only as different manifestations of the same Godhead; (iv) that Arabia had no concept of 'एकं सद् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति' (God is one; sages call Him by different

names); and (v) that the idolatry against which Prophet Mohammed had waged a war was a feud-promoting, economically divisive and socially disintegrative worship of the idols (lacking in the sense of oneness), which had nothing to do with the Indian understanding and practice. When the Muslims find that even great Muslim scholars such as Al-Biruni noted in the past that worship with the aid of images in India was not idolatry, they will possibly understand. When Muslims themselves have to seek arguments in support of their practices, they would know how difficult it is to rationalise some of their practices. They would also know that in reasoning (ijtihad), in theological as well as legal matters was expected to play an important role in Islam. It would then be easier to build bridges of understanding.

NOW, LET ME come to the Communists. They are now split into many different political parties. All of them swear by Marx but all have forgotten the mainspring of Marxism, which was a profound humanism passionately seeking freedom from hunger and freedom of the spirit. Today's Marxists have closed minds. They fit all facts into their ideological frame, instead of testing the ideas continually against the unfolding realities of life. As the *mullahs* believe that Prophet Mohammed had received that last revelation, the Marxists believe that Karl Marx had received all truths. They, therefore, frown upon any original thinking,

What RSS should have done about Ayodhya and in Meerut

even if it is inspired by the intent to fulfil Marx's original purpose. Lenin's statement that "Marx's theory is the objective truth.....From the philosophy of Marxism.....it is impossible to expunge a single basic premise, a single essential part, without deviating from objective truth", completely shuts out fresh ideas.

As an ex-communist—who left the party in 1957, not out of any discontent but because of fundamental ideological differences—and as one who produced in the same year an analysis which has been vindicated by Euro-Communists and Gorbachev's many pronouncements, I still feel that the Communists, most of whom are emotionally rich and are ready to suffer for the oppressed people, would be able to play a great role if only they re-examine their ideology and political policies. They must search their hearts to see:

Why they are regarded as elements who have mortgaged their brains to Moscow or Beijing;

Why most people believe that if they come to power, they will impose dictatorial regime;

Why people feel they sabotage alliances by ousting others to acquire power for themselves.

Of course, in whatever they do, they are comforted by the feeling that "people's interests demand their being in power". But how true is this feeling?

In 1940, a veteran Gandhian of my district (24 Parganas, West Bengal) made a sarcastic comment. "You, Communists, talk of establishing dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, the Communists end up by establishing dictatorship *over* the proletariat. That is what they have done in the Soviet Union." As a young Marxist, I laughed away the suggestion derisively. History has proved that he was right. Those who are loyal to the spirit of Marx should ponder (i) *how* this could happen in almost all Communist-led countries and (ii) *why* and *how* in the systems we call "socialist", the people came to be mere digits in the individual? struggle for power.

I have my own analysis in this respect showing what happens when the concentration of political power and economic power are combined in the same hands. But I think I should not go into that analysis here. The Communists need to think if the 'personality cult' explanation is enough. They need to ask: what is there in that cult that makes the personality cult possible? If Stalin planned to perpetrate monstrosities, why could he succeed? Was he *alone* to blame for all these? Were there no loopholes in Lenin's *theories and methods of organisation* that enabled these monstrosities to sprout? Were there no *errors and ambiguities* in Marx that contained the seeds of overturning his humanistic goals?

The Marxists who replaced God by Marx and are also impelled by a burning passion for justice, have been without any internal restraints. In their vanity that they are building a socialist—and, thereafter, a Communist—society "which will last eternally, without any major contradictions (anti-thesis)", they came to think that their "new morality" is the final arbiter of truth. This has been causing great massacres. Marx himself, in spite of many profound thoughts, avoided stating that there are certain things called "ethical imperatives". His avoidance was presumably due to the fear that this might slip into metaphysics. Hence, in their vaunted "new morality", the alleged Marxists went berserk. The Bolshevik publication, "Red Sword", is credited with the following shocking statement in August 1919, i.e. in Lenin's lifetime. "Ours is a new morality...Our humanism is absolute, for it has as its basis the desire for abolition of all oppression and tyranny, *To us anything is permitted, for we are the first in the world to raise the sword not for*

the purpose of enslavement and oppression but in the name of liberty and emancipation".* (Emphasis added). Is this not very much like the voice of fanatics who sought to spread Islam by the sword "to banish conflict and inequality?"

The Marxists have, by and large, avoided understanding Indian culture. Distaste for certain aspects of Indian realities—fatalism in the name of Karma, the transformation of occupation-based caste system into caste disabilities, etc.—led them to denigrate all of Indian culture. Moreover, anything that fell from the lips of Marx became Gospel Truth. I myself, after my long wanderings, discovered that Marx's identification of "hydraulic civilisation of the East" with "oriental despotism" was wrong.

Reform Movements in the West and even within Islam vindicate the Hindu approach to life

The Eastern hydraulic system and its many wholesome features were based on ecological principles. If we have to survive, we would have to understand, with reverence, ancient India's agricultural and other cultural practices interweaving Man and Nature.

Marxists know well that Marx could not leave outlines for rebuilding society after revolution. Instead of thinking for themselves, they rush to suggest "nationalisation" as the panacea for all maladies, forgetting that statism can lead to grave problems. Recently after the USSR's and China's disclosures about the evils of State control, their rush to this patented formula of nationalisation has abated a little. But have they seriously been thinking about the way out? Neither Lenin nor Mao came out of the limited frame left by Marx. Gorbachev has uttered many truths and he is trying to restore humanism to Marxism but he, too, has his own illusions. He is yet to grasp (i) that neither freedom nor people's material progress lies the "market economy" way and (ii) that the "nature-conquering science and technology", in which he wants the Soviet Union to equal the USA, can never liberate man: these can only widen the disparities, increase authoritarianism, destroy life-support systems (by polluting air and water and making the soil toxic). This genre of science and technology can succeed only in making life-destruction-oriented instruments—and in machinistic inventions in transport and communication systems which, of course, have civilian uses as well. For common people's liberation, we need nature-harmonic science and

* Source: the book 'Beyond Science' by Denis Alexander published by Lion Publishing, Berkhamsted, Herts (1972)

technology which opens up people's access to natural resources and makes these usable without capital intensive equipments—a science and technology which is conducive to economic and political decentralisation, and can open the way to participatory democracy.

Marxists will have to learn that however much one may talk of decentralisation and freedom and power for the people, it will never materialise if the so-called “high tech” becomes the main reliance. The “high tech” is, in fact, low-social-efficiency tech; capital intensity, mass displacement, elitism and life destruction inhere in it.

Within the state-led structure of society, if you depend mostly on material incentive, it can only increase inequality, nepotism and corruption. If you price goods at real costs, this leads to inflation. If you depend on market forces, that leads to capitalism. That is why I have always regarded Deng of China as a “capitalist roader”.

Society needs new thinking. Marx had challenged certain concepts in philosophy, history and economics but he virtually accepted the given pattern of science and technology, dazzled as he was by the “liberation from theological tyranny” brought about by Galileo and by the theory of evolution of species worked out by Charles Darwin in Marx's own time. It did not occur to Marx that Darwin's theory was lop-sided, that the system of cooperation has a larger aspect in Nature than competition. Marx had tried to extrapolate mechanistic causality determinism right out of science into a theory of social evolution. Now when, this concept of determinism in science is being devalued by Indeterminacy Principle, the Marxists ought to re-examine the theory of social determinism. Their over-emphasis on struggle has led at one pole to excessive militancy and resulting dissipation of friendly forces; at the other pole, it has led to neglect of the needed struggle for a transformation of the psyche, for precedence to society's benefit over personal interest, and for a change-over to techniques in farming and industry in which people's control becomes feasible. The non-physical dimension of struggle—the struggle which has to be in the domain of consciousness—got neglected.

The new thinking should be on the entire spectrum of knowledge—on the pattern of science and technology, on economics, philosophy, history, psychology etc. This would require us to go beyond Marx. So long as the Marxists remain confined to the Marxist or Leninist frame of thinking, there would be no solution for dilemmas of the kind mentioned above. Mao understood, correctly, that in the ‘state-controlled socialist’ society, a new ruling class based on State power could emerge. That is why he wanted a cultural revolution. But his cultural revolution was not a natural growth. It was not accompanied by technology which could make possible the local people's control over the local

resources or free agriculture from dependence on urban inputs. It was not accompanied with a concept of low-concentration-based industrial technology which could open up low-income people's access to industries or the non-technocratic people's control over industries in the vicinity. Since Mao had no concept of these—and no bold thinking outside the Marxist frame or the given pattern of science and technology—he thought of imposing cultural revolution from above. Hence the implementation of ‘cultural revolution’ was hasty, crude, cruel and counter-productive. It was this failure of Mao that prompted efforts in another direction and enabled Deng to apply the reverse gear after Mao's death. It is an illusion to think that the Deng approach would bring prosperity.

This is the essence of the dilemma. On the one hand, there is capitalism with its militarism and cannibalism talking about democracy. On the other hand, a formula-bound statist socialism facing problems in whichever direction it moves.

Fortunately, ecology with its nature-harmonic techniques has come to show the way out. The Gandhian philosophy of ‘development in harmony with Nature’ becomes very important in this context. Among the statesmen of the world, Gandhi was the only one who perceived this. On the ground of ecology Marx, Mao and Gandhi meet.

Ecology and Gandhism will united RSS & Communists

Both Gandhians and RSS have already accepted the need for ecologically sound pattern of development. Both favour nature-harmonic technologies which conserve soil, protect water, air and forest resources and which support patterns of development for universally shared prosperity and make decentralisation of political and economic power possible. Communists, too, will have to come to this realization if they remain loyal to their basic objective. Ecology and Gandhism will, then, be the cementing bond between RSS and the Communists.

Many people ask me : Where are the true Gandhians ? The true ones are already too old and incapacitated, they say. But I see Gandhism staging a comeback on a massive scale on the world level. The young ecologists are mostly Gandhians. True, those old Gandhians who are still active in India, have their minds limited to charkha and a few small and cottage industries and cow protection. These are no doubt important. But the Gandhians must reckon that if Gandhiji had been alive today, he would have given the highest priority to massive afforestation, without which there would be little fodder, hence no cow protection, and soil would get parched. The Gandhians must also know that renewable-energy based production is the key to people's swaraj. Re-oriented Gandhians along with Gandhism via ecology route will make the three vital forces of India meet beneficially. But they must first shed their blinkers and illogical obsessions, which fail the nation, mankind, and themselves.

The measure of a man.....

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Article 356 Must Go—If India is to Survive as a Federation

By : Justice Guman Mal Lodha,
Chief Justice (Retd.)

"Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution of the Third Reich of Germany, was used by Herr Hitler to destroy democracy in Germany and to establish his dictatorship." Thus thundered Shri H. V. Kamath while opposing Article 356 which was earlier Article 278 in the draft constitution. He moved amendment No. 225 for inclusion of the words "that the President must be satisfied that a grave emergency has arisen, which threatens the peace and the tranquillity of the state". He gave a warning in the following classical words which have proved to be true in Karnataka now and various other states like Andhra Pradesh, J & K, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland earlier. He said on 3rd of August 1949 in the Constituent Assembly : "The dangers are that on the pretext of resolving a ministerial crisis, or on the pretext of purifying or reforming maladministration obtaining in a particular state, the President may have recourse to this article 278."

Kamath then said: "A mere crisis or a vote of no-confidence in the ministry by the legislature, even a repeated vote does not, and cannot empower the President of the Union Government to intervene and proclaim an emergency. Nowhere in the world has this been done. If you are going to set up a new precedent, you are welcome to do it; but let us beware of the catastrophes that have followed in the wake of arming the executive with unnecessary, uncalled for, tyrannical, dictatorial powers."

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena supported Kamath and reminded the Constituent Assembly that even the Government of India Act of Britishers adopted in 1947 is more progressive in this respect.

He said: "If you see the Government of India Act 1935, you will find that this article is almost a word for word reproduction of section 93 of that Act; only for the Parliament of England, you have substituted the houses of parliament in India."

He then revealed that even the Government of India Act 1935 as amended in 1947 had deleted this article. He said; "So in a way the present Government of India Act under which we are now being governed is more progressive than the article which we are now going to pass, because in this present Government of India Act, there is no section 93 and we are re-introducing it in our new constitution. I surely think that this is a retrograde step."

Prof. Saxena termed article 356 as introducing unitary form of Government, instead of federal. He said: "Then, Sir, I find that this article scraps the State Legislature and the Council of Ministers as well as the Governor, and the President and Parliament becomes the rulers of the Province. I would not have minded, if you had frankly said, 'We are framing a unitary Constitution'. That would have been better. You could have had 250 countries in the country and one single central parliament. But now we have rejected such a formula and we have adopted this federal constitution with autonomous states. Therefore you must at least treat the states with some respect."

Shri Saxena quoted Govind Vallabh Pant and Kunzru, for deleting article 356, when he said: "I am not the only person, nor my friend Mr. Karnath is, but even many of our leaders in this house are of this opinion. I find that no less a person than Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant had tabled an amendment to this article. So had Dr. H. N. Kunzru. Such men too were for deletion of this article."

Shri K. Santhanam saw the difficulty when he said: "Of course a difficult case may happen when some states are governed by political parties which are different from the political party which is governing at the Centre and the majority of the other states. Then, it is possible through political prejudice some unnecessary or intolerant action may be taken under article 278 and 278-A."

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru also pleaded for omission of article 356 when he said: "I think, therefore, Sir, that articles that we are discussing are not needed." Pandit Kunzru specifically asked Dr. Ambedkar: "Is it the purpose of articles 278 and 278-A to enable the Central Government to intervene in provincial affairs for the sake of good government of the provinces?" To which Dr. Ambedkar replied: "No, no, the Centre is not given that authority."

At the conclusion of the debate Dr. Ambedkar realised that almost all the members who participated in the debate have opposed granting of arbitrary powers to the Centre to interfere in the autonomy of the states. He, therefore, instead of withdrawing the article, assured them that it would remain a "dead letter". He said: "In fact I share the sentiments expressed by my honourable friend Mr. Gupta yesterday that the proper thing we ought to expect is that such articles will never be called into operation and that they would remain a dead letter."

Even earlier, while moving this article, Dr. Ambedkar had made it clear that the Provinces are as sovereign, as the Centre in their respective spheres. He said "none-the-less this is a federal constitution and when

we say that the Constitution is a Federal Constitution it means that the provinces are as sovereign in their field which is left to them by the Constitution as the Centre is in the field which is assigned to it. In other words, barring the provisions which permit the Centre to override any legislation that may be passed by the Provinces, the provinces have a plenary authority to make any law for the peace, order and good government of that province. Now, when once the Constitution makes the provinces sovereign and gives them plenary powers to make any law for the peace, order and good government of the province, really speaking, the intervention of the Centre or any other authority must be deemed to be barred because that would be an invasion of the sovereign authority of the province. That is a fundamental proposition which, I think we must accept by reason of the fact that we have a Federal Constitution."

I wish Shri Shankaranand, Law Minister, successor to Dr. Ambedkar, had shown the above vital undertaking and assurance of Dr. Ambedkar to Shri Buta Singh, and his "Blue eyed-yours most obedient servants, the Governors," as the latter has got the privilege to succeed Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Govind Vallabh Pant.

Article 356 Must Go if India is to Survive as a Federation

A few amongst treasury benches knew, that Dr. Ambedkar sensing the vehement opposition to passing of article 356 categorically declared that it would never be acted upon and would remain "dead letter", as the Constituent Assembly was in a mood to reject article 278 (356 now). Article 356 should, therefore, be read only with the rider that it was intended to be "dead" and not a handy weapon to topple opposition Governments in the states.

Is it not a pity that hardly the ink on the constituent assembly debate had dried, none else but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru betrayed, by exploding article 356 bomb in Kerala, for toppling "Communist Government"?

Constitutional experts recount that by now Article 356 Atom bombs have been exploded over 150 times against federalism, for toppling opposition Governments.

Dr. Sampurnanand, Governor of Rajasthan, Dr. Dharamveer, Governor of W. Bengal, Shri Ramlal, Governor of Andhra, Shri Jagmohan, Governor of J & K, Shri Talyarkhan, Governor of Sikkim and Shri K.V.

Krishna Rao, Governor of Nagaland are illustrious predecessors of Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah, Governor of Karnataka, who would always be remembered for giving body blows to federalism in India by gagging the majority verdict in the state, for the benefit of the ruling party at the centre, under the pretext of failure of the constitutional machinery in states, even though the opposition in those states had majority support in the legislature.

Dr. Sampurnanand refused to count the independent members supporting the Samyukt Dal headed by Gayatri Devi, Laxman Singh, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat in 1967, resulting in mass upsurge, against the central intervention to deprive the majority legislature. Dr. Sampurnanand suppressed it by enacting another mini-Jallianwala Bagh in Johari Bazar, Jaipur, where 9 persons were killed by bullets of police and 100 injured on 7th March, 1967 in firing which was held wholly unjustified by Justice B.P. Beri, Chief Justice of Rajasthan.

Dharmveer had to confess in his Governor's address to the West Bengal assembly that he committed murder of democracy as Governor earlier and the Marxist volunteers at the gate of West Bengal assembly greeted him by spitting on his face rather than giving him red salute 'Lal Salaam'.

Ramlal wanted to do a miracle by installing Bhaskar Rao in Andhra Pradesh by constitutional rape but N. T. R. proved more than a match for him and politically buried him and Bhaskar Rao alive.

Talyarkhan dismissed Bhandare in Sikkim but he could not stop his rebirth. Jagmohan's dismissal of Farookh and Shah Ministries in J & K has ultimately paved a red carpet reception to pro-Pakistani terrorists who are engaged in a civil war. Shri Khurana's unconstitutional action in Tamilnadu only resulted in the rebirth of D.M.K. and wiping out Congress (I) in Haryana.

No one in the Raj Bhavans studies the constitutional duties, and restrains which the great framers of the Constitution debated while framing article 356, 153 and 154 of the Constitution.

I wish the Prime Minister requested the Governors to have a refresher course in Baroda House with particular emphasis on having a study of the Constituent Assembly's above debates and the judicial verdicts like the Gauhati High Court judgement quashing the Nagaland Governor's report under article 356 and highlighting the parameters of the Governor's rights, duties and limitations while using article 356 in particular.

Perhaps no one in the country has remembered and acted upon Dr. Ambedkar's undertaking and solemn assurance to the Constituent Assembly that "I hope the first thing he will do would be to issue a mere warning to a province that has erred, that things were not happening in the way in which they were intended to happen in the Constitution."

What Dr. Ambedkar wanted to remain as a dead letter only has literally been negatived by making his undertaking a dead letter, and using 356 as a weapon in the armoury of the Governor to act in the political interest of the centre to topple opposition governments in the states.

I would be partisan and biased, if I fail to note that the Federal structure of the constitution was also given a body blow by Morarji Desai in 1977. Mrs. Indira Gandhi followed him in 1980. These Prime Ministers having secured majority in the Lok Sabha, misused article 356 for dissolution of all the assemblies in the states, having government, of opposition parties, How, just because in the Lok Sabha a particular party gets majority, the state governments of parties opposed to them overnight become incapable of running the government in the states

Kamath and Kunzru, Pant and Santhanam wanted Article 356 out

in accordance with provision of the constitution, is beyond understanding. In a federal form of parliamentary democracy, there is no requirement that the state government should be of the same party which gets a majority in the centre in Lok Sabha. Yet the unconstitutional dissolution by Morarji and Indira Gandhi under article 356 of the constitution, were sealed and signed by the apex judiciary. Dr. Upendra Baxi, a veteran jurist has rightly termed the above Supreme Court verdicts providing unbridled political power to the centre, to dissolve the assemblies in states having majority Governments of the parties opposed to the centre, before the expiry of the term of 5 years, as politicking, or politics in Supreme Court.

Undoubtedly the "Operation Venkatasubbaiah" is non-violent in contrast to 'Operation Blue Star' or 'Operation Thunder.' But the fact that he did not disclose to Bommai that 19 legislators had sent death warrants against him by withdrawing support, and not permitting Bommai to even prove that 12 out of 19 had withdrawn the letters, shows the ugly unconstitutional hot haste resulting in murder of democracy and federalism in India.

No doubt 'Operation Venkattasubbaih' was under remote control of Butasingh assisted by Dhavan. But why Mrs. Indira Gandhi was permitted to mark time in 1969 to obtain support of communists and others to convert her minority into majority, when Congress came in minority on the split of the Congress, and why Charansingh was given one month's time to show his majority in the house, but different yardstick was adopted in the case of Bommai, Chief-Minister of Karnataka ?

Perhaps the personal war of nerves for power in Janata segment of the Janata Dal between Chandrashekhar and Hegde being at its worst behind the curtain, 'Operation Venkattasubbaih' was planned to strike while the iron was hot.

However, it would not provide any justification or protective umbrella either to Venkattasubbaih or to Butasingh or to Rajiv.

The defence that Rs. 15 lacs bids were given to legislators and the government was under constitutional obligation to prevent 'horse trading' is not only wholly unconstitutional but also sinister and mischievous in addition to being meritless. The constitutional debate referred to above on article 356 makes it clear that such reasons are foreign to article 356, as whether the Government is good or bad, corrupt or honest, efficient or inefficient cannot be a ground for dismissal under article 356. It is for the electors to decide finally and give their verdict and not the Governor. Defections, for whatever reasons it may be, are to be governed by the anti-defection law in which the Speaker alone is competent and the Governor has no say in the matter.

The Governor is not omnipresent and omnipotent for all party evils in the legislatures or outside the legislatures, as his constitutional function is not to oblige the centre by converting majority into minority or deciding on no-confidence, while sitting in Raj Bhavan.

The time is now right for amendment by deleting article 356 of the constitution or amending it in a suitable manner by adding H. V. Kamath's amendment referred to above, which has become much more relevant now, as the undertaking given by Dr. Ambedkar has been betrayed time and again. The amendment of Kamath was to add the following : "is satisfied that a grave emergency has arisen threatening peace and tranquillity of the state" and this amendment was turned down only on the undertaking of Dr. Ambedkar that 356 would remain a 'dead letter'.

Finally, now the Sarkaria Commission's report further clarifies the restrictions and limitations on article 356. They should be made express under article 356, by adding a further provision that no Government in a state would be called upon to prove its majority before the Governor and the only method of testing majority would be trial of strength on the floor of the assembly.

Keep Dr. Ambedkar's word that Article 356 will be a "dead letter"

Neither the American constitution nor the Australian constitution has got any provision analogous to Article 356. There are enough other provisions in the form of 352, 353, 354, 355, 358 & 360 to take care of internal or external emergency or failure of constitutional machinery in the states.

Let us delete Article 356, as pleaded by Govind Vallabh Pant, Kamath, Saxena, Kunzru, and Santhanam who were great patriots and architects of our constitution. Let us constitutionally declare "dead" what Dr. Ambedkar wanted to remain dead in practice before the Federal structure totally collapses.

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The Age of the Vedas

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The Aryan-Invasionists have conceded that Sanskrit is the oldest of the 'Indo-European' languages, and there is no evidence of Sanskrit being used anywhere outside India, prior to the Vedas. It is therefore unnecessary to discuss the antiquity of the Vedas for combating the Aryan-Invasion theory.

But a discussion of the Aryan-Invasion theory is necessarily connected with the nature of the Vedic civilization, and from this point of view it is necessary to discuss when the Vedas were composed.

The initial attempt to fix the date of the earliest hymns of the Rgved was made by Max Muller. He calls this earliest period the *Chhandas* period, the *Mantra*, the *Brahman* and the *Sootra* periods coming after it, in the order stated. In the *Mantra* period, the hymns of the *Chhandas* period were classified and some new ones composed on the lines of the old. In the *Brahman* period explanations of the hymns of the *Chhandas* and the *Mantra* periods were given. The *Sootra* period is that of the *Anukramanis* of Shaunak and Katyayana. These are editorial types of works. Max Muller assigns the following dates to these different periods:

Sootra period : 600 to 200 B.C.

Brahman period : 800 to 600 B.C.

Mantra period : 1000 to 800 B.C.

Max Muller assigned these periods on the basis of the estimated time required for the transition of the 'language and thought' of one period into the 'language and thought' of another. But beyond dogmatically asserting that such a development required 400 years for the *Sootra* period, but only 200 for the other three periods, he has not given any detailed working out of the transition of 'language and thought'. One could be content with 100 years for each of the periods and bring down the Rgved to only 600 B.C. On the contrary there is no reason why one could not take 500 years instead of 200, and carry the date of the earliest period as far back as 2000 B.C.

In fact Whitney and Benfey, using arguments similar to Max Muller's, do carry back the date of the Rgved to 2000 B.C.

The language of the Brahmanas can be understood without much difficulty by those who can follow the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. This language is called classical Sanskrit and was spoken at least in the

days of Patanjali i.e. 150 B.C. This is clear from his statement how different forms of the word GOW (cow) are current in different regions, but only GOW is accepted as correct i.e. standard by grammar. It is contended that thousands of years could not have elapsed between the language of the Brahmanas and the language of Patanjali, since the two are so similar that one of them is intelligible to those who know the other.

As against this, it can be pointed out that Max Muller himself allows 600 years between the Patanjali period and the Brahmana period. If intelligibility is the criterion, there is no reason why this should not be taken as 1000 years. The earliest Marathi sentence of 983 A.D.—on the Shravan Belgola—is clearly intelligible today even after more than a thousand years. It should be remembered that Marathi was not governed by a strict grammar compulsorily taught to all those who entered the field of Marathi letters. The history of Marathi grammar is only 150 years old and Marathi writers who have undergone the discipline of Marathi grammar, is a very recent phenomena. On the contrary, Sanskrit grammar has a history which goes back to a period centuries earlier than Panini. Panini himself mentions 10 grammarians who preceded him. The Pratisakhya are grammatical works which are supposed to be even earlier. Estimates of Panini's date vary from 400 to 700 B.C. The date of the grammatical studies can thus be carried back without exaggeration to 1000 B.C., since there is no weighty evidence against Panini having flourished in 700 B.C.

This has not been said for estimating the date of the Vedas from the date of Panini, but to emphasize that, from very early times, the composers of Sanskrit works were students of grammar and took care that their compositions are grammatically accurate. This served to preserve the uniformity of this language over a wide region as well as over longer periods than is true of other languages. The fact that the Sanskrit language did not change much from the times of the Brahmanas to the times of Patanjali, is thus explicable.

Another factor is that whenever the language, in spite of the efforts of grammarians to keep it as it is, did change, the grammarians amended their grammar accordingly, and the copyists, while copying an ancient book, did not hesitate to correct it in the light of the new changes. This is recognised by the editors of the Mahabharat brought out by the Bhandarkar Research Institute. While restoring the older texts, they have followed the principle that the readings which fit the meter and grammar better are later than the readings which do not. The tendency of the copyists to correct the text while copying it is clearly seen in Marathi manuscripts.

The verses of Ramdas have been corrected to bring them in line with the language current at the time of the copyist. Parashuram Tatya Godbole has done the same to the work of Raghunatha Pandit. It is, therefore, wrong to suppose that the Vedic literature handed down to us, specially the Brahmanas, is a photostat copy of the originals, and estimate the date of the originals from the difference in their language and that of the later works. Such an estimate can at best give us the date of the stabilization of their present form, when these works were regarded sacred and any change in them became a sacrilege.

The idea of sacredness arose about the hymns much earlier than about the Brahmanas, because the Brahmanas are after all a commentary on the hymns. The language of the hymns is, therefore, found to be so different from that of the Brahmanas that it is difficult to understand it without a commentary.

Thus there is nothing in the linguistic argument which can override all other arguments to the extent of completely ignoring them, and even linguistically there is nothing to prevent placing the Vedic literature thousands of years before 1200 B.C.

Chhandas came first—and then came Mantras Brahmanas and Sootras

The other method is *astronomical*. This method has been brought into disrepute by many writers who put astronomical constructions on texts which can not bear them without outright distortion. Some even change the text to fit their desired meaning with the sole justification that this serves their purpose. Some even base their conclusions on astrological as distinct from astronomical statements. There are stock astrological descriptions for auspicious and inauspicious events and these cannot be taken as seriously intended to describe the observed astronomical phenomena. We shall consider here only those astronomical statements which are free from these blemishes.

Some noted scholars, a la Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, have evaded all astronomical arguments by saying that (1) conclusions based on astronomy vary by thousands of years, (2) those who composed the Vedic literature could hardly have known any astronomy.

I have called these objections as evasions because :

(1) We have seen that conclusions based on linguistic considerations can also vary by a thousand years. The much wider gap between different astronomical estimates are due, not to the undependability of Astronomy,

but to the fact that many such estimates are based on fanciful interpretations of the texts. When a straightforward meaning of the texts is taken, there is almost no variation in the estimates.

(2) As to the Vedics not knowing any Astronomy, this has to be decided on the basis of the Vedic texts themselves. The Vedic texts should not be interpreted on the basis of preconceived notions about the astronomical ignorance of the Vedics. Traditionally, Astronomy has been recognized as one of the six sciences necessary for the study of the Vedas (*Vedanga*). Astronomy was part and parcel of Vedic life.

In fact Astronomy is a part and parcel of all ancient civilizations. When gadgets like the watch and the mariner's compass were not available, people kept their time and found their directions by astronomical observations. Even now in the villages, if you ask a person when he wakes up, he will not say "at 4 O'clock", he will reply "at the rise of the Venus." The villagers talk of the Orion—MRUGA NAKSHATRA—as the signal for the rainy season; they do not talk in terms of the Gregorian calendar month.

In ancient times a network of roads with boards indicating directions were not available in most places. So the people depended on the heavenly bodies for finding their way. This was much more necessary for the navigators. So the observation that the Vedics did not know any astronomy betrays an elementary ignorance, not only of the uses of Astronomy, but also of the contents of the Vedas.

The earliest known use of the astronomical method is by Haugh (1827-1876). Haugh uses the statement in the *Vedangajyotish* to the effect that the Sun and the Moon embark on their northern course when they are in the constellation of Shrivishtha—Delphinus. Haugh calculated that this position dates back to 1186 B. C. Deceit and Tilak hold that, on this very basis, we can go back to 1400 B. C. The *Vedangas* are admittedly posterior to the Vedas. Haugh, therefore, assigns the following periods :

Brahmanas : 1400 to 1200 B. C.

Samhitas : 2000 to 1400 B. C.

Oldest Hymns : 2400 to 2000 B. C.

Haugh's finding is flawless. The statement on which he has based his calculations is found in an Astronomical work and there could be no dispute about its meaning.

The reaction to Haugh's finding by the European scholars was evasive. Max Muller has gone to the extent of hinting that the line is

not a genuine part of the Vedanga and that the Vedanga Jyotish is mostly obscure. There is certainly a good deal of obscurity in the Vedanga, but there is no obscurity in this verse and there is no reason why it should not be regarded as a genuine observation in the work, beyond the fact that this does not suit Max Muller's prejudices.

That the Vedic literature is prior to 1400 B. C. is corroborated by the date of an Asia Minor inscription which mentions Vedic deities. The date of this inscription is 1400 B. C. Maedonell tries to evade this piece of evidence by postulating an imaginary Vedic civilization outside India, more ancient than the Rgveda and the inscription. But recourse to imagination just for evading inconvenient facts, can hardly be called scientific research. Asia Minor has no history of Vedic worship, and, therefore, the Vedic deities in the inscription must have been borrowed from a place where there was such a history. This place is no other than India.

Tilak has pointed out that while the Vedanga Jyotish says that the Northern course starts at the beginning of Delphinus, the Maitrayani Upanishad says that it starts in its middle. This gives a period about 480 years earlier i. e. about 1600 B. C. The Maitrayani Upanishad quotes from the Chhandogya. The Chhandogya Upanishad is, therefore, earlier than 1600 B. C. and the hymn period still earlier.

Even 1000-year old Marathi is intelligible today

This is corroborated by the latest date when the Vedic Saraswati was alive. This is given by Geologists as 1800 B. C.

The Chhandogya Upanishad mentions Krishna, the son of Devaki. This Krishna is obviously the Krishna of the Maha Bharat war. This war presupposes the Vedas. According to the Bruhaddevata, Arshitshena Devapi, the brother of Shantanu composed the rain hymn (10/98) in the Rgveda. The Nirukta says that Devapi composed it when there was a terrible drought in the reign of Shantanu, the Emperor of Hastinapur, and the fourth ancestor of the Pandavas. The latest portions of the Rgveda are thus not much more than a 100 years older than the Mahabharata war.

Megasthenes who came to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, states that Heracles, who was worshipped by the Shauraseni people, flourished 138 generations before Chandragupta Maurya. Heracles worshipped by the Shaurasenis could only be Shri Krishna. Taking 20 years for a generation gives 3072 B. C. as period when Shri Krishna was living.

According to the Mahabharat Shri Krishna left his mortal coil 36 years after the Maha Bharata war. The traditional date of the war is 3101 B. C. This gives 3065 B. C. as the date of the death of Shri Krishna. The difference of 7 years is negligible in a field where estimates vary by thousands, and specially when Megasthenes is talking in terms of generations and not years.

The traditional date of the war is given in the Aihole inscription which states that at the time of its composition 3735 years from the war and 556 years of the Shaka era, i. e. 534 A. D., had elapsed. This shows that the Kaliyuga, which according to the Mahabharata marked the end of the war, and which began in 3101 B. C., was widely used even in historical records like the inscriptions. Kaliyuga is the oldest era current in India.

Varahamihir who flourished in the 6th century, quotes Garga as saying that one can get the date of Yudhishtir by adding 2526 years to the Shaka year. This Shaka year cannot be the year of the Shaka era now current, because, he is held to have flourished before the Shaka era. His name is mentioned in the Mahabharat. Dynast Chrysostom, a greek traveller who came to Tamilnadu in 50 A. D., mentions the Mahabharat of 100 thousand verses. If the Mahabharat of 1,00,000 verses was well known in Tamil Nadu, a place far off from Kurukshetra, in 50 A. D. it is obvious that the whole of the Mahabharat as it exists today was composed before the Shaka era, and the Garga mentioned in it could not have belonged to that era.

The Shaka Kala mentioned by Garga could only be the Shakyakala i. e. the Buddha era, because Buddha was called Shakya. Buddha's date is 543 B. C. as current in Burma. Adding 2526 to this gives 3069 as the date of Yudhishtir. Yudhishtir is said to have ruled for 36 years after the Mahabharat war. The date we have arrived at is only three years short of this, when we add the first year after the war to it. This lacuna is again negligible in a field where estimates vary by millennia.

Vishnupurana states that 1500 years have elapsed between the birth of Pareekshit and the coronation of the Nandas. This gives the date of the birth of Pareekshit as $364 + 1500 = 1864$ B. C. Considering that the father of Pareekshit, viz. Abhimanyu, died in the Bharat war itself, this does not give us the date of the Bharat war earlier than 1865 B. C.

The anomaly, however, is removed by the following statement in the Mahabharata.

"Janamejaya obtained the kingdom, gone in the kaliyuga, from his father Pareekshit for a thousand years." (41st Adhyaya, Asteka Parva.)

This state statement is very significant. The phrase *Kaliyug gamam* "gone in Kaliyuga", suggests that the kingdom ended with end of the Kaliyuga. According to the ancient tradition Kaliyuga consists of a thousand years only. According to the current notion the Kaliyuga consists of 432000 years. If this is accepted, it makes no sense to say that the kingdom which Janamejaya obtained ended in Kaliyuga, because all kingdoms after the Bharat war which have ended must end in Kaliyuga. "*Kaliyuga gamam*" therefore means ended with the end of Kaliyuga i.e. after a thousand years allotted to the Kaliyuga had passed. Secondly though Pareekshit ruled only for 60 years, his son obtained the kingdom for a thousand years, i.e. he ruled for a thousand years. The writer makes this strange statement because he knew that there was a king called Janamejaya who ruled when a thousand years of the Kaliyuga had passed, but did not know anything about the kings who ruled between this Janamejaya and the great grand son of Arjuna. He, therefore, fills the gap by making the great grandson of Arjuna himself rule for a thousand years.

New copyists did not hesitate to correct old Grammar as they went along

If there was another Janamejaya, a thousand years after the Bharat war, the likelihood of another Pareekshit 237 years later than this Janamejaya cannot be ruled out. The Pandav line ended at the birth and not at the death of this Pareekshit, because he was born dead. This still birth of the last Pareekshit was imposed on the son of Abhimanyu with the miracle story of his being revived by Shri Krishna. It is because the Pandav line ended with the birth of the last Pareekshit that the Vishnupurana is referring to the birth of Pareekshit as a landmark for its dating. There is no reason why the birth of the son of Abhimanyu should be taken as such a landmark when the Bharat war or the death of Shree-Krishna could be so taken.

Thus the Vishnupurana does not necessarily contradict the traditional date of the Bharat war since it could be referring to a Pareekshit other than the son of Abhimanyu in its reckoning.

That the Vishnupurana does not have knowledge of kings before 1900 B. C. is shown by its geneology of the kings of Magadha. This geneology according to the years given, accounts only for 1912 years before Christ. It begins with Somapi. But there is no evidence that Somapi was a contemporary of the Bharat war. The Magadha king who fought in the Bharat war was Sahadeva and his son is called Meghasandhi in the Mahabharat, not Somapi. Thus the Vishnupurana geneology does not go up to the Bharat war and therefore the Pareekshit mentioned by it

was a contemporary of Somapi, sometime in 1900 B. C. and not the son of Abhimanyu.

The traditional date of the Bharat war is conclusively proved by a statement in the Shatapatha Brahmana. The statement runs. "The constellation of Pleides (Kritika) does not deviate from the East. All other constellations deviate from the East."

The statement is unambiguous. It is in the present tense and it means that the Pleides traverse the sky along the celestial equator—the path followed by the sun on 21st September and 22nd of March. This is the exact East-West line. The distance in degrees, of a heavenly body from this path is called its declination. Thus the declination of the Pleides was zero when this sentence was composed.

S. B. Deexit observed in 1900 that the declination of the Pleides was 68 degrees North. The declination changes one degree in 72 years. $68 \times 72 = 4896$ years had therefore elapsed in 1900 from the time this sentence was composed. This comes to 3996 B. C.

The Shatapatha Brahman mentions Janamejaya, the son of Pareekshit. Pareekshit ruled for 60 years. Janamejaya ascended the throne after his death when he was yet a child. Before Pareekshit, the Pandavas ruled for 36 years. Thus Janamejaya became king in $3101 - (36 + 60) = 3005$ B.C. The sentence in the Shatapatha Brahman was thus composed when Janamejaya had already completed a few years of his reign.

The Shatapatha Brahman statement is conclusive and should have finally settled the controversy about the age of the Vedas at least as far as the third millenium B. C. is concerned.

But that was not to be.

A typical reaction is that of Keith. He says, "It is impossible to attach serious value to this assertion made in a passage which assigns foolish reasons for preferring one or the other Nakshatra." The attitude of evasion is obvious in this reaction. A reason for preferring a *nakshatra* may be "foolish" but that by itself does not prove that it is non-existent. A man may stop going ahead on a path because a cat crosses his path. One may declare his reason for stopping as foolish, but that does not prove the cat did not cross his path.

Thebeau takes recourse to the other usual subterfuge viz. saying that the statement is interpolated. He has given no reasons for regarding the statement interpolated, except that it militates against his prejudices.

Secondly, since an interpolation can take place only in an existing work, the interpolation charge would prove that the Shatapatha Brahmana is older than 3000 B. C., a conclusion hardly welcome to Thebeau.

Winternitz has devoted a little more thought to Deexit's thesis. He takes the words 'do not deviate from the East' to mean 'are seen in the East for a considerable time!' The astronomical adviser of WINTERNITZ informed him that, "for an observer at latitude 25 degrees North, the Pleides rose 13 degrees to the North of the equator in 1100 B.C., slowly came to the East line and crossed it after 2 hours 11 minutes at 29 degrees altitude." According to Winternitz the Shatapatha Brahmana describes this state of affairs and therefore its date is 1100 B. C.

One is simply stunned by such acrobatics. To say that 'do not deviate from the East' means "do not rise in the East and even after coming on the East line, cross it" is like saying that, "a man never leaves his home" mean he never lives at home and even when he visits it, leaves it very soon."

Astrological evidence in Mahabharat puts Kurukshetra War at 3996 B.C.

Daptari has tried to remove the first part of the absurdity by saying that the Pleides are NOT seen when they are on the horizon, and therefore they can not be seen as not rising in the East. They are seen only when they come on the East line. "I could see them only when they came 13 degrees above the horizon. So the Shatapatha Brahman is talking about the Pleides which are 13 degree above the horizon as not deviating from the East."

Daptari further borrows a line from the Baudhayan Sootra quoted by Winternitz to support his position. It runs: "They plan a hut whose bamboos point to the East. The Pleides do not leave the East. Some say that the measure (of the East) should be taken by looking at the Shrivana." According to Daptari, Shrivana rises at 29 degrees latitude. It can never be in the East when on the horizon. The statement that the Pleides never deviate from the East has to be similarly interpreted. They were in the East at 13 degrees above the horizon. This was the state of affairs in 1722 B. C.

If anything can strengthen my belief in the truth of Deexit's thesis, it is the "refutations" advanced by Daptari a la Winternitz. Daptari has managed to escape from the difficulty that the Pleides

which do not rise in the East can not be described as "undeviating from the East" by saying that they cannot be seen when they rise. But even according to Daptari they can be seen when they cross the East line. How can the Shatapatha Brahman describe the Pleides which cross the East line as *not* deviating from the East? Do the Pleides disappear again after crossing the East line for the convenience of Daptari? Secondly, according to the Shatapatha Brahman it is the Pleides alone that are undeviating from the east, all other stars deviate from the East. On the interpretation of Winternitz and Daptari, the Pleides can claim no uniqueness, many other stars which come on the East line can be described as "seen in the east for a considerable time."

Daptari's trump is that the Pleides cannot be seen when they are on the horizon. The sole reason given for this assertion is that he could not see them. No other Astronomer agrees with him. I made inquiries in the Astronomical wing of the Survey of India, Dehradun. I was told that the Pleides contain a star of the third magnitude, and a third magnitude star can be seen even on the horizon by a man of normal eyesight. When this star is seen, the constellation itself is recognized. Those who are accustomed to the observation of the heavens, know even the precursors of the Pleides, and the moment these are seen, they expect the Pleides to follow. What is expected can be readily seen. On a moonless and a cloudless night when the Pleides rise two/three hours earlier than sunrise or later than sunset they are clearly visible. A man of normal eyesight accustomed to astronomical observations need not wait till the Pleides ascend 13 degrees for seeing them.

On my request, the Jyotish department of the Varanasi Hindu University made actual observations of the Pleides on the horizon and confirmed that they can be thus seen.

Winternitz and Daptari have stretched the meaning of East in order to escape from the findings of Deexit. The accepted meaning of East is the equinoctial point on the horizon. The celestial equator which starts from this point, up to the altitude which can be easily seen without raising one's head, is the East. No other line can be properly called the East line. Any star which rises at the equinoctial point will remain on this line even if it is first seen at the altitude of 10 degrees or so and can be assumed to have risen at the equinoctial point.

But Daptari and Winternitz take the line from the equinoctial point to the zenith of the observer as the East line. Since no constellation ever follows this path, no body will ever say that a star on this east line does not deviate from the East, because any star which comes on it must cross it.

Some uneasiness can be caused by the verb "Chyavante" which means "fall off." The statement of the Shatapatha Brahmana that "All constellations besides the Pleides fall off the East" makes no sense because no constellation will ever fall off the East line defined on the celestial equator, and a constellation which is never on this line can not be reasonably said to "fall off" from it either. One who is never on the Kutab-minar, cannot possibly fall off from it.

The difficulty ceases, if we remember that *Chyavante* does not necessarily mean "fall off". It can also mean "deviate". "A's height deviates from the average" does not mean that it was average at some time and it is changed from the average. "A constellation deviates from the East" simply means: "it is not in the East", it does not mean, "it falls off from the East".

This meaning of the root *Chyu* is clearly seen in the term "*Chyutasanskritatva*" in Poetics. The fault called "*Chyutasanskritatva*" is committed when a composition is *Chyuta* from "*Sanskritatva*" or refinement. This does not mean that the composition was once refined and now has ceased to be so. It simply means it deviates from refinement.

The Vedic evidence of Saraswati, which dried up around 1800 B.C.

Even if one insists on taking the verb "*Chyavante*" to mean "fall off", the Shatapatha Brahmana statement fits squarely. The stars to the North of the observer and those to the South of the equator are in no sense in the East. We are, therefore, concerned only with the stars which rise in between the equator and the observer's latitude. All such stars cross the East line as defined by Winternitz, i.e. not being in the East, they come to the East line and then cross it or leave it. But the Pleides, rising at the equinoctial point, are in the East even when they leave the Winternitz East line, they are always on the equinoctial East line. One can therefore say that "all other constellations excepting the Pleides 'fall off' from the East". Thus Winternitz and Daptari in their Herculean effort to escape from the conclusion of Deexit, have only served to show that his thesis is much more precise than perhaps he himself thought it to be.

The statement in the Baudhayana Sootra quoted by Daptari really supports Deexit and not his opponents. At the time of the Baudhayana Sootra the method of fixing the East point on the basis of the Pleides had come to stay by sheer tradition, but was not giving correct results. So some preferred the Aquila. But the Aquila also did not give exact

results. The Baudhayan Sootra says that the Pleides do not deviate from the East, echoing tradition, though his statement did not quite fit the contemporary observations. It is to be noted that Aquila is not credited with the property of not deviating from the East, because it crossed the Winternitz East line or because it did not follow the equinoctial line.

The Shatapatha Brahman makes its statements foolproof by emphasizing that all constellations other than the Pleides deviate from the East. Both Daptari and Winternitz have observed diplomatic silence about the line, because according to their interpretation, every relevant star comes on their self-styled East line some time or the other, and the uniqueness of the Pleides is lost. Daptari himself mentions the Aquila as coming on the East line, but even this failed to remind him of Shatapatha's assertion "all other constellation deviate from the East".

Daptari further argues that the Shatapatha mentions the constellations from the Pleides to the Virgo as suitable for propitiation. No constellation after Virgo is so regarded. The reason given is that the spring, the summer and the rains are the seasons of the gods and the autumn, Hemanta and winter are the seasons of the manse. The sun is in the region of the gods in its Northern course and in the region of the manse in its southern course. The fire should be consecrated when the sun is in its Northern course.

This shows that the constellations after Virgo are prohibited because they are to the South of the equator and the Pleides are regarded as suitable because they are to the North of the equator and therefore are the constellations of the gods. The Pleides were not to the North of the equator before 2322 B. C. The Shatapatha, therefore, cannot go back to the period before 2322 B. C.

Daptari's arguments are typical for circumlocutions. He has nowhere shown that the Shatapatha Brahman regards the Pleides as a constellation of the gods. The statement quoted by him is from the Taaittiriya Brahman *not* from the Shatapatha Brahmana. Even if such a statement is found in the Shatapatha Brahmana it could not help Daptari, because a constellation right on the equator can be allotted to both the gods and the manse, being the median, it belongs to both. The Shatapatha Brahman gives the following reasons for the suitability of the Pleides: (1) they are many (2) they do not deviate from the East and (3) they are the wives of the fire. The reason alleged by Daptari, viz. that they are the constellation of the gods, nowhere figures in this.

By saying that the Shatapatha Brahmana rejects the constellations after the Virgo as unsuitable, Daptari is wrongly suggesting that it regards

all the constellations from the Pleides to the Virgo as suitable. But this is not so. The Shatapatha Brahman does not regard Ardra, Pushya and Magha as suitable though they are between the Pleides and the Virgo. Besides the Pleides, Rohini, Mrigshirah, Falguni, Hasta and Chitra are regarded as suitable, but the reason for suitability is nowhere given as being a constellation of the gods.

Even if the northern course of the Sun and the sighting of the Pleides are regarded as reasons for suitability, it does not follow that the Pleides were to the North of the equator. The Pleides can be seen when the sun is in its northern course, even if they are on the equator.

The date of the Shatapatha Brahman therefore goes to the threshold of the third millennium B. C.

Where is old Hastinapur ? —and the sunken Dwarika ?

That the Vedic literature goes back to this period is corroborated by the fact that it does not know cotton, which is found in the Indus excavations. Secondly silk is not known to most of Vedic literature. Silk was invented in China is 2640 B. C. The Vedics were at home in the Himalayan regions bordering on China. It should not have taken more than a couple of centuries for silk to have come to India from China. Literature which is ignorant of silk must, therefore, be older than 2400 B. C.

Diogenes Laertias quotes Xanthus of 470 B. C. as saying that Zarathushtra flourished 600 years before the Trojan war. The Trojan war is supposed to have been fought in 1800 B. C. Zarathushtra thus goes back to 2400 B. C. The Rgveda is placed 500 years before the Avesta by Mcdonell. This brings us to 2900 B. C. as the period of the Rgveda.

Grounds for misgivings

One great snag in supposing that the Bharat war ended in 3101 B. C. is that the Mahabharat itself contains no pointer to this date excepting the statement that the Bharat war ended with the commencement of the Kaliyuga. It contains the statement that Bhishma died on the eight lunar mansion of the month Magha when the sun turns North, and that the autumnal equinox took place in the fourth lunar mansion of Kartik. (This latter is not a direct statement

but can be inferred). These phenomena do not carry us beyond 2300 B. C. at the earliest and can refer to even 100 B. C. at the latest. The latest date is obviously due to the fact that the lunar year lags behind the solar and 100 B. C. is the period when it had lagged behind to the maximum extent, and therefore does not indicate the coordinates correctly. We have therefore to take the month corrected by the intercalary insertion to justify the assertion that the sun turned North in the month of Magha. But even taking the earliest date leaves 800 years gap between the Mahabharat war and the Mahabharata statements. This gap is bound to cause some misgivings about the traditional date of the Bharat war.

We must at present rest content with the explanation that the Mahabharat contains portions composed even after the Buddha as is indicated by the statement in the Vanaparva which refers to the rapid spread of Buddhism; some statements even refers to the period near about the beginning of the Christian era viz. those which refer to the "Deenar", a Roman coin. The implicative statement about the autumnal equinox and the direct statement about the Winter solstice, therefore, refer to the period of the composition of the work Mahabharat and not to that of the Bharat war. The composer saw that the sun turns North on the eighth day of the Magha and had no means to know that this was not the case in the days of the Bharat war. The portion of the Mahabharat, which was composed after a period reasonably near the Bharat war, and which may be present in the available Mahabharat, do not contain any astronomical statement from which we can infer the date 3101 B. C. without far fetched interpretations of the texts.

Recently archaeologists have come out with an objection that the cities associated with the Bharat war, viz. Dvaraka and Hastinapur, did not exist around 3000 B. C. This is a consideration against the traditional date but not a very weighty one. The archaeologists were once saying that the horse was not known to the Indus Valley civilization, but within decades a horse skeleton was found in further excavation of the civilization. Excavations have an inherent limitation. They can be made only in uninhabited places. One important city connected with the Bharat war is Indraprastha. The site of the Indraprastha is in the heart of New Delhi and it cannot be dug up. The Hastinapur site is comparatively uninhabited, but it has not been dug up on an extensive scale to the required depth to warrant a negative conclusion. The submerged Dvaraka has been found, but this is the Dvaraka of the period when it sank in the sea; the inference that it did not exist earlier is rash. The reference to the sinking Dvaraka in the Mahabharat could be of a later date because the Mahabharata does contain references which are as late as the beginning of the Christian era.

Lastly the notion that intact walls and roads of a ruined ancient city can always be found if we dig in a proper place, is itself questionable.

We have seen that the latest portions of the Rgveda are about 100 years older than the Bharat war. How far back can we go? The Adiparva of the Mahabharata gives the genealogy of the Pandavas, beginning from Brahma. The son of Brahma was Mareechi and the son of Mareechi was Kashyapa. This Kashyapa is supposed to have composed 100 Rks of the Rgveda of which only one has survived. He seems to be one of the oldest hymn-makers of the Rgveda. The 39th descendant of Kashyapa was Devapi. Taking 20 years for a generation, we see that one of the earliest hymn-maker of the Rgveda flourished 780 years before the latest, who in turn flourished three generations i. e. 60 years before the Bharata war. The early hymns of the Rgveda thus go back 840 years before 3101 B. C. i. e. 3941 B. C. The estimates of Tilak and Jacobi, which place the Rgveda in 4000 B. C. on the basis of astronomical constructions put on some hymns of the Rgveda, do not therefore appear baseless.

Vasisth, Vishwamitra & Kanva are family names

The generation number of some of the hymn-makers according to this genealogy is (1) Vivasvan 3 (2) Ushanas or Shkracharya 9 (3) Kanva 37 (4) Vishwamitra 37

The genealogy of the descendants of Rama is also useful in this connection. Bhadbala, the 31st descendant of Rama, was killed by Abhimanyu in the Bharata war. Thus Rama flourished 620 years before the Bharata war. Vasistha, the priest of Rama, is a hymn-maker of the Rgveda. His date is therefore 3720 B. C. The date of Kanva and Vishwamitra comes to be 3251 B. C. Thus, Vasistha, priest of Rama and the real and foster father of Shakuntala were not contemporaries. The statement in the Dasharajanya hymn that both Vasistha and Vishwamitra were the priests of Sudas, has to be harmonized with this by supposing that the names Vasistha, Vishwamitra, and Kanva are family names.

There is a pointer to the existence of Vedic civilization even before 4000 B. C., though not for placing any existent portion of the Rgveda in that period, in the Taittiriya Brahman, which says that Jupiter the first born, occulted the constellation of Tishya. Jupiter, is called the first born because it is the largest of the planets and is seen full or phaseless for a considerable time. It is also called Guru i. e. elder. V. B. Ketkar

has shown that the observation was possible only in 4500 B. C. But from this we cannot infer that the Taittiriya Brahman or any existent portion of the Vedas was composed about that date. The event is described in perfect past tense, which is used in connection with remote events. Nevertheless, the statement shows that the Vedic civilization and the practice of astronomical observations can go back to that date.

This antiquity of the Vedic civilization is corroborated by the date of Zarathushtra given by ancient Greek writers. Pliny (23—79 A. D.) quotes Aristotle and Eudoxus as assigning Zarathushtra the period 6000 years before Plato (427—347 B. C.). This takes us back to 6347 B. C. for Zarathushtra and 7847 B. C. for the Rgveda. Hermodorus and Theopompus assign Zarathushtra to 5000 years before the Trojan war. This takes up to 6800 B. C. Max Muller dismisses these estimates as exaggerated. It is strange that sources which are regarded as valuable for writing European history are declared of no consequence by Max Muller when the age of the Vedas is to be considered. Writers like Aristotle had no motive to exaggerate the antiquity of Zarathushtra. They are only echoing views that were current among Greeks several centuries before Christ. If celebrated Greeks three centuries before Christ thought that Zarathushtra was thousands of years older than themselves, the estimates of the Western scholars which try to bring Zarathushtra within less than a thousand years from these writers, stand discredited.

Though the Vedic civilization goes back to 4500 B. C., there are many portions in the existing Vedas which are thousands of years later. There is considerable chronological overlap between the earlier and later phases of Vedic literature. The Shatapatha Brahman is a Brahman of the Yajurved. But Yajurved itself contains hymns which are later than the portions of the Shatapatha which were composed at the time when the Pleiades were on the equator (3000 B. C.) Yajurveda (Adhyaya 14) says that Jyeshtha and Ashada are summer months (6) and Ashvin and Kartik are autumn months, and Shravana and Bhadrapada are rainy months (16). These deceptions can not apply to any period earlier than 2500 B. C. Thus though the Brahmins as a whole are later than Mantaras, some Mantras are later than some portions of the Brahmins.

The recent discoveries that the beds of the Sarasvati which met the ocean were not live after 8000 B. C. suggest that the hymns addressed to the ocean-going Sarasvati must belong to that period. This reinforces the statement of Aristotle about the antiquity of Zarathushtra and, by implication of the Vedas.

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*Shri L. C. Jain speaking. Also seen in the picture are
Shri Tarlok Singh and Shri Vasantrao Oke.*

The Cruel Joke of Panchayati Raj

On May 29, DRI organised a talk on Panchayati Raj Bill, by Shri L.C. Jain, well-known Gandhian.

Shri Tarlok Singh, ICS, Secretary of the Planning Commission when it was first set up, presided.

Shri Jain said that Gandhiji's observation that winning freedom would be easier than uplifting the poor, had proved only too true.

Today if USA can blackmail us on trade, it is only because we have neglected Gandhiji's advice for maximum village self-sufficiency in respect of food and clothing, and gone in for imports and exports in a big way. "You can't go to a molester's house and then complain of molestation."

Right in our second plan, we bade good-bye to village self-sufficiency in the booming name of "national self-sufficiency".

We must observe the rule that until and unless unemployment is ended, there shall be no manufacture of consumer items by machine. "And I can't see the end of unemployment even in the next fifty years."

In the name of "mixed-economy", we have mixed up our economy. We had a minister like T.T. Krishnamachari who described the charkha as "obstacle to progress". He was all for OGL, Open General Licence. And when even the Planning Commission demurred, he snapped: "Who the hell is Planning Commission?"

When we set out to frame the Constitution, we appointed a bunch of lawyers to do it. When the draft Constitution was presented, as many as 85 members noted that it was only plastic surgery on the 1935 Act. Even the word 'Panchayat' was not there anywhere in this draft Constitution. The members of the Drafting Committee said they were sorry: "We forgot." Said Shri Kamalapati Tripathi: "This Constitution is not the child of a Revolution".

Dr. Ambedkar dismissed the objection by saying that villages were dens of corruption and reaction.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, said it would take long to recast the Constitution, with the Panchayat at the centre of things. And so just one Article—No. 40—was inserted, to mention the Panchayats in the Directive Principles. Gandhiji's dream had gone to seed. It was an insult to the memory of Bapu.

In the new Constitution, 'Industry' was a state subject, but 'Textiles' were put in Union List. Ten lacs of illegal power looms were regularised. This was a body-blow to handloom industry which, after agriculture, is the biggest provider of employment.

In 1985, all curbs on powerlooms were removed. Tamil Nadu, which has lacs of weavers, protested with a unanimous resolution by the State Assembly. A fifty day Satyagraha followed. But New Delhi could not care less. Big mills were given big credits—with no repayment for 6 years, and an interest of only 9%. On top of this, cotton and cotton yarn were exported—to starve the handloom worker of yarn. No wonder yarn prices rose by 70%. And all this while synthetic fibres were imported.

The New Panchayati Raj Bill also does not have village welfare in mind. Will the Planning Commission examine village plans? Who will audit the accounts of lacs of Panchayats?

In Karnataka five years ago it was found that one third of all investment went into power. Some 70% of this power went to big industry. But this industry produced little employment and contributed only 4% to State revenues.

In the villages, loans are given for tubewells but there is little or no power to energise them.

Now Nehru Rozgar Yojana will spend thousands of crores on trying to provide employment. But who cares for the ten lacs of unemployed weavers? Today these weavers are selling vegetables or plying cycle-rickshaws in the towns.

Karnataka under Shri Hegde launched a real Panchayati Raj. There are 56,000 Panches—25% of them women and 18% SC and ST. All these 56,000 Panches—20000 of them are Congressmen—were brought to Bangalore, shown the Vidhan Soundha and told that they were co-sharers in the governance of the State. The inauguration of this Panchayati Conference was *not* done by the Chief Minister; he specially invited Union Minister Narasimha Rao for the occasion. The bureaucrats also worked for Panchayati Raj with all their heart. But it is sad to recollect that the Centre sat for two years on Karnataka's Panchayati Raj Bill!

Chief Minister Hegde invited his senior colleague Nazir Saab to take any important portfolio. But good old Nazir Saab said he will have nothing but Rural Development and Panchayats. While ordinary politicians view this as an unimportant portfolio, Nazir Saab understood that it was the most important portfolio—if you really want to serve the masses.

It is sad to say that Central Congress leadership has no understanding, and no appreciation, of the Karnatak scheme. They believe in "leadership by parachute". U.P. and Bihar, ruled by Congress, refuse to have Panchayat elections—on the ground that Congress will lose them!

The Deserted Village

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

—Oliver Goldsmith

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(R. to L.) Prof. Sondhi, Shri Sarin, Syed Maiwand and G.S. Bhargava

DRI Discusses Afghan Issue

The DRI organised a discussion on the Afghan situation on April 15. Speakers included Syed Mohammed Maiwand, Editor, 'Kabul Monitoring Service', (C-104, Defence Colony, New Delhi-24) Shri Rajendra Sarin, Editor, 'Public Opinion & Trends', (F-8, Press Enclave, Saket, New Delhi-17) and Prof. M.L. Sondhi of JNU, (7, Amrita Shergil Marg, New Delhi-3).

Shri G S. Bhargava, (B-110, Gulmohar Park, New Delhi-49) former Principal Information Officer, Government of India, presided.

Shri Maiwand said that Afghans liked India but not the Government of India. There were 50,000 Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan. They were engaged in trade and they had great reputation for honesty. "Even crores are safe with them." They had never taken part in Afghan politics. But for the first time now, New Delhi had persuaded them to support the Moscow-backed Government. Indian ambassador Dikshit had interested himself in politicising Indians in Afghanistan. As a result, with the withdrawal of Russian troops, Hindus and Sikhs feel insecure.

Kandhar used to have 10,000 Hindus; today only seven families are left. Two Gurudwaras were blown up and 62 Sikhs killed in Kabul. India had closed down its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandhar.

UN aid for Afghan refugees in India was paltry. Eighty percent refugees' applications for U.N. relief had been rejected.

Afghans will never accept a fundamentalist government or a Red Government. Loi Jirga is our big conference of tribal chiefs. It alone can decide on a government for Afghanistan—until such time as free elections are held.

President Najibullah claims 92% support, fundamentalist Gulbadin in Pakistan claims 92% support; but an opinion poll of Afghans in Pakistan revealed 72% support for King Zahir Shah.

Shri Rajendra Sarin said that if fundamentalists prevail in Afghanistan, there will be a blood bath, killing lacs.

The Government of Afghanistan had imposed no land ceiling, and it had declared Islam as the state religion.

India had sent Swaran Singh and Ram Sathe, then Foreign Secretary, to Pakistan, to urge a regional solution of the Afghan problem. But Zia said Afghanistan was not a regional problem but a global problem.

When Brezhnev was here, Mrs. Gandhi said on live TV that no country had the right to militarily intervene in another country.

It is not true that the Indian Ambassador had incited Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan to side with the Government. Actually since 1984, Sikhs there have been wearing black arm-bands; they do not visit the Indian Embassy. All these Hindus and Sikhs are Afghan nationals. Afghans can have a consensus only on ex-King Zahir Shah.

USA is wrong to think that without Russian support, Najib Government would collapse. Even those Afghans, who are not with Najib, are not with Mujahideen either. Indeed, Mujahideen groups—seven in Pakistan and eight in Iran—are more opposed to each other than to the Najib government.

Last year Mujahideen sacked the town of Qundus and abducted 37 girls. The people were so enraged, they killed over two hundred Mujahideen.

In 1974, Bhutto had called Gulbadin to pit him against President Daoud of Afghanistan.

India had posted four Army Divisions on the border to warn Pakistan against any adventure in Afghanistan. And then Kabul has Russian

missiles to take care of Mujahideen. Only a US-USSR agreement can instal an acceptable government in Kabul. Afghans can manufacture arms, but they can't produce ammunition, which can come only from USA or USSR.

PROF. M. L. SONDHJI said that Afghans share the ancient Indian culture of Family and Honour. They call it "Pushtoonwali".

The real border of India is the Oxus River. Afghans had stopped Islam on the Hindukush for three hundred years. And at the end of it all, the then Afghan king had surrendered only on condition that he will not be made to eat beef or indulge in sodomy.

In Bangladesh, we were with the people; in Afghanistan we are against the people: that is the government mistake.

Apart from Pakistan and USA, Arabia has also been poking its nose in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia is also playing games in India and Bangladesh. We must put Arabia in its place. But India should also distance itself from Najib; it was wrong of New Delhi to take sides in the Afghan conflict and invite him to Delhi.

Natwar Singh demonstratively went to Rome to see ex-King Zahir Shah. This was very wrong. It immediately made Zahir Shah unacceptable to Pakistan and the Mujahideen.

ANSWERING some questions, Syed Maiwand said that the King had been out of the country, and out of touch, for ten long years. Also he had made many mistakes. His restoration was not practical politics. The King himself does not want to come; he wants elections held. Shri Sarin said it was not fair to single out Dikshit for our Afghan policy; in the last ten years, we had posted half a dozen ambassadors in Kabul.

Syed Maiwand said that 98% Afghans would reject any suggestion of confederation with Pakistan. Afghanistan, he said, is Pakistan's Bangladesh.

Wounded in Afghanistan

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
An' the women come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle an' blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.

—Rudyard Kipling

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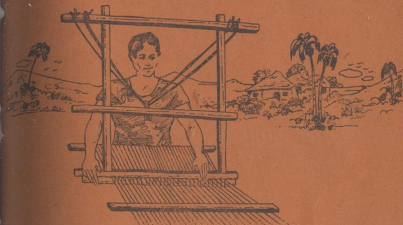


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