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**Politics and Religion:
The Need for an Overlapping Consensus**

(an exemplar from the Hindu tradition)

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ABSTRACT

Politics and Religion: The Need for an Overlapping Consensus (an exemplar from the Hindu Tradition)

This Thesis examines the consensus Hinduism in India shares with the ideology of liberal pluralism, and applies these reflections to religious education in the English context.

The Rawlsian theory of justice models the political structure of a liberal plural society. Insights from communitarianism, relativism and Alasdair MacIntyre, are critically assessed and used to enlarge this model. Further, Carol Gilligan and Tom Kitwood emphasise that moral citizens in a plural society need, and must provide, a caring and open environment.

The overlapping consensus across liberal pluralism and the Hindu tradition is assessed at the (i) theological and (ii) empirical levels.

(i) Vedāntic concepts are formulated to highlight a *potentially* strong consensus across Vedāntic and liberal viewpoints. The presentation of God as a caring and egalitarian mother is emphasised.

(ii) A landscape survey (sample size 550) was conducted to help focus the case-study investigations. Case-studies of four Indian young Hindus studied attitudes towards pluralism through discussions on Ayodhyā 1992. The minute sample size of the case-study meant that this data could not, in itself, justify inductive generalisation. Nevertheless, the case-studies did highlight some important and disconcerting voices, and did not contradict the conclusions from the larger landscape survey.

The data warns that contemporary sentiment may be incongruent with the *potentially* strong consensus across liberal pluralism and Vedāntic theology.

The conditions responsible for this are explored. It is suggested that a combination of secularism and the exclusion of religious education from State education has contributed to ignorance of liberal theological imperatives and reinforced the communal isolation between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Amongst Hindus, this has caused suspicion and illiberal attitudes. The lessons from India are applied to the English plural situation.

Juxtaposing Rawlsian theory aside recent pragmatic initiatives, a model for religious education suitable for the perpetuation of a liberal pluralism is proposed. This Interface Approach Towards a Liberal Indigenous Charter (IATaLIC) model respects liberal justice but recognises the classroom educator's limitations in motivating young persons with a strong religious identity towards a liberal disposition. Equally problematically, traditional religious leaders and scholars within the community may not care for justice. Hence the classroom religious educator, sympathetic towards both the liberal and traditional agendas, must work with the community leaders and scholars. Educators must encourage these personnel to excavate liberal principles from their religious texts, and then evangelise these principles throughout their community. Then, justice will be met and communal integrity maintained.

Communal tension in India may be due to a liberal State prohibiting such an approach. In England, opportunities do exist for education to establish a consensus across religious and liberal viewpoints. Such opportunities should not be neglected.

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Admittedly, we all try hard to avoid error; and we ought to be sad if we have made a mistake. Yet to avoid error is a poor ideal: if we do not dare to tackle problems which are so difficult that error is almost unavoidable, then there will be no growth of knowledge. In fact, it is from our boldest theories, *including those that are erroneous*, that we learn most. Nobody is exempt from making mistakes; the great thing is to learn from them.

Karl Popper

Learn this knowledge by prostration, by extensive questioning and by service. The wise who see the truth will teach you knowledge.

Bhagavadgītā IV. 34

My thanks to Dr.J.J. Lipner and Dr.P. Walsh for highlighting my mistakes and helping me to learn from them.

The work of Dr. Julius Lipner deserves special respect. There is a tendency for works on Hinduism to be of one of two kinds, either the academic or the traditional. I feel that Dr. Lipner writes with both the critical pen of an academic *and* retains a sensitivity and respect for the tradition. The result is that his work enlarges the believer's orbit without offending his or her deepest convictions.

I revere John Rawls. He has through the clarity and compassion of his thought convinced me how meritorious are the liberal values. I pray he will live long and write more books.

My father has taught me how to think and be true to the ramifications of my thought, to the best of my ability. He, my good wife and all my close family, are a great support.

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The work of Ernest Gellner has refreshed me with its ebullient humour, simplicity and robust crusade against fuzzy thinking.

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I have tried with endnotes to make further due acknowledgements.

Acknowledgements of a different kind are also appropriate. This Thesis is written by a Hindu, from a Hindu perspective. The author has not routinely qualified or cross-referenced his position aside the perspectives of the non-Hindu communities of India. Considering the growing subaltern literature, it is necessary to qualify this further by stating that the Thesis is written from a 'Brahminical' Hindu perspective. The views of other communities must be considered, but that is not the focus of this Thesis. What is presented here is but one voice amongst many to be heard.

An apology is also needed. Not only have I not considered all alternative viewpoints but I have also opposed certain ideologies. Throughout the critiques, an effort has been made to be humble. Nonetheless there is much good in the opposition that will have escaped my attention and consequently my presentation. I apologise to the respective writers and those who read this Thesis for this shortcoming.

For the Rod, used wisely, endows one's subjects with *dharmā*, *artha* and *kāma*. Used badly, out of passion or anger or disregard, it enrages even forest-anchorites and wandering ascetics, leave alone householders! If not used at all, it gives rise to the Law of the Fish (*matsya-nyāya*): for, in the absence of the wielder of the Rod, the stronger swallows the weak.

Artha Śāstra
(translation: Julius Lipner)

. . . obedience to a law which we prescribe for ourselves is liberty

Rousseau

PREAMBLE

In a remote Indian hamlet, around one a.m. an extremely old man can be heard stumbling along. He is tiny Hanumanmahan, our village drunkard. Sometimes you can hear him mumbling - in English no less - of the good old days: 'I've served under the Britishers I'll tell you. I myself have served under them. Who are you to criticise me?'

Hanumanmahan is interesting. He is from a scheduled caste, that mass living on the fringes of polite Hindu society. His father found employment in Government Service and 'some how or other' (to use Hanumanmahan's favourite phrase) secured for him a place in an English medium school. There was no looking back for the educated man who soon advanced to become school janitor and ultimately Peon to The Officer of the Home Guard. He routinely proffers an ex-serviceman's cigarette case to prove this.

The octogenarian's past is mysterious. He married a woman of standing sufficient to merit her a pension of Rs. 25 a week, which he goes weekly to the city to collect (the bus fare is Rs. 37 paise 50, but the pension is a prestige issue with him). Unfortunately, Mrs. Hanumanmahan remains unseen. Some say she has departed, others that husband and wife came upon irreconcilable differences. Alas, poor Hanumanmahan has had his fair share of these.

After Independence, leadership of the Guard transferred to a one Mr.S. Pratap. Pratap was an ostentatious man hopelessly unable to fill the British officer's boots and proud Hanumanmahan resented playing second fiddle to this feeble imitation of a real officer. Eventually, after 15 years of humiliation, he resigned his prestigious peonage. His wife went berserk and the drinking began. The wrong crowd, ladies of the night - the usual dive soon followed.

Then he drifted to our village. The drinking did not stop but religion got a hold. Relatively brilliantly, he took only twenty years to learn what takes a Brahmin two and soon became an inspirational god-man amongst his pariah community.

Not only his own find him inspirational. One night I felt lonely wondering about marriage or celibacy, of what my preceptors would make of my future. I could not sleep. Then, about one a.m., I heard Hanumanmahan stumbling along and I knew all was well with the world.

Hanumanmahan has this effect on people because he is *reliable*. Each evening he will get drunk, fall about and then walk home. Next morning he will repent, fall asleep in

the middle of his prayers and wake up to eat. Rejuvenated, read the newspapers (English of course); then akin to the village bullock, wander here and there until somebody bothers to speak to him. Embarrassed by yesternight's exploits, he will apologise saying what a wretch he is, how it does your reputation no good to be seen talking to him, etc. Formalities completed, he will opine on world affairs and quote Padmashree Mark Tully of the BBC. If Tully has not said anything recently, the day-dreamer will simply make something up and attribute it to the 'very great man'. Finally, he will ask how it is with you. Only after it is dark and the children have gone to sleep will he find a shadow and get totally drunk. Keep him in mind. There is no clever twist in the tale, but he will return.

 Now consider the three entities of State, any particular religious community and the remaining other citizens. Imagine them as equidistant points:

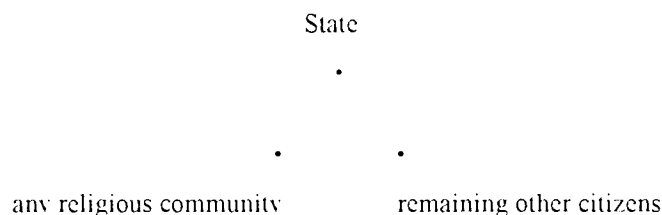


Figure 1. The triangular relationship

This geometric representation models the following assumptions:

- a. One cannot assume the relationship between the three parties will be harmonious.
- b. Any party can join forces with or against any other.
- c. Each may, and often does, find itself accountable to the others.

Also, consider that citizens located in the above triangular relationship often take for granted the two civic values of equality and freedom. These values have become so deeply ingrained in the moral structure of modern society as to make their opposites, inequality and tyranny, unacceptable on moral grounds.

However, more than moral indignation is required to ensure a civil society.

The fact is, people have in the past often been repulsed by the immorality of others but this has not prevented them from turning a blind eye to injustice. The reason humankind *now* responds to injustice with such urgency has as much to do with *fear* as

repulsion. Fear that global mobility and technology are now such that anybody can become a target of persecution. Fear that in the face of technology we are all vulnerable. One no longer has to be an unfortunate minority - all are equally helpless if those with the power to do so choose to persecute others. Under these conditions, it becomes prudent to work towards a stable and just world community. Such self interest makes for a fragile peace, but more peace than the world has known before. Any civil society must understand how such peace can be preserved.

Ernest Gellner has provided an illuminating commentary on how so.¹ Before turning to his counsel, let it be noted that some within religious education see the absence of conflict to rest on promoting a form of religious relativism: 'To keep the peace, teach youngsters that any one ideology is no better or worse than any other. Then future generations will not view ideology as a battleground'. This brand of religious education distinguishes religion from a commitment to any particular objective reality, and instead regards faith as merely a personal quest for 'meaning'. What is most remarkable about this type of religious education (often referred to as implicit or existential religious education - the name changes but the basic idea remains constant) is that it expects dedicated believers to look upon their faith as but one amongst many ultimately equally valid subjective viewpoints. Many believers would find it hard to accept such relativism.

Alternatively, Gellner's counsel is that a religious citizen need not accept a relativist position, but a citizen must keep religious ideals where surreptitious bottles used to be - up the cassock's sleeve. Once it was that our sins were to be kept concealed, but now it is our notion of virtue that we must keep to ourselves. This counsel seems particularly appropriate when one considers the plural composition of modern society. In such a society, if any body of citizens were to insist that a single ideology be allowed to determine the affairs of State, the consequent political conditions would be oppressive to those of a different outlook. Conflict would then be likely.

Gellner therefore suggests that a stable liberal society requires 'modular' citizens. A modular citizen expects no 'special privileges, no sliding scales' and views himself or herself as one amongst many equal and accommodating individuals:

There are firms which produce, advertise and market modular furniture. The point about such furniture is that it comes in bits which are agglutinative: you buy one bit which will function on its own, but when your needs, income or space available augment, you can buy another bit. It will fit

with the one acquired previously, and the whole thing will have a coherence, aesthetically and technically. You can combine and recombine bits at will . . .

What genuine Civil Society really needs is not modular furniture, but modular man.²

Modularity requires a believer to have the desire and ability to get along with those of a different outlook. This may require religious commitments to be kept outside of the sphere of public life. It must be re-emphasised that in Gellner's analysis, liberty requires only the separation - separation *not* relativisation - of religious ideology with respect to political power. The believer is not required to relinquish a unique claim to truth, merely to acknowledge the private status of that revelation.

This seems a reasonable demand. However, an event from modern India makes it clear that such a separation of religion from politics may not be easily enforced. The following summary regarding the event and its interpretation is quick but not misleading.

On 6 December 1992, despite the appeals of the:

. . . RSS³ general secretary . . . to stop the demolition and destruction . . . crowds . . . swarmed all over the site of the disputed structure [the Babri Masjid at Ayodhyā], shouting in triumph and urging on the demolition squads.⁴

Consequent to such uncivil behaviour:

[India projected itself to the world as] a land of sword wielding, maniacal dancing dervishes rather than the silent majority of decent folk who practice the religion of humanism.⁵

Apparently, the unacceptable events relating to the demolition of the Babri Masjid were symptomatic of:

. . . not an organisation seeking to enforce the humanism and ecumenism of Hinduism but the well honed instrument of a grand design for the pursuit of power by using Hinduism . . . to usher in its fascist millennium.⁶

This would indeed be an intolerable development within the world's largest liberal polity. However, professions of disgust are not enough; depravity is something that must be understood if it is to be reversed. As a starting point, the Ayodhyā episode provides a stark warning to all plural societies that modularity must never be taken for granted. *If* the modular individual is the type of citizen best guaranteed to ensure harmony and avoid conflict, then we cannot overlook how astoundingly 'un-modular' people often are.

The question then becomes - how can people of one outlook be effectively and reliably integrated with those 'of a different cultural mould'⁷? How can people with strong religious identities and affiliations be brought round to adopting a liberal attitude towards those of a different outlook? This Thesis seeks to pursue this enquiry through

an examination of the views of young Hindus growing up within a liberal and plural polity under strain. The investigations assume that the liberal values of freedom and equality are best guaranteed when the three entities of State, any particular religious community and remaining citizenry are in harmony. Conversely, the stability of liberal society becomes threatened if any one of the three entities should be in conflict with any other. It transpired that the lore evolving from these investigations rested upon the ramifications of one word.⁸

Now let us return to Hanumanmahan. As an individual he is good. He does charity work and teaches English to the local urchins. He is also regarded as a religious man and a source of envy because of this prestige. Unlike many, he appears to answer daily to his Maker. Perhaps this is making a virtue out of necessity, but that is not within our capacity to judge.

Everything said and done, Hanumanmahan appreciates that if he treats his fellows well his own misdemeanours will weigh light in the balance. He has an easy presence and never imposes his ideals on others. If only the same could be said of all. So no one criticises him, and that too in a village where libel is a popular pastime.

As for the State and the nation at large, he has paid his dues - almost half a century in government service, and much of that under that wretched Mr.S. Pratap. Nevertheless, Hanumanmahan stuck it out to become the proud recipient of a Britisher's pension.

Perhaps he drinks too much, and certainly his life has not been the best, but one always knows where on earth one stands with the old rogue. 'Somehow or other' the State, religion and the individual have found an agreeably motley coalition in robust Hanumanmahan. The conditions of liberty too are well satisfied. Long may he endure.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

Chapter 1 uses the precision of John Rawls to co-ordinate the political principles upon which a just and plural society must be founded. The salient feature of such a society is that no particular version of the good is invested with absolute political authority. Rather, society accepts a condition of reasonable pluralism as normative. This makes the determination of a social contract problematic. The concept of the 'veil of ignorance' is introduced as a device of representation to guarantee fair legislation. 'Justice as fairness' views society as a system of fair social co-operation between free and equal persons.

The terms social co-operation, freedom and equality are then defined and all three coalesced into the prototype of the citizen as custodian of two moral powers. The first moral power is a capacity to respect freedom and equality as normative values. If citizens exhibit this capacity, they are free to exercise the second moral power - the capacity to pursue multifarious conceptions of the good life.

The sobriety of Rawls' writing has misled some to believe him dissociated from the depth of social living. The work of the communitarians Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre is representative of this discontent. Sandel complains that Rawls' concept of man is so 'thin' as to make the entire Rawlsian treatise misguided. MacIntyre advances this critique through his portrayal of man as always located within a complex communal narrative.

The critique of those such as Sandel and MacIntyre has caused Rawls to become more sensitive to the importance of particular communities within the larger political unit. Rawls, after the communitarian critique, while still maintaining that the principles of justice are conceptually independent of the norms and practices of any given culture, is forthright in acknowledging that it is essential that each community comes to support these principles 'each from its own viewpoint'. This pivotal idea of overlapping consensus establishes that Rawls has appreciated the conditions required for a just community in a situation of reasonable pluralism.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the modelling of citizens as custodians of two moral powers. Commitment to these powers is emotionally demanding and requires an atmosphere of care, reciprocity and low institutional domination. The work of Carol Gilligan and Tom Kitwood is drawn upon to establish the social conditions that encourage an expansion of the caring tendency from intimate relationships into the larger social sphere.

The fundamentalist religious outlook threatens the establishment of such a society on account of its:

- a. desire to conflate religious ideology with political power
- b. alienation from the wider society
- c. tendency to regard religious texts as existing in a transcendental, context free vacuum
- d. concept of morality founded on a rigid theological viewpoint with little room for a human viewpoint.

The above obstacles to liberalisation may also be posed, albeit in more moderate forms, by religious styles that are not fundamentalist. In all cases, if religious education is to attract believers towards a liberal viewpoint corrective initiatives must rely upon the excavation of liberal counsel implicit within the texts to which the believers give their allegiance.

These issues are contemplated in the context of the interaction between State and religion in India. This context is relevant to the English situation since both India and England are plural societies committed to the perpetuation of liberal political values. Recently, as witnessed by the rise of what has been referred to as 'Hindu fundamentalism', significant numbers of the majority Hindu population of India appear to have become disillusioned with secular liberal pluralism. The fact that elements of the (often assumed liberal) Hindu community can adopt an illiberal, in some ways fundamentalist, outlook provides a general warning for the necessity to establish and preserve an overlapping consensus across liberal and religious viewpoints.

Chapters 3 and 4 investigate the overlapping consensus across the liberal outlook and the Hindu tradition.

Chapter 3 begins by first considering the general possibility that a theologically determined outlook might be radically antagonistic to a liberal human perspective. This possibility is then discredited with regard to Hinduism. Hinduism is a highly pluriform phenomenon, and the present investigation restricts its attention to one branch of the complex banyan - the comprehensive doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedānta. The Nature of God is documented through reference to the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, some important early Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*. These texts highlight God in His majestic, metaphysical and personal aspect respectively. The Vedāntic concept of man is then introduced in terms of the essential and the contingent *ātman*. The two formulae: *adiyemullan udahullan* (man, the servant of God who dwells within the soul) and *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) are also considered.

An attempt is then made to formulate Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedānta in strong consensus with liberal moral, psychological and political principles. Vedāntic moral theory is modelled as an attempt to approximate to the view from Brahman (God). This view is presented as a bi-focal perspective. As the *Puruṣa* (cosmic Person), God contains the entire universe within Himself. From this perspective each individual is regarded in his or her objective finitude as one amongst innumerable others. However, as the *antaryāmin* (inner soul of all), Brahman is cogently familiar with each and every subjective first person perspective, and consequently aware of all the complexities of human inter-subjective social living. The complete view from Brahman incorporates an objective, subjective and inter-subjective perspective on each life. Approximating to this viewpoint provides the moral protocol of Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedāntic thinking.

The Vedāntic God is then psychologically characterised through *vāsalya* (forgiving solicitude), *sausilya* (courtesy), *saulabhya* (welcome) and *paraduḥkhaduḥkhi* (empathy). Approximating to this viewpoint provides the psychology of Vedāntic moral reasoning.

Chapter 3 can therefore be viewed as an indication of how a religious tradition, in this case Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, can be codified into a liberal charter.

Chapter 4 examines whether young Hindus actually relate to such a charter in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations. The research was conducted over a two year period. During 1994 a landscape survey was conducted in India to acquire a general understanding of whether young Hindus were of a liberal outlook. The disconcerting contours detected by the survey initiated the following enquiries:

- a. Could Hinduism, with a potentially strong consensus with liberal values, have become corrupted at the popular level to a form contrary to these values?
- b. Is it presumptuous to assume that young Hindus are relating to liberal formulations of Hinduism?

c. Could it be that the attitude of young Hindus towards pluralism is influenced by the form of Hinduism to which they are relating?

These enquiries were examined in greater detail through case-studies of four young Hindus in India from the Anāvīl Brahmin community of South Gujarat. None of them were from families affiliated to any religious sect or political party.

The case-studies (1995) were conducted in three stages. Firstly, the attitudes of young Hindus towards pluralism in the context of the Hindu-Muslim situation were explored using a range of structured and open ended interviews relating to the Ayodhyā episode. Secondly, the extent to which young Hindus were relating to the doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta was determined primarily through an examination of their understanding of human motherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship. This approach was adopted for while young Hindus might have been unfamiliar with the scholarly formulation of Viśiṣṭādvaita, important Viśiṣṭādvaitic concepts might have been assimilated through a broader narrative tradition. In the third stage, notions of Indian and Hindu identity, and general moral outlook, were briefly explored. The findings from the three stages were then juxtaposed.

The findings suggest that some young Hindus in India show a very poor consensus with a liberal outlook. These young Hindus also seem to have lost touch with the metaphor of God as the egalitarian Mother. In place of the maternal deity, some have a male warrior 'God' of vengeance. These findings suggested the following tentative thesis:

a. Hinduism, with a potentially strong consensus with liberal values, has in parts become corrupted to an aggressive form that is contrary to a liberal outlook.

b. Many young Hindus are not relating to the Vedāntic model of a liberal, maternal God.

c. The attitude of these young Hindus towards pluralism is influenced by the corrupted and aggressive model of God to which they are relating.

Since an aggressive version of the Deity has no precedent in having a central appeal, the findings suggest a relatively modern change in the character of Hinduism.

Chapter 5 attempts to understand the social conditions responsible for this transition.

This analysis is conducted from a Malinowskian perspective that regards cultures as providing the legitimate routes for the satisfaction of human needs. The critical questions are: which need of the youngsters is being satisfied by adopting an aggressive religious style, and what are the available routes for the satisfaction of this need?

It is suggested that the aggressive attitude of some young Hindus is a consequence of their need for self-respect and social security. Nehru's version of secularism hampered a recourse to traditional routes whereby these needs could be satisfied in a liberal manner.

The counsel of Gandhiji and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad will be offered as a (neglected) corrective tonic. Reflecting on their ideologies, one sees that Nehru's secular policy was doubly disastrous. Firstly, Nehru's secularism presumptuously ignored the traditional foundations for national identity. This cultural amnesia deprived Hindus of the social bases of self-respect and severely compromised their ability to pursue various traditional conceptions of the good life. Further, Indian educational policy prohibited a religious underpinning for moral, political and psychological values. This resulted in liberalism being presented as an external construct rather than as an indigenous position.

Secondly, the exclusion of religious education in all State funded schools reinforced the communal isolation between the Hindu and Muslim communities leading to stereotyping, misunderstanding and suspicion. This, coupled with the deprivation of a liberal Hindu basis for nationalism, may be responsible for the young Hindus turning to an aggressive and distorted form of Vedāntic ideology in an attempt to satisfy their need for social security and self-respect.

Chapter 6 suggests that the two most important lessons for English education to learn from the Indian investigations are:

(i) Young people must not be put in a position where they are ignorant of their traditional bases of self-respect.

(ii) Education must help to bring about mutual understanding and trust that will reduce the fear of betrayal from the minority communities.

With the hindsight of the Indian investigations combined with the theory of Rawls and Gellner, it becomes possible to propose a model of religious education capable of nurturing citizens who will perpetuate the liberal state. The salient features of this model are:

a. It believes religious education must apply itself to problems relevant to life in an age of reason.

b. Foremost of these problems are those regarding identity and political stability.

c. All citizens are entitled to not only the political necessities, but also the social bases of self-respect. The Indian case-studies confirm that authentic cultural membership is one such prerequisite for self-respect.

d. However, since cultural membership cannot be guaranteed to be of a liberal influence, each situation must be examined piecemeal. Religious education must help in excavating from within each tradition theological counterparts for liberal principles. Simultaneously, illiberal tendencies must be counteracted using arguments from within the tradition itself.

e. Thus liberalisation will not require believers to betray their traditional roots while still abiding by the principles of justice.

f. Success requires the co-operation of men and women of goodwill working at the interface of political liberalism and communal identity. This model is therefore referred to as the **Interface Approach Towards a Liberal Indigenous Charter (IATaLIC)**.

India provides a cogent example of the consequences of a liberal State prohibiting religious education in the classroom situation. In England, opportunities exist for the exploration of explicitly political dimensions of religious influence. England cannot afford to neglect such opportunities and should rigorously incorporate the IATaLIC model into its programs of religious education.

1 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

... the diversity of reasonable comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines found in modern democratic societies is not a mere historical condition that may soon pass away; it is a permanent feature of the public culture of democracy. Under the political and social conditions secured by the basic rights and liberties of free institutions, a diversity of conflicting and irreconcilable - and what's more, reasonable-comprehensive doctrines will come about and persist if such diversity does not already obtain.

... These are the doctrines that reasonable citizens affirm and that political liberalism must address. They are not simply the upshot of self and class interests, or of peoples' understandable tendency to view the political world from a limited standpoint. Instead, they are in part the work of free practical reason within the framework of free institutions. Thus, although historical doctrines are not, of course, the work of free reason alone, the fact of reasonable pluralism is not an unfortunate condition of human life. In framing the political conception so that it can ... gain the support of reasonable comprehensive doctrines, we are not so much adjusting that conception to brute forces of the world but to the inevitable outcome of free human reason.

John Rawls

§ 1 The Original Position

1.1 The idea of a social contract

John Rawls' work provides a foundation from which to determine what it means to be a just plural society.¹ He is humble concerning the limits of his project. His intention is not to provide an all encompassing moral philosophy, that being the task of the 'comprehensive doctrines' or belief systems that citizens are allowed to affirm privately.² Instead the enquiry is: what are the rules through which a liberal society is to be governed?

1.2 The veil of ignorance

Rawls' reply is based on a simple methodology. He starts by assuming that any society needs common laws. The problem a culturally plural society faces is: what laws would a collection of legislators, with each legislator representing a community with a particular conception of the good life, agree should be binding upon everyone? Obviously everyone will not agree to be governed by points of religious dogma, personal prejudice or such principles. If universally binding maxims are required, attention must be focused on what *all* human beings would insist should be guaranteed. Safeguarding these basic human needs would then provide a legitimate basis for political legislation.

To arrive at such a fair conclusion, Rawls requires legislators to enter the legislative bargaining as if from behind 'a veil of ignorance'. The veil can be imagined as a

process of hypnosis that makes legislators forget their communal backgrounds and so dislocates them from their parochial contexts. As Rawls states:

... the parties are not allowed to know the social position of those they represent, or the particular comprehensive doctrine of the person each represents. The same idea is extended to information about people's race and ethnic group, sex and gender, and their various native endowments such as strength and intelligence, all within the normal range. We express these limits on information figuratively by saying the parties are behind a veil of ignorance. Thus the original position is simply a device of representation: it describes the parties, each of whom is responsible for the essential interests of a free and equal citizen, as fairly situated and as reaching an agreement subject to conditions that appropriately limit what they can put forward as good reasons.³

Each person forgets that he or she is (say) a Hindu, Indian, etc. Such amnesia reduces the complex human condition to those elements that are common to all. What remains is a person stripped of any incidentals, and as a member of a class of beings who are (a) rational, (b) self interested, (c) having plans over an entire life, (d) capable of acknowledging their social context and (e) in need of certain primary goods.⁴ Rawls has referred to the bargaining situation involving these persons as the 'original position' (OP):

... we must find some point of view, removed from and not distorted by the particular features and circumstances of the all-encompassing background framework, from which a fair agreement between persons regarded as free and equal can be reached.

The original position, with the features I have called the 'veil of ignorance', is this point of view.⁵

The legislators also know, even while bargaining, that their amnesia will be temporary. Whilst not knowing who they are in toto or which communities they represent, they *do* know that after bargaining they will return to their complete personalities and communities of old. They know it is their total personality and community (and not the minimal person of a-e above) that will find its activities regulated by the laws made during bargaining. When one knows one belongs to a community, but does not know *which one*, it becomes prudent to agree upon tolerant and minimal legislation that does not favour one community over another.

The veil is a device of representation only, and not an endorsement of a model of human personhood as abstracted from cultural or communal identities.⁶ Indeed it is recognition of the importance of private and communal commitments that finds Rawls determined to limit the scope of government legislation. Legislators cannot be allowed to impose hegemony based on one particular version of the good life. He hopes that by modelling legislation in the manner of the OP, laws will be made that are non-partisan and worthy of universal acceptance:

The aim of justice as fairness, then, is practical: it presents itself as a conception of justice that may be shared by citizens as a basis of a reasoned, informed and willing political agreement. It

expresses their shared and public political reason. But to attain such a shared reason, the conception of justice should be, as far as possible, independent of the opposing and conflicting philosophical and religious doctrines that citizens affirm.⁷

The methodology of the OP will inevitably fail to legislate a perfectionist liberal policy.⁸ However, until the minimal manifesto can be taken for granted society cannot function in even a tolerable, let alone an ideal, manner.

§ 2 The Citizen as a Political Person

2. 1 Justice as fairness

Rawls has faith that legislators in the OP will anchor their social contract upon:

This organising idea . . . of society as a fair system of social cooperation between free and equal persons viewed as fully cooperating members of society over a complete life.⁹

Each of the terms (fair, social co-operation, free and equal) will now be separately considered and then coalesced to arrive at Rawls' vision of citizenship in a liberal society. Rawls places fairness foremost. The imperative to treat all citizens fairly is so fundamental that it is equated with the concept of social justice itself. Rawls states that the most fundamental principles of justice are:

- a. Each person has an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all.
- b. Social and economic inequalities are permissible provided that they are:
 - i. to the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged; and
 - ii. attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.¹⁰

Whereas some versions of equality dictate an equal distribution of goods or opportunity¹¹, Rawls' 'difference principle' (b.i)¹² suggests inequality of distribution is permissible provided the relative elevation of those 'least advantaged' is guaranteed. The aim of this stipulation is to reduce progressively the gap between citizens to a minimum while ensuring social improvement for all.

2. 2 Social co-operation

Concerning social co-operation Rawls says:

- a. Cooperation is distinct from merely socially coordinated activity, for example, from activity coordinated by orders issued by some central authority. Cooperation is guided by publicly recognised rules and procedures that those cooperating accept and regard as properly regulating their conduct.
- b. Cooperation involves the idea of fair terms of cooperation: these are terms that each participant may reasonably accept, provided that everyone else likewise accepts them. Fair terms of cooperation specify an idea of reciprocity: all who are engaged in cooperation and who do their part as the rules and procedure require, are to benefit in an appropriate way as assessed by a suitable benchmark of comparison. . . .
- c. The idea of social cooperation requires an idea of each participant's rational advantage, or good. This idea of good specifies what those who are engaged in cooperation, whether individuals, families, or associations, or even the governments of peoples, are trying to achieve, when the scheme is viewed from their own standpoint.¹³

The idea of social co-operation defines the boundaries of civic expectation but does not stipulate the nature of 'the good'. The individual is not to be coerced into affirming a concept of the good and it is only fair to expect a citizen to contribute to society if that effort is in harmony with that citizen's particular and politically legitimate conception of the good. Citizens must not be exploited for the greater good.¹⁴

2. 3 Freedom as a political capacity

The political identity of a citizen rests in his or her ability to articulate three faculties of freedom. These freedoms are inviolable:

- a. First, citizens are free in that they conceive of themselves and of one another as having the moral power to have a conception of the good.¹⁵
- b. A second respect in which citizens view themselves as free is that they regard themselves as self-authenticating sources of valid claims. That is, they regard themselves as being entitled to make claims on their institutions so as to advance their conceptions of the good (provided these conceptions fall within the range permitted by the public conception of justice).¹⁶
- c. The third respect in which citizens are viewed as free is that they are viewed as capable of taking responsibility for their ends and this affects how their various claims are assessed.¹⁷

Firstly, a citizen is free to choose a conception of the good without fear of subsequent discrimination. Religion, party political persuasion or any other affiliation can be changed without loss of basic political rights. Even those at odds with the liberal State retain the same social freedoms as any other citizen.

Secondly, citizens are free when each is equally significant politically, i.e. the political process is democratic¹⁸. Whereas the first freedom assures citizens that their rights are not a function of their beliefs, the second reassures them that those beliefs will have a voice in politics.

Thirdly, freedom depends on a willingness to be reasonable. The first two faculties of freedom protect a citizen from oppression; the third prevents a citizen from being a liability to others. Freedom cannot tolerate the opportunist or parasitic citizen:

Citizens are to recognise, then, that the weight of their claims is not given by the strength and psychological intensity of their wants and desires (as opposed to their needs as citizens), even when their wants and desires are rational from their point of view. . . . as persons who can engage in social cooperation over a complete life, they can adjust their ends so that those ends can be pursued by the means they can reasonably expect to acquire in return for what they can reasonably expect to contribute. The idea of responsibility for ends is implicit in the public political culture and discernible in its practices. A political conception of the person articulates this idea and fits it into the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation.¹⁹

Rawls makes a distinction between the rational and the reasonable. The rational is the good as defined from any particular coherent and self contained viewpoint; rationality is the exercise of one's talents to achieve this good. The reasonable on the other hand,

is an inter-subjective concept seeking to regulate behaviour across (potentially) conflicting subjects.²⁰ It entails ‘reciprocity’:

Finally . . . the reasonable (with its idea of reciprocity) is not the altruistic (the impartial acting solely for the interests of others) nor is it the concern for self (and moved by its ends and affections alone). In a reasonable society, most simply illustrated in a society of equals in basic matters, all have their own rational ends they hope to advance, and all stand ready to propose fair terms that others may reasonably be expected to accept, so that all may benefit and improve on what everyone can do on their own.²¹

From this it follows that if a citizen’s rational intentions contravene the idea of society as a fair co-operation of free and equal individuals, then that citizen must ‘take responsibility for (his or her) ends’ and adjust accordingly. Should that citizen be either unwilling or incapable of so doing, then that person’s standing as a free and equal political person may be compromised.

2.4 The two moral powers

All this coalesces in Rawls’ concept of the citizen as a moral being. While Rawls does insist upon civic restrictions, these restrictions are designed to allow maximum freedom for all. Accordingly, citizens are expected to exercise two moral powers:

- a. The first (moral power) is a capacity for a sense of justice that enables them to understand, apply, and to act from the reasonable principles of justice that specify fair terms of social co-operation.
- b. The second moral power is a capacity for a conception of the good: a conception of the ends and purposes worthy of our devoted pursuit, together with an ordering of those elements to guide us over a complete life. Citizens’ capacity for a conception of their good in a manner suited for political justice is modelled within the procedure by the rationality of the parties. By contrast, citizens’ capacity for a sense of justice is modelled within the procedure itself by such features as the reasonable condition of symmetry (or equality) in which their representatives are situated as well as by the limits on information expressed by the veil of ignorance.²²

The understanding of the citizen as a moral person will be elaborated upon in Chapter 2. Here, it is sufficient to note that Rawls’ political definition of a moral being includes objective (justice) and subjective (good life) components.²³

Rawls’ political liberalism seems uncontroversial. Yet some have challenged him. Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre are the foremost representatives for this ‘communitarian’ discontent.²⁴ Out of respect for their intentions, their work is introduced as a critique of Rawls. However, it is humbly suggested that they are better read as supplementing, not opposing, Rawls. They, by highlighting aspects of social and personal well being not sufficiently explored by Rawls, advance his basically sound position.

§ 3 The Basis of the Communitarian Challenge

3. 1 Sandel on the ghosts of the ‘original position’

Sandel’s work represents the radical foundation of the communitarian challenge.²⁵ He insists that Rawls models persons as ‘essentially unencumbered’ or dislocated from any particular communal context:

To assert the priority of the self whose sovereign agency is assured . . . (Rawls found it necessary) to identify an ‘essentially unencumbered’ self, conceived as a pure subject of possession, distinct from its contingent aims and attributes, standing always behind them (parenthesis not supplied by Sandel).²⁶

Sandel points out there is no commitment in Rawls’ OP towards any definite version of the good life.²⁷ Sandel assumes that this exposes Rawls’ impoverished understanding of human nature. He takes this line of attack in response to the Rawlsian citation:

It is not our aims that primarily reveal our nature but rather the principles that we would acknowledge to govern the background conditions under which these aims are to be formed and the manner in which they are to be pursued. For the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it: even a dominant end must be chosen among numerous possibilities . . . we should therefore reverse the relation between the right and the good proposed by teleological doctrines and view the right as prior.²⁸

Sandel finds the term ‘the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it’ too close to Descartes’s ‘Cogito ergo sum’ for his liking.²⁹ Sandel reads Rawls as arguing that the self can legitimately be seen as unencumbered or abstracted from the social world of real life. In opposition, Sandel points out that unlike the minimal legislators of the OP human beings have a range of attachments and relationships and that:

. . . real persons ordinarily conceived as ‘thick with particular traits’ are not strictly prior to their ends, but are embedded in and conditioned by the values and interests and desires from among which the ‘sovereign’ self, qua subject of possession, would take its purposes.³⁰

These predispositions cannot be phenomenologically ‘bracketed out’ when considering the authentic self. Indeed, the product of such an exercise would be a ghost of the true self. Sandel regards the legislators in Rawls’ bargaining situation as just such phantoms. Sandel is therefore sceptical of any conclusions, particularly the conception of justice, that Rawls has derived from such unrealistic premises. According to Sandel, once the divorce of politics from any ‘thick’³¹ view of human nature is shown to be erroneous the intricately constructed Rawlsian theory of justice collapses.³²

Sandel, despite making wrong assumptions about Rawls’ view of human nature³³, is correct to emphasise that politics will be unrealistic if it does not respect the rich complexity of human life. Political systems need to organise people with innumerable

desires, convictions and aspirations, hence requiring that there must be more to government than enforcing justice.

3. 2 MacIntyre and the importance of cultural narrative

MacIntyre complements Sandel's critique by highlighting that any understanding of human behaviour must be sensitive to context. In particular, intentionality and coherence define intelligible human behaviour. He illustrates this using an amusing example:

I am standing waiting for a bus and the young man standing next to me suddenly says: 'The name of the common wild duck is *Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*'. There is no problem as to the meaning of the sentence he uttered: the problem is, how to answer the question, what was he doing in uttering it? Suppose he just uttered such sentences at random intervals; this would be one possible form of madness. We would render his action of utterance intelligible if one of the following turned out to be true. He has mistaken me for someone who yesterday had approached him in the library and asked: 'Do you by any chance know the Latin name of the common wild duck?' Or he has just come from a session with his psychotherapist who has urged him to break down his shyness by talking to strangers. 'But what shall I say?' 'Oh, anything at all'.³⁴

MacIntyre elaborates through the concept of narrative. Each person lives within a set of circumstances, apart from which his or her behaviour becomes unintelligible. To understand (say) a Hamlet, requires a knowledge of his intentions and the background circumstances of his life. Only through familiarity with these is it possible to appreciate his struggles and near lunacy. It is Hamlet's *inability* to come to terms with his narrative that leads to tragedy:

A central thesis then begins to emerge: man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key questions for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'.³⁵

MacIntyre proposes a nexus 'of mutual presupposition'³⁶ between narrative and personal identity. MacIntyre relates this to the 'unity of a human life'. If the unity becomes strained life becomes absurd. Should the nexus be altogether broken, one would cease to remain the same person for long. Such a 'person' would be not merely unpredictable or enigmatic but schizophrenic, i.e. a person only in a limited sense. As far as MacIntyre is concerned this schizophrenia is the fate of all liberal lives divorced from the communal narratives that alone make a person whole.

MacIntyre highlights the social construction of life's meaning. A good life is built through the integration of the particular into a greater narrative. One cannot live for the moment alone, and a fragmentation of our narratives into public and private domains could threaten the unity of life. With one's narrative in tatters, is it possible to

provide a reassuring answer to the rhetorical question 'who am I?' MacIntyre asserts that the answer must be 'no'. Who am I? What should I do? How should I do it? - these kinds of questions are embedded in predetermined social contexts.

§ 4 Communitarianism: Friend or Foe of Liberalism?

Many have voiced concerns that the communitarian position might find itself associated with bad company. The emphasis it places on the pre-determined context of social living, as opposed to the exercise of free reason, appears to make a virtue of subjugation. For example, Nausbaum senses that communitarianism is likely to be associated with:

. . . the abandonment of the enlightenment's radical demand for human equality across differences of ethnicity, nationality, class, gender and race.³⁷

These concerns should not be dismissed lightly. While communitarianism, at least of the MacIntyre variety, is not intentionally the enemy of human liberties, its position is as much fraught with danger as it is with promise since it can be manipulated to subserve illiberal positions. Understanding both the virtues and problems of MacIntyre's position requires a recognition of his difference from, and similarity with, two phenomena of the modern political context: postmodernism and relativism. These associations are now explored. The object of this exercise is to suggest that provided one is alert to certain dangers, communitarian and relativist insights, particularly of the MacIntyre variety, must be heeded by liberal theorists.

4. 1 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is best viewed as a disorganised revolution against almost everything. The postmodern individual is to strip of all prior commitments and historical contexts. All identities are incidental and must be questioned. Rabinow tells us:

. . . the post-modernist is blind to her own situation and situatedness because, qua post-modernist, she is committed to a doctrine of partiality and flux for which even such things as one's own situation are so unstable, so without identity, that they cannot serve as objects of sustained reflection. Post-modernist pastiche is both a critical position and a dimension of our contemporary world.³⁸

Postmodernism is ironic. Whilst it is committed to a doctrine of flux, it is firm in its belief that any opinion is as good as any other, and unyielding in its dismissal of the possibility of objective truth. Postmodernists apply this conviction to all fields of human experience. In the ideal postmodernist world, epistemology, politics and morality would all be matters of individual fancy. All points of view would be equidistant to the centre of truth, if 'truth' could be said to exist at all.

4.2 Gellner, Popper's three worlds, and ethical relativism

Gellner argues that while postmodernism need not be taken seriously, the movement has been of some avail. Postmodernists have put the spotlight on a kindred spirit that deserves close inspection - relativism:

Postmodernism as such doesn't matter too much. It is a fad . . . But it is a specimen of relativism, and relativism does matter . . . It is objectionable because it leads to *cognitive* nihilism, which is simply false, and also because it possibly misrepresents the way in which we actually understand societies and cultures.³⁹

Gellner's critique is based on the following criticisms of epistemological relativism. Concerning our understanding of the *physical* world, the efficacy of the natural sciences has established the possibility of objective truth and the procedures through which this truth can be realised. One way of gaining knowledge about the world is not as good as any other and the scientific way, based on empiricism and logic, is best because it works. Hence concerning the physical world, epistemological relativism is false.

Gellner points out that the *social* world, for all its subjective variety and subtlety, is still located within the physical world. Moreover, if one wants to understand any society, one cannot ignore the world-wide dominance of empirical and logical thinking. As such, he feels that:

To pretend that we are somehow or other living in a pre-scientific world . . . in which all meanings-systems are equal . . . and to indulge in a rite of expiation for a vanishing hegemony, is simply absurd. The sooner this nonsense stops the better.⁴⁰

The postulation of this kind of completely indisputable asymmetry has nothing whatever to do with a racist, or any other, glorification of one segment of humanity over another. It is style of knowledge and its implementation, not any category of personnel, which is being signalled out as symmetry-defying.⁴¹

Hence: the physical world is best understood through the methods of science and most societies acknowledge this. Gellner then makes a more controversial claim. In the same way that knowledge of the physical world is culture-transcendent, so too it may be possible to arrive at moral principles that are transcendent to cultural or parochial norms:

The denial of the possibility that morality could be beyond culture, and knowledge beyond both, is in fact an extremely acceptable definition of relativism . . .

The point is - what we desperately need is precisely a morality beyond culture, and knowledge beyond both morality *and* culture. As it happens, we do appear to possess the latter, but not the former. . . . *The fact that we do so is the central and by far the most important point about our shared social condition.* . . .⁴²

Though Gellner pleads for the ethical counterpart of trans-cultural cognitive asymmetry, he does not elaborate on the theme. A pity, since his perspicacity is always

helpful. He does however highlight that any situation of plurality is riddled with differing viewpoints on moral matters. Gellner feels that if a plural society is to remain coherent, 'we desperately need . . . a morality beyond culture'.

What should be made of Gellner? It is true that the highly mobile and miscible character of today's world means that the ethical viewpoints of various peoples, traditions and societies can no longer remain mutually exclusive. However, arriving at 'a morality beyond culture' cannot be straightforward. While Gellner is right to dismiss postmodernism as an extreme, indiscriminate and irresponsible form of relativism, there may be forms of context-bound moral relativism which do not necessarily conclude in 'cognitive nihilism'. Certain of these forms may be valid, and recognising their validity may play a crucial part in the realisation of a civil and liberal plural society. A brief detour into Karl Popper's 'three worlds' philosophy lays the foundation for understanding why so. Essentially:

In this pluralistic philosophy the world consists of at least three ontologically distinct sub-worlds: or, as I shall say, there are three worlds: the first is the physical world or the world of physical states; the second is the mental world or the world of mental states; and the third is the world of intelligibles, or of *ideas in the objective sense*; it is the world of possible objects of thought: the world of theories in themselves, and their logical relations; of arguments in themselves; and of problem situations in themselves.

The three worlds are so related that the first two can interact, and that the last two can interact. Thus the second world, the world of subjective or personal experiences, interacts with each of the other two worlds. The first world and the third world cannot interact, save through the intervention of the second world, the world of subjective or personal experiences.⁴³

Popper (like Gellner) would deny a postmodernist view of 'understanding' as ultimately a world II object, i.e. just a mental state, with one mental state as good as another. Were it so, understanding *would* stand condemned to an interminable relativism. Instead, Popper points out that though understanding involves mental states, these sensations can through language be represented as 'ideas in the objective sense'. These ideas can in turn be tested for 'logical relations' and how these relate to 'problem situations in themselves'. Such relationships can be formulated as theories, which are world III objects:

Admittedly, the activities or processes covered by the umbrella term 'understanding' are subjective or personal or psychological activities. They must be distinguished from the (more or less successful) *outcome* of these activities, from their result: the 'final state' (for the time being) of understanding, the *interpretation*. Although this *may* be a subjective state of understanding, it may also be a third-world object, especially a theory; and the latter case is, in my opinion, the more important one. Regarded as a third-world object, the interpretation will always be a theory: for example a historical explanation, supported by a chain of arguments and, perhaps, by documentary evidence.

So every interpretation is a kind of *theory* and, like every theory, it is anchored in other theories, and in other third-world objects. And in this way the third-world problem of the *merits* of the interpretation can be raised and discussed, and especially its value for our historical *understanding*.

This, I suggest, can be generalised, and holds for every subjective act of 'knowledge': all the important things we can say about an act of knowledge consist of pointing out the third world objects of the act - a theory or proposition - and its relation to other third world objects, such as the arguments bearing on the problem as well as the objects known.⁴⁴

Or to put it in another way: *the activity of understanding consists, essentially, in operating with third world objects.*⁴⁵

Popper's taxonomy clarifies why understanding in the world of morals must be contrasted with the scientific understanding of the physical world. In scientific understanding, world III theories are built on the uncontroversial measurement of world I objects. Measurements and the logical relationships between them can credit or discredit any related world III theories. But concerning moral understanding, the 'raw data' includes world II pleasures and pains, or attractions and repulsions, that are impossible to measure precisely and without provoking controversy. To complicate the matter further, many moral concepts (e.g. honour) derive their meaning through numerous other pre-existing world III concepts (e.g. bravery or reputation) which are themselves built upon slippery world II objects. Thus, understanding a moral position involves operating with entities that cannot be measured objectively or understood without reference to numerous other subjective moral concepts.

While it is not possible to understand a moral outlook outside of a communal context, this is *not* to say that every moral outlook can be justified through communal context; somethings *are* wrong in *all* contexts, e.g. sadism can never be a virtue. But one must not be presumptuous. An outside observer may find an act cruel, which from within may not be considered so. The subjective and inter-related nature of many moral objects suggests that Gellner is unrealistic if he is hoping for a trans-cultural understanding of, let alone judgement on, *all* moral objects.

4.3 Return to MacIntyre: mixed blessings

MacIntyre emphasises that moral objects are culture-context bound. By so doing, he make a valuable contribution to liberal thinking on justice in a context of cultural pluralism. However, MacIntyre is in danger of disregarding the cosmopolitan, even global, moral contexts of today. Both the value (§4.3.1) and the dangers (§4.3.2) are considered next.

4.3.1 The value of MacIntyre

MacIntyre's work is valuable because he (i) emphasises that there can be no morality beyond culture (ii) confronts (in certain situations) the relativist challenge and (iii) appreciates (in certain situations) the need for inter-traditional moral enquiry.

4.3.1.1 No morality beyond culture

MacIntyre can, in some important respects, be regarded as an ethical relativist. He denies that 'the essence of moral valuations is that they are universalizable and prescriptive'⁴⁶. Unlike Gellner who feels 'we desperately need a morality beyond culture', MacIntyre argues this is often an unintelligible project since morality is culture specific. The case for both particularity and cultural specificity of moral matters rests on realising that:

I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognise it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition.⁴⁷

MacIntyre stresses each tradition has its perspective, and no one tradition can assume an authoritative viewpoint. This inter-traditional relativism differs from postmodern ethical relativism. The non-universalizability of moral judgements rests on context, yet these contexts or 'narratives' are each embedded within a greater narrative. The virtuous life demands the unity of these ever widening narrative circles that culminate with the 'ongoing social tradition':

My account of the virtues proceeds through three stages: a first which concerns virtues as qualities necessary to achieve the goods internal to practices⁴⁸; a second which considers them as qualities contributing to the good of a whole life; and a third which relates them to the pursuit of a good for human beings the conception of which can only be elaborated and possessed within an ongoing social tradition.⁴⁹

... no human quality is to be accounted a virtue unless it satisfies the conditions specified *at each of the three stages*.⁵⁰

It is the third condition, that a virtue is meaningful and can only be realised within a social tradition, that finds MacIntyre opposed to not only postmodernist moral relativism, but also a prevalent individualistic and relativistic trend in liberal moral philosophy⁵¹. Foot's observations are apposite:

Where ... (sociologists and anthropologists) would think of morals ... in connection with ... the regulation of behaviour in and by society, philosophers commonly take a different starting point. What the philosopher does is to ask himself what it is to make a moral judgement, or to take up a moral attitude, and he tries to give the analysis in terms of elements such as feeling, action and thought, which are found in a single individual (parenthesis not supplied at exactly this point).⁵²

The sociologist in MacIntyre has suggested that liberal thinking on the moral matters is guilty of the philosopher's culturally decontextualised, individualistic focus. After all, does not Rawls equate what is morally 'just' with what would gain the consent of a

culturally anonymous individual legislator? MacIntyre ridicules the OP for expecting us to think as if ‘we had been shipwrecked on an uninhabited island with a group of other individuals, each of whom is a stranger to me and to all the others’ and then ask ‘What kind of social contract with others is it reasonable for me to enter into?’⁵³

MacIntyre feels that the OP legislators *would not* arrive at a consensus even on political matters. This is so because there is no reason to believe that Rawls’ principles of justice are the *only* likely outcome of the OP bargaining. The legislators, given their inadequate constitution, might conclude with any number of laws. Indeed, MacIntyre regards the entire ‘Enlightenment project’ (of which Rawlsian liberalism is a subset)⁵⁴, with its commitment to individual reason and rationality⁵⁵ and denial of any ‘overall theory of the human good’⁵⁶, as doomed to an interminable moral relativism.⁵⁷

In opposition, MacIntyre says that before the Enlightenment, moral and political concepts had meaning as parts of a co-ordinated and non-accidental social whole. Any individual’s moral sense was constructed and regulated by the group, and moral positions were grown into, not chosen. Of course, a society’s moral sense could change over time, and individuals could accept or reject the new sense. However, there was always a firm moral ground on which to push or pull:

In Aristotelian practical reasoning it is the individual *qua* citizen who reasons; in Thomistic practical reasoning it is the individual *qua* enquirer into his or her good and the good of his or her community; in Humean practical reasoning it is the individual *qua* propertied or unpropertied participant in a society of a particular kind of mutuality and reciprocity; but in the practical reasoning of liberal modernity it is the individual *qua* individual who reasons.⁵⁸

In the Aristotelian, Thomistic and Humean traditions, the meaning of the good life was not found in a perpetual personal deliberation but through a growing onto a pre-existing moral context. For MacIntyre this is not just how it was, but how it should be now. Persons must discover their moral sense through the relationships and traditional social structures that give life meaning.

Much of this is correct. Liberals must learn from MacIntyre that each person must be recognised as a member and product of a community. The process of nurture into a particular communal context begins at birth, long before the person enters society as a political being. This communal background can remain influential throughout the citizen’s life. It is within this background that a person develops a sense of what is right and wrong, what is to be done and what is prohibited. For better or worse, people do things in and with their groups that they would find inconceivable on an

individual basis. To ignore this, or to hope that communal affiliations will be put aside in the interest of an anonymous or neutral viewpoint, is to play roulette with political change.

So MacIntyre's critique, which began with an objection to universal moral judgements (in this sense a relativist position), concludes by placing the burden of virtue in the lap of tradition (in this sense not a relativist position). Consistent with MacIntyre's narrative theme (§3.2), it is the unity of the individual with tradition that makes a person's life good. MacIntyre urges postmodernists and liberals alike to stop making a fetish of the individual's right to choose, and instead affirm a particular conception of the good and organise like-minded communities.

4.3.1.2 Recognising the threat of the relativist challenge

MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981/5) concentrated on the importance of narrative. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) explored the ramifications of those insights in situations of multiple communal narratives. In the latter book MacIntyre recognised that the position in *After Virtue*, while explicitly opposed to postmodern relativism, nevertheless lends itself to an *inter-cultural* relativist position since it tends to idealise traditions as independent wholes. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* pays closer attention to the limitations of idealising traditions.⁵⁹

MacIntyre begins by emphasising that the communal narrative influences a person's conception of justice. What is perceived as just depends on what one believes is the purpose of life. If there are various communal views on rationality, then there will be different views on justice.⁶⁰ This lack of a neutral standard of either rationality or justice⁶¹ *could* find society unfortunately degenerating into a form of inter-cultural relativism. MacIntyre summarises the threat:

There can be no rationality as such. Every set of standards, every tradition incorporating a set of standards, has as much and as little claim to our allegiance as any other. Let us call this the 'relativist challenge'. . . .⁶²

Whilst MacIntyre opposes the above, he does not feel that the relativist challenge can be dismissed relying on arguments assuming decontextualised models of the human person. People are rarely converted to the positions of others through logical arguments.⁶³ According to MacIntyre, only 'the kind of rationality possessed by traditions'⁶⁴ allows inter-cultural relativism to be defeated. The Enlightenment foreclosed this option and hence condemned humanity to a state of endless quarrels.⁶⁵

What is this ‘kind of rationality possessed by traditions’? MacIntyre explains that any tradition is based on fundamental beliefs or ‘first principles’. These ‘first principles’ are justified on the pragmatic basis of internal coherence and efficacy.⁶⁶ Practices are learnt within a tradition, and practices and traditions are good if they help one cope with life. Now, suppose tradition A's way of coping with a particular problem is not as effective as that of tradition B. A cannot dismiss B as no better than itself since elements in tradition B help to solve A's problems more efficiently than was possible before the encounter. A, in some important respect, finds B the more meritorious, i.e. A comes to reject the relativist challenge. Here is the full scenario whereby the ‘relativist challenge’ is to be refuted:⁶⁷

The rationality of a tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive enquiry is . . . a matter of the kind of progress which it makes through a number of well-defined types of stage.

1. Every such form of enquiry begins in and from some condition of pure historical contingency . . . authority will have been conferred upon certain texts and certain voices. Bards, priests, prophets, kings, and, on occasion, fools and jesters will all be heard.⁶⁸

2. Confrontation by new situations, engendering new questions, may reveal within established practices and beliefs a lack of resources for offering or for justifying answers to these new questions.⁶⁹

3. At any point it may happen to any tradition-constituted enquiry that by its own standards of progress it ceases to make progress. Its hitherto trusted methods of enquiry have become sterile. Conflicts over rival answers . . . can no longer be settled rationally. Moreover, it may indeed happen that the use of the methods of inquiry and of the forms of argument, by means of which rational progress had been achieved so far, begins to have the effect of increasingly disclosing new inadequacies, hitherto unrecognised incoherences, and new problems for the solution of which there seem to be insufficient or no resources within the established fabric of belief.⁷⁰

4. This kind of dissolution of historically founded certitudes is the mark of an epistemological crisis.

5. The solution . . . requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and . . . some new type or types of theory which meet three highly exacting requirements.

(i) First, this in some ways radically new and conceptually enriched scheme, if it is to put an end to epistemological crisis, must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way.

(ii) Second, it must also provide an explanation of just what it was which rendered the tradition . . . sterile or incoherent or both.

(iii) And third, these first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to this point.⁷¹

6. That particular tradition's claims to truth can at some point in this process no longer be sustained. And this by itself is enough to show that if part of the relativist's thesis is that each tradition, since it provides its own standards of rational justification, must always be vindicated in the light of those standards, then on this at least the relativist is mistaken.⁷²

7. When they have understood the beliefs of the alien tradition they may find themselves compelled to recognise that within this other tradition it is possible to construct from the concepts and theories peculiar to it what they were unable to provide from their own conceptual and theoretical resources, a cogent and illuminating explanation - cogent and illuminating, that is, by their own standards - of why their own intellectual tradition had been unable to solve its problems or restore its

coherence . . . Derived as it is from a genuinely alien tradition, the new explanation does not stand in any sort of substantive continuity with the preceding history of the tradition in crisis.⁷³

8. In this kind of situation the rationality of tradition requires an acknowledgement . . . that the alien tradition is superior in rationality and in respect of its claims to truth to their own.⁷⁴

These are the possibilities which the relativist challenge has failed to envisage.⁷⁵ [Tabulation imposed].

The above not only provides an account of how the ‘relativist challenge’ can be discredited; it also emphasises the futility of any culture regarding itself as a self-fulfilled whole. Traditional mechanisms for coping with problems can fail acutely, leading to an ‘epistemological crisis’ (EC). Though initially cause for despair, EC is also an opportunity for growth. Humility and enquiry are thrust upon a tradition. Conversely, a tradition stubbornly convinced of its self sufficiency will miss opportunities for advancement. This is important for all traditions to heed.

4.3.1.3 Inter-traditional moral enquiry

MacIntyre in his 1990 work, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, Tradition*⁷⁶, has sought to indicate how moral enquiry that is rational in the sense outlined above, might be conducted. He makes a scholarly comparison of the process of moral enquiry as found in:

- a) the Enlightenment (Encyclopaedic)
- b) Nihilism (Genealogical) and the
- c) Thomistic tradition - the preferred alternative to both (a) and (b).

The virtue of the Thomist approach is that it allows for traditions to provide a firm basis for the growth of knowledge and discourages a blinkering of the intellect or restriction of its growth.⁷⁷ Significantly, opportunity for fruitful dialogue is not restricted to the EC scenario but instead dialogue is the routine activity of the university scholars.

In the conclusion of *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, MacIntyre explains how the Thomistic process of ‘practical reasoning’ might work in a plural world. The role of the university is central. Within any given university, a particular tradition’s form of moral enquiry is to be practised and perpetuated. Many forms of enquiry, many unique universities. Scholars within each university are immersed within their traditions of enquiry, and hence seek to advance wisdom within that tradition. At the same time, they also participate in debate with scholars from other universities. Hence they become familiar with different approaches to problems of shared interest.⁷⁸ Such

debate is a dialogue of knowledgeable equals, not vacuous neutrals. Now MacIntyre presents himself not so much as an anti-liberal but as a post-liberal. Hence in one sense the work represents a welcome acknowledgement of what was lacking in *After Virtue* - explicit respect for the existence of pluralism. Nevertheless, a number of reservations concerning MacIntyre's counsel must be stated. The following section highlights these reservations by looking at MacIntyre with a critical, not sympathetic, eye.

4.3.2 Things of which to be wary

MacIntyre's general insights on the nature of human values, the defeat of the relativist challenge and the value of scholarly inter-traditional dialogue are invaluable. The difficulty arises when one feeds into MacIntyre's general theories precisely the kind of cultural data MacIntyre claims is lacking in Rawls' OP. Ironically, MacIntyre's counsel is one that is in abstract wise but in its particulars out of touch. If one applies MacIntyre's teaching to the modern context, one must be wary because he:

- (i) is insensitive to many complications in defining communal membership
- (ii) offers *limited* scope for inter-traditional dialogue
- (iii) does not recognise the difficulties even coherent and rational cultures can pose for *other* cultures
- (iv) hopes for a political and social monolith
- (v) seems to have a patronising view of commoners.

4.3.2.1 Complications in defining communal membership

MacIntyre would accept that at any given time each individual is involved in not just one narrative but many.⁷⁹ Yet he does not respect the implications of this. Today, most people live in a plural nation-State. Under its banner exist many racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups,⁸⁰ each of which can legitimately be seen as a community. Each community interacts with others. Consequently, new cultural characteristics evolve; the original narrative evolves.⁸¹ To complicate things further, nation-States are themselves part of a greater narrative of globalization.⁸² Both within and across nations, cultural cross-pollination is occurring with unpredictable consequences.⁸³

Acknowledging these changes is not to find postmodernists right in saying culture or tradition are obsolete concepts.⁸⁴ Nor is it to deny the importance of communal narrative for human well being. But it is to say that our narratives and identities have outgrown their previously parochial boundaries and must now define themselves in an

increasingly global context. Thus, MacIntyre is right to say that one's moral values stem from one's narrative, but is wrong to ignore the impact of the plural and global narratives.

In today's world, people belong to more than one narrative or community. Take even a very traditional society - the Hindu. Here identities are attached to (say) a (i) caste, (ii) linguistic group, (iii) vocational group and (iv) nation-State. To which community or tradition does the person belong? The Brahmin, the Gujarati, academic or the English or Indian? A person can belong to all these communities, and each community has its 'conception of the good' to which the person is accountable. The number of incumbent evolving and overlapping affiliations make it difficult to define precisely communal identity.

4.3.2.2 Limited scope for inter-traditional dialogue

In '*Whose Justice*', MacIntyre has examined the possibility of resolving debates across traditions by concentrating on the scenario where tradition A learns from tradition B when B provides A more rational solutions to problems faced by A than A could offer from within its existing recourses.

However, it is not clear why MacIntyre restricts the possibility of an educational encounter merely to traumatic instances of EC. Would it not be more efficient to be ever willing to learn from others? Why not interact with and learn from other cultures even in times of internal coherence and stability? Surely the most 'rational' approach for all cultures to take is to participate in an on-going dialogue, not restricted to times of crisis, 'defeat', etc. MacIntyre fails to explore vigorously these possibilities.

In '*Three Rival Conceptions*', there is a greater emphasis on routine dialogue, but the argument seems restricted to the heights of academia. It is not clear whether MacIntyre would encourage commoners, untutored in their own traditional form of enquiry, to embark on dialogue with outsiders. Yet in the real plural world debates are not carefully planned for events, but interactions thrust upon one, ready or not. If rationality is the criteria whereby judgements are to be made, then in a world with many simultaneous contexts a flexible and eclectic approach might prove the most rational. MacIntyre might find such a conclusion unpalatable.

4.3.2.3 Whose crisis?

MacIntyre neglects the fact that even cultures in 'good order' (by the standards of internal coherence and not in EC) may need to change. Cultures are not only

accountable to their members but also to a wider public. There are many instances, religious fundamentalism for example, where a community stands internally coherent, self-satisfied and facing no immediate prospect of EC. If the EC scenario is envisaged as the primary route for inter-traditional dialogue, then these traditions will never change since they are prepared to be irrational for the sake of 'higher' values. Believers often speak of sacrificing the world for the sake of their soul, and would during their crusades readily sacrifice the worlds of others. These traditions might not face an internal crisis but certainly pose a crisis to those outside of the enchanted circle. Should such traditions be left free to advance along their lines? MacIntyre's position does not challenge such traditions to ask 'Is there a valid way, apart from our traditional viewpoint, of looking at this situation?'. The traditionalist's reluctance to ask such questions makes for an insensitivity to the consequences that a particular traditional lifestyle may have for the lives of outsiders.

4.3.2.4 The hope of an intra-traditional monolith

Over almost two decades, MacIntyre has voiced a pessimistic and morose appraisal of the inability of modern (western) society to arrive at a solid and profound consensus on how life should be lived:

The most striking feature of contemporary moral utterance is that so much of it is used to express disagreements: and the most striking feature of the debates in which these disagreements are expressed is their interminable character.⁸⁵

. . . we have all too many disparate and rival moral concepts, in this case rival and disparate concepts of justice, and the moral recourses of the culture allow us no way of settling the issue between them rationally.⁸⁶

Yet what the kind of philosophy which has been put to work in the history of post-Enlightenment academic philosophy reveals is that although very, very occasionally some particular thesis is conclusively refuted or at least rendered utterly implausible . . . disagreement upon major issues seems to be ineradicable.

. . . this kind of philosophy is . . . what some of its most acute exponents always said that it was, a way of clarifying issues and alternatives but not of providing grounds for conviction on matters of any substance.⁸⁷

What has become clear, however, is that gradually less and less importance has been attached to arriving at substantive conclusions and more and more to continuing the debate for its own sake.⁸⁸

The implications of this complaint require scrutiny. No society can tolerate radically conflicting conceptions of justice and every culture must have the resources for settling disputes rationally. However MacIntyre seems to extend his judicial purview beyond the scope of radically conflicting views of justice to include many other 'matters of substance.' The general position seems to be:

1. Society is full of disagreements on moral and social matters.
2. It should not be full of disagreements.
3. Controversies that exist should be promptly settled on a rational basis.
4. Rationality requires a clear conception of the good.
5. Society lacks this, therefore (1).
6. Remedy: give it a clear conception of the good and remedy (1).

More will be said on whether disagreement is always bad (§5.3). For the moment it should be noted that even granting one could establish clearly defined social identities and a clear conception of the good, there would remain the question of what to do with those persons irrational and perfidious enough to reject the moral, social and political monolith. Are those who abstain to be expelled, as Pericles implies?:

. . . we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business: we say that he has no business here at all.⁸⁹

In today's world, those to be expelled might outnumber those committed to that society's comprehensive version of the good. Indeed, a liberal (as opposed to MacIntyrean) society could well be viewed as a community of persons who have no desire to live in a moral, social and political monolith. Such persons are not tortured by 'interminable moral disagreement'; rather they feel relieved by the flexibility offered by life in an inconclusive society. MacIntyre seems to ignore this.

4.3.2.5 Patronising view of mankind

A closely related difficulty is MacIntyre's patronising dismissal of the sentiments of large sections of humanity. Consider the claim that 'liberalism can provide no compelling arguments in favour of its conception of the human good'⁹⁰. This is presumptuous. Who says it cannot? Certainly not the millions across the world who sacrifice much to live in a liberal society or struggle for its realisation. Liberal societies more than any other do not have captive memberships. In this they can take pride. Equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, creed, colour, age or communal background; freedom to speak against the status quo without reprisal; the right to determine and change the political leaders; economic stability and freedom to organise one's affairs - these are all compelling reasons why people choose liberal societies. It is surprising that learned MacIntyre has not noticed that this highly plural and forever dithering post-enlightenment world is also one where all humans are generally treated

as such, and those that are not have scope to remedy their position. How can all this be considered un-compelling?

4.4 Summary of MacIntyre's position

MacIntyre's position is complicated and a critical summary may prove useful:

Relativist aspects	
No emphasis on <i>routine</i> inter-cultural dialogue - hence inclining towards an inter-traditional relativism (§4.3.2.2). In absence of 'EC' each culture to live without critical introspection - again, inter-traditional relativism (§4.3.2.3).	No universal morality - inter-traditional relativism (§4.3.1.1).
Reservations	Valuable insights
Reservations Disagreement is unwholesome (§4.3.2.4). Hope of a social and political monolith (§4.3.2.4). No consideration for those outside the pale (§4.3.2.4). People cannot choose the good for themselves (§4.3.2.5).	Valuable insights Importance of traditional narrative (§3.2). Morality not built on individual deliberation but communally constructed (§4.3.1.1). Importance of EC and rationality as a basis for inter-tradition dialogue (§4.3.1.3). Responding to the 'relativist challenge' (§4.3.1.2).
Non-relativist aspects	

Figure 2. Important aspects of MacIntyre's work

MacIntyre recognises the importance of cultural narrative and hopes for a coherent moral, social and political monolith. Within a tradition, one justice, one rationality, one version of the good life; across traditions, many rival conceptions of justice, rationality, and the good life. Except when in EC or academic institutions, traditions are to live by their own lights.

Though MacIntyre is right to want cultures free from external hegemony, it would be a pity if this meant cultures were not answerable to any external moral standard, or that they failed to learn from others. *Such* inter-traditional relativism would be dangerous and inefficient. MacIntyre fails to emphasise sufficiently the need for *routine* trans-cultural dialogue and critical introspection. Hence, while he opposes *intra*-traditional relativism he is, through his lack of emphasis on routine inter-traditional dialogue and critical introspection, prone to certain weaknesses of *inter*-cultural relativism.⁹¹

MacIntyre, like Sandel, is an honourable man who feels that a government offering no guidance and negligent of the social basis of personal identity has no business being in government at all. Both saw Rawls' theory of justice as a threat to such visionary and authentic government. Rawls advances upon this critique, while remaining sensitive to its dangers. Consequently, Rawls' position has advanced.

§ 5 Rawls after the Communitarian Critique⁹²

5.1 The 'original position' as merely a device of representation

Sandel's 1982 work *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* was a critique of Rawls' OP as presented in *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Rawls has recognised the importance of this critique and has responded.⁹³ When re-presenting the OP in '*Political Liberalism*' (1992), he has carefully pointed out that:

There are, however, certain dangers in using this idea. As a device of representation its abstractness invites misunderstandings. In particular, the description of the parties may seem to presuppose a particular metaphysical conception (i.e. the Kantian) of the person; for example, that the essential nature of persons is independent of and prior to their contingent attributes, including their final ends and attachments, and indeed their conception of the good and character as a whole (parenthesis not supplied by Rawls).⁹⁴

The OP was never meant to be more than a 'device of representation' - it is not meant to model an ideal of human personhood. The OP is an exercise in role-playing to help citizens think as free and equal persons should. The OP legislators are not real people, but were they to exist, their concluding constitutions would be Just. This in itself may be a controversial claim, but it is a far more limited one than that of which Rawls is accused. However, were it not for Sandel's impassioned assault, Rawls might not have clarified his OP representation.

5.2 Recognition of tradition

Rawls has admitted that his 1971 work, *A Theory of Justice*, failed to respect the significance of particular communal identities.⁹⁵ Subsequent works move towards a more realistic basis for social stability. Now the 'intuitive' elements⁹⁶ are down played. So too is the a-historical, transcendental context free Kantian enterprise.⁹⁷ Rawls becomes forthcoming in stating that life is located within various narratives. Hence his theory of justice is recognised as (perhaps) suitable only for a particular type of person, located within a particular democratic political tradition. Rawls accepts concerning his theory of justice that:

Whether justice as fairness can be extended to a general political conception for different kinds of societies existing under different historical and social conditions . . . are separate questions. I avoid pre-judging these larger questions.⁹⁸

Rawls' commitment to real world politics also finds him noticing that a democratic context allows for numerous particular contexts:

. . . liberalism assumes that in a constitutional democratic state under modern conditions there are bound to exist conflicting and incommensurable conceptions of the good. This feature characterises modern culture since the Reformation.⁹⁹

He recognises that the identities of citizens are moulded by religious and other group affiliations. Correspondingly, citizens are likely to uphold differing conceptions of the good life independent of the political conception of justice. Since a worthwhile life must have meanings extending beyond the boundaries of jurisprudence, these meanings deserve more respect than to be treated as incidentals. This increased sensitivity towards the influence of traditions is witnessed by his explicit distinction between the political conception of the person and the 'comprehensive doctrines' which animate the lives of citizens:

Earlier Rawls (1971): . . . Nothing is made of the contrast between comprehensive philosophical and moral doctrines and conceptions limited to the domain of the political.¹⁰⁰

Latter Rawls (1985): The conception of the citizen as a free and equal person is not a moral ideal to govern all life . . . we adopt a conception of the person framed as part of, and restricted to, an explicitly political conception of justice . . . persons can accept this conception of themselves as citizens and use it when discussing questions of political justice without being committed in other parts of their life to comprehensive moral ideals often associated with liberalism, for example, the ideals of autonomy and individuality . . . these comprehensive ideals, despite their very great importance in liberal thought, are extended too far when presented as the only appropriate foundation for a constitutional regime. So understood, liberalism becomes but another sectarian doctrine.¹⁰¹

Rawls is emphasising that there is no need for liberalism to impose itself upon citizens as 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. Not all aspects of life can, or even should, be expected to conform to the rules by which public life and institutions are to be regulated. Instead, liberalism is presented as the product of pragmatic reflection upon the conditions for a stable free and equal public space. Hence many aspects of a citizen's private or communal concerns can be left un-compromised.

5.3 Vision, 'weak absolutism' and reasonable pluralism

5.3.1 Vision of an open and progressive society

MacIntyre finds liberalism lacking vision and doomed to imperfection. This is an ironic charge. Consider a MacIntyrian non-liberal society committed to one clear vision of the good life. Individuals would find themselves under tremendous pressure to conform to the social norm. To do otherwise would be continually inconvenient. In such a society only an EC is sufficient to encourage citizens into a progressive inter-traditional dialogue. These are not visionary societies but ones that remain blinkered until they hit a brick wall.

In contrast, Rawls has no intention of straight jacketing the scope of human potential. He does not seek to socialise citizens into any particular version of the good life. This lack of commitment to any one overriding conception of the good is characteristic of a

visionary tradition perpetually open to the possibility of social evolution (and not of one lacking vision). This in turn is reflected in Rawls' attitude towards the complex issue of moral relativism.

Rawls, unlike the postmodern type of relativist, realises it is one thing to say that moral truth is difficult to know, and another to say that an individual or society must not strive to know it as best as possible. Life poses many moral problems and our solutions to these may be more, or less, acceptable. Yet postmodernists have torn up the questions and tentative answers, and thrown them about like confetti. Those as MacIntyre are more discriminating and respect rationality and coherence. Nevertheless the tragedy of both extreme relativism and communitarian absolutism is their disinclination for routinely learning from others - postmodernists deny the wisdom of tradition, MacIntyrians ignore the wisdom of *other* traditions until a crisis arises.

5.3.2 Weak absolutism

Rawls rejects vigorously both postmodern and those kinds of inter-cultural relativism that resist routine dialogue, and instead pursues social progress from the viewpoint of what Jarvie has referred to as 'weak absolutism'. This position retains the humility of the relativist in as much as it is never claimed that one knows the whole truth. However, it does not degenerate into a postmodernist abandonment of the quest for truth. Instead, weak absolutism strives for ever closer approximations to moral, social and political truths. It represents a middle ground between the denial of objective truth and the certainty that one already has it within one's grasp. Such an attitude is more rational than either of the polar extremes:

Relativism is the position that all assessments are assessments relative to some standard or other, and standards derive from cultures All assessment is culture relative. Absolutism in its weak form is the position that there are absolute, i.e. non-culturally relative, truths.¹⁰²

Weak absolutism allows that there are degrees of truth as well as absolute truth, and the former is defined as an approximation to the latter. If $2 \times 2 = 4$ is absolutely true, then $2 \times 2 = 3\frac{1}{2}$ is more true than $2 \times 2 = 2\frac{1}{2}$.¹⁰³

Absolutism in its strong form is the position that the only truths there are absolute truths . . . if something is true it is true for all times and all places: there are no 'local,' partial or relative truths; $2 \times 2 = 3\frac{1}{2}$ and $2 \times 2 = 2\frac{1}{2}$ are alike in being non-truths, i.e. falsehoods . . .

Weak absolutism. . . . says we can learn from (culturally bound) experience about a world structure that is itself not culturally bound, but, rather, bounds cultures. Rationality is displayed in adopting the strategy that maximises the growth of knowledge. The strategy which does that . . . is, I believe, trial and error: offering solutions to problems and then doing our level best to assess them by criticism and improve them in its light.¹⁰⁴

Provided the critical faculties are alert, it is rational to remain open minded. Liberals emphasise that the existence of 'interminable moral debates' may not always be bad.

Both within and across cultures, various points of view must be allowed to flourish since some may contain important elements of truth. This freedom allows creativity from which can spring further novel and illuminating perspectives. Advances are regularly made in the ethical field by people opposed to the existing wisdom. A weak absolutism allows flexibility, which makes for perpetual internal correction and learning from other viewpoints. This is not to deny the importance of culture but to deny it an inexorable authority. Or, as Jarvie says 'Rationality shows itself in our building a self-improving social organisation, not in the delusion that through it we escape social life'.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, individuals, cultures and societies prohibit their evolution by being sure of the sufficiency of their existing moral position. Such entities are likely to be caught unawares by the many changes in circumstance that are common these days.

5.3.3 Reasonable pluralism

Though Rawls never uses the phrase 'weak absolutism', his formulation of 'reasonable pluralism' expresses the insights of weak absolutism in the political context. Reasonable pluralism is a type of moral relativism that celebrates the existence of various moral viewpoints but does not make a virtue out of the vice of babel. Moreover, it does not present liberal political principles as absolute, free standing truths suitable for all peoples at all times. Rather, they are the working principles most *likely* to ensure stability and peace for *plural* societies.

Rawls recognises there are a number of moral positions, not only mutually incompatible but also defying the establishment of the superiority of one over the other. Many moral matters are beyond reasonable jurisdiction. On matters reason cannot judge, the liberal prefers not to pass judgement. Any plural society must accept such incommensurability.¹⁰⁶ For example, speaking of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs Rawls says:

We do not say that they are all doubtful or false, or address questions to which truth and falsehood do not apply. Instead, long historical experience suggests, and many philosophical reflections confirm, that on such doctrines reasoned and uncoerced agreement is not to be expected . . . Many conceptions of the world can plausibly be constructed from different standpoints . . . Justice as fairness tries to construct a conception of justice that takes deep and unresolvable differences on matters of fundamental significance as a permanent condition of the human life. Indeed, this condition may have its good side, if only we can delineate the character of social arrangements that enable us to appreciate its possible benefits.¹⁰⁷

However, incommensurability of moral viewpoints (when it does arise) must be the end, not starting, point of moral dialogue. Equally importantly, the existence of some incommensurable moral positions does not mean that every moral debate is

interminable nor that ‘anything goes’ in the moral sphere. Politics often require an arbitration between two moral positions. Rawls has tried to model through the role play of the OP a fair process of arbitration that does not *presume* the absolute truth of any particular and comprehensive moral viewpoint.¹⁰⁸

While diversity is an inevitable and wholesome situation, there must be limits on commitments that threaten the perpetuation of the open society. Without these limits a plural society might dis-integrate. If the plural whole wishes to remain viable, conflicts must be resolved in a manner acceptable to as many reasonable citizens as possible. It is the business of government to establish the trans-cultural conditions under which a situation of reasonable pluralism might flourish within the objective framework of society as a system of co-operation between free and equal persons:

First, given the fact of reasonable pluralism . . . Liberal principles meet the urgent political requirement to fix, once and for all, the content of certain political basic rights and liberties, and to assign them special priority. Doing this takes those guarantees off the political agenda and puts them beyond the calculus of social interests, thereby establishing clearly and firmly the rules of political contest.¹⁰⁹

Rawls dissociates himself from indiscriminate forms of both inter and intra cultural relativism by juxtaposing liberty of the subjective good aside the constraints of objective justice. Justice must be the cardinal principle regulating all aspects of political activity. In itself, justice does not amount to the good life, but it is an essential prerequisite if all citizens are to stand an equal chance of realising their various aspirations. Hence citizens are characterised through the two moral powers (§2.4).

§ 6 A Stable Pluralism

6.1 Overlapping consensus

Rawls’ political theory can be split into two stages. The first investigates the theoretical conditions that must be satisfied before a plural society can be just. Such a society requires objective, trans-cultural social principles to ensure cohesion. The alternative would be anarchy or a disorganised conglomeration of contingent enclaves.¹¹⁰ Justice as fairness seeks to hold together a plural society.

In the second or ‘overlapping consensus’ stage of his political theory, Rawls shifts attention from the *theory* of a liberal society, to the realisation of such societies given that communal backgrounds can influence political attitudes. The problem now concerns the relationship between a person’s attitude towards justice and other compelling influences. Effectively, the enquiry is now into how legislators, awoken

from their amnesiac trance of the OP and again committed to their comprehensive doctrines of old, will react to the laws they themselves have made (§1.2). In this second pragmatic stage belief systems cannot be taken for granted:

Distinguish three cases:

- a. In the first the political principles are derived from a comprehensive doctrine;
- b. in the second they are not derived from, but are compatible with that doctrine; and
- c. in the third, they are incompatible with it.¹¹¹

These cases shall be referred to as strong, weak or contrary in their consensus with justice. In the strong case an individual finds that his comprehensive doctrine actively compels him to uphold liberal justice. It is only when such a strong overlapping consensus has been established that a stable pluralism becomes possible. In its absence a just society would forever remain potentially unstable.

Rawls does consider the problem of conflict across groups with a weak or contrary consensus. He postulates the following as representing a realistic scenario whereby such groups could be won over to liberalism.¹¹² Initially, the illiberal communities must become disillusioned with strife and accept the principles of justice as a *modus vivendi*. Once a truce is established all citizens will begin to reap the benefits of peace. Trust develops between citizens who were previously antagonistic. This trust makes social co-operation and long term planning possible, leading to increasing prosperity for all. The older generation recall the futility of conflict and are grateful for the liberal values that have improved their social conditions and made possible stability and prosperity. These elders then instil in future generations affectionate feelings towards these values:

Gradually, as the success of political cooperation continues, citizens gain increasing trust and confidence in one another. This is all we need say in reply to the objection that the idea of overlapping consensus is utopian.¹¹³

It would be impertinent and too pessimistic to dispute this.

6.2 Rawls, the realistic communitarian

Rawls can be viewed as a *realistic* communitarian since he respects traditions enough to see the need to establish an overlapping consensus across particular traditions and the principles of justice. Those who doubt Rawls' love of community should remember that he defines 'social co-operation', 'freedom' and 'equality' in a context of mutual obligation. Rawls is not an enemy of 'community' but he does realise that given political obligations must demand the allegiance of citizens with a range of ideological outlooks the political conception of society must be 'thin':

. . . Justice as fairness does indeed abandon the ideal of political community if by that ideal is meant a political society united on one (partially or fully) comprehensive religious, philosophical,

or moral doctrine. That conception of social unity is excluded by the fact of reasonable pluralism: it is no longer a political possibility for those who accept the constraints of liberty and toleration of democratic institutions. . . . political liberalism conceives of social unity in a different way; namely, as deriving from an overlapping consensus on a political conception of justice suitable for a constitutional regime.¹¹⁴

Aristotle said that a community is united by its common objects of love. If so, a plural society, assuming it could be united by anything at all, could do much worse than be united through a love of justice and reasonable pluralism. Once this is realised, MacIntyre’s yearning for a telos is well satisfied:

. . . I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’¹¹⁵

We are part of a story of humankind wherein people have routinely justified atrocities on a communal basis. Yet it is also a narrative where the migration and mixing of peoples has caused extraordinary variety and advances. Rawls clarifies how in a plural society all can be guaranteed the absence of tyranny, and the scope to pursue various agatopias. Therefore, one should not underestimate the august, pure and caring aspect of his vision merely because his style is austere and lacks MacIntyre’s literary gifts.

It is also very significant that Rawls had the humility to call his first book *A*, and not *The, Theory of Justice*. Rawls always was aware that there are rival conceptions of justice, and even *Political Liberalism* may not be his last word - political man can but make closer and closer approximations to a just society.

Here is a critical summary of Rawls’ insights on pluralism and political liberalism:

	Relativist aspects
Not clear whether ‘private’ bodies outside of the political context should be allowed to be ‘unjust’ (as per the standards of the liberal State).	Recognises that not all moral disputes can be settled. Does not regard this as necessarily a bad thing. Insists politics must be organised to allow a number of versions of the good life to flourish (§ 5.3). Aim is a stable and peaceful society, not the realisation of ultimate truths or moral, social or political monoliths (§5.3.3). Political liberalism is not a transcendental, free-standing truth but is itself rooted in a particular tradition (§5.2).
Reservations	Valuable insights
Reservations	Valuable insights
	Non-relativist aspect
	Principles of justice have the power to restrict or prohibit certain forms of the good life (§2.4). Insists on the pragmatic necessity to establish an overlapping consensus across principles of justice and various versions of the good life (§6).

Figure 3. Important aspects of Rawls’ work

This is an appropriate point to recall that many have found fault with Rawls' noble purview.¹¹⁶ Everything said and done, much criticism of Rawls is animated by the sentiment that political liberalism and its associated civil society lacks adventure and a sense of utopia. This criticism is correct - political liberalism is not for the social high-fliers. It is more for those who know what it is like to be bullied or taken advantage of, and care for those who have so suffered. They want a world where a few winners do not take all - a world that would suite more people than it would not.

Only the brave deserve the fair, says the poet. But may we not aspire to a social order in which even those of us who are timid can enjoy feminine beauty? Such has always been my pious hope. Civil society is an order in which liberty, not to mention female pulchritude, is available to even the timorous, not vigilant and absent minded.

Ernest Gellner

2 THE CITIZEN AS A MORAL PERSON

If there is one lesson that emerges clearly from the history of Ancient Athens and extends up to the present struggle to maintain and extend democracy in many countries throughout the world, it is this: Citizens are not free because they live in free nations; rather nations become free and remain free because their citizens believe and act as free citizens must.

Richard Gross

§ 1 The Meaning of Moral in a Political Context

1.1 The political context

Critics of Rawls have imputed that *Political Liberalism* compromises the full scope of human development. This is not true since Rawls insists that his counsel is to apply only to public citizenship; it is not intended as a prototype for a perfect humanity.¹ As clarified:

I stress that it is a moral psychology drawn from the political conception of justice as fairness. It is not a psychology originating in the science of human nature but rather a scheme of concepts and principles for expressing a certain political conception of the person and an ideal of citizenship. . . . Human nature and its natural psychology are permissive: they may limit the viable conceptions of persons and ideals of citizenship, and the moral psychologies that may support them, but do not dictate the ones we must adopt.

We cannot say anything we want, since the account has to meet the practical needs of political life and reasoned thought about it. Like any other political conception, for it to be practicable its requirements and ideal of citizenship must be ones that people can understand and apply, and be sufficiently motivated to honour . . .²

(Concerning this political conception) If in its environment it is not destructive of itself but flourishing and nature permits it, that again suffices. We strive for the best we can attain within the scope the world allows (parenthesis not supplied by Rawls).³

Rawls' intention is to clarify the necessary (not sufficient) conditions for political moral well being. He resolves the moral demands to be made upon citizens into two components. Recall:

- a. The first (moral power) is a capacity for a sense of justice that enables them to understand, apply, and to act from the reasonable principles of justice that specify fair terms of social co-operation.
- b. The second moral power is a capacity for a conception of the good: a conception of the ends and purposes worthy of our devoted pursuit, together with an ordering of those elements to guide us over a complete life.⁴

In this definitive formulation, justice is the objective component of the moral faculty. Its limits are fixed and binding upon all citizens. Recall also the fundamental principles of justice :

- a. Each person has an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all.
- b. Social and economic inequalities are permissible provided that they are:
 - i. to the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged; and
 - ii. attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.⁵

These principles establish that Rawls' moral theory sympathises with 'the least advantaged'. There is nothing impersonal or amoral about this. On the contrary, political requirements demand that we treat our fellow citizens better than comes naturally to most.⁶

Provided citizens do not contravene justice they are free to exercise a second, subjective moral power through the pursuit of miscellaneous conceptions of the good life. It is crucial to note that Rawls refers to this second power as *moral*. Exercising self-expression is characteristic of the free will radical to any conception of moral well being. The power is also moral because our conception of the good will influence how we treat each other. Because of its comprehensive nature this conception will extend beyond the rational and reasonable realms of justice to include the full gamut of human relations. The first moral power is orientated towards social responsibility, the second towards providing responsible moral lives with fulfilment.

When an individual is able to harmonise the two moral powers, that person recognises their responsibilities as a member of a society of free and equal citizens. Many moral philosophers have taken a similar line:

Saint Matthew: All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets.⁷

Kant I: I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law.⁸

Hare RM: . . . if I, a gander, am thinking of maltreating my goose, before I can say that it is all right to do so, I have to agree that it would be all right for me, were I to turn into a goose just like this one, with the same desires and aversions, and in the same situation, to be maltreated in the same manner.⁹

Wilson J: Of course I can say, very loudly, 'I ought to have it because I, John Wilson, want it', but the 'because' will make no sense unless I can represent myself as one case of a general principle.¹⁰

The above purview is brisk but sufficient to indicate that morality requires stepping outside of one's personal viewpoint to enter an inter-subjective and social mode of thinking.

1.2 Care and connection

So far the discussion has concentrated on moral development as requiring a progression from a purely subjective viewpoint to a recognition of the responsibilities of social living. This progression can be strenuous. It is always from a subjective locus that the moral agent advances towards the inter-subjective and objective viewpoints. A salient feature of the subjective viewpoint is its emotional fragility. If the

political conception is to be realistic it must respect the emotional limitations of moral agents.¹¹ What are these limitations and how can society make the transition from the subjective to the inter-subjective and objective viewpoints manageable?

Carol Gilligan has examined the difficulties felt by people trying to live morally. In *A Different Voice*¹² she challenges the adequacy of Lawrence Kohlberg's justice orientated model to accommodate these challenges¹³:

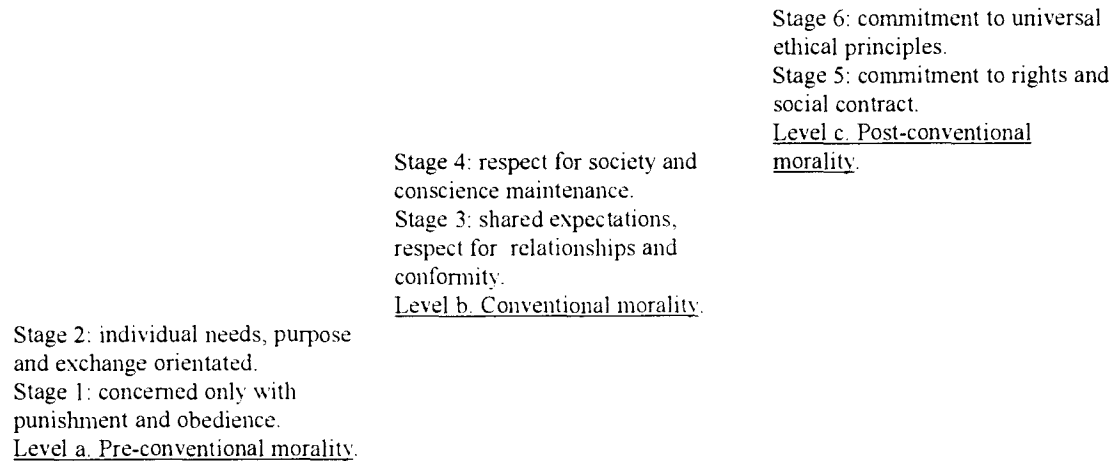


Figure 4. Kohlberg's justice orientated hierarchy model

Kohlberg's moral theory is based on two assumptions. Firstly, morality is restricted to the concept of justice and the concomitant concepts of crime and punishment. Moral maturity is equated with the ability to act from within a detached and objective viewpoint. Like Kant, Kohlberg liked the idea of a universal ethical imperative that could be binding upon everyone.¹⁴ This takes one to his second assumption of moral hierarchy. A child's moral judgements are exclusively opportunist (pre-conventional morality). On growing older, children become aware of social mores and they conform accordingly (conventional morality). A few reach stages five and six (post-conventional morality). At stage six, one accepts as a matter of principle the principles of universal justice.¹⁵

Gilligan does not dispute the empirical reality of Kohlberg's categories. Her point is that to restrict the examination of ethical development to rights, justice and contractual law tragically impoverishes any model of ethical development. By these limited standards of assessment, women appear retarded in their ethical development:

The arc of developmental theory leads from infantile dependence to adult autonomy, tracing a path characterised by an increasing differentiation of self from other and a progressive freeing of thought from contextual constraints Thus the individual meeting fully the developmental challenges as set for him by Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg, thinks formally, proceeding from theory to fact, and defines both the self and the moral autonomously Yet . . . (these men) have all been plagued by the same problem, the problem of women, whose sexuality remains more

diffuse, whose perception of self is so much more tenaciously embedded in relationships and whose moral dilemmas hold them in a mode of judgement that is insistently contextual. The solution has been to consider women as either deviant or deficient in their moral development (parenthesis not supplied by Gilligan).¹⁶

Gilligan insists that if Kohlberg finds that women rarely progress to high level morality, then this shortcoming is due to limitations in his criteria of assessment, and not in limitations of female ethical maturity. She is confident that Kohlberg's legalistic framework is neither complete nor representative of the moral outlook of most women. She cautions justice with a feminine 'ethics of care'.

Gilligan's thesis is that women approach moral dilemmas with a greater emphasis on empathy as opposed to the 'detached' justice ethos to which men incline.¹⁷ Empathy and emotional involvement are second nature to the fair sex. The defining characteristics of the feminine moral outlook are co-operation, care and connection. This is the 'different voice' that men have long ignored. These revolutions in ethical thinking are summarised by Nona Lyons, herself from the Gilligan cadre.¹⁸

A morality of justice	A morality of response and care
Individual as separate from others.	Individuals as connected to others.
Morality of justice as fairness that rests on an understanding of relationships . . . grounded in the duty and obligation of their roles.	Morality of care that rests on an understanding of relationships as responses to another . . .
Moral problems . . . as issues . . . of conflicting claims . . . Resolved by invoking impartial rules, principles or standards.	Moral problems are generally construed as issues of relationships or of response.

Figure 5. Justice and care morality as per the Gilligan school

Fortunately empirical research has softened Gilligan's gender orientated critique - men are just as likely to respond with care as women are to demand retribution.¹⁹ However, Gilligan's central thesis is indispensable. Any view of morality that ignores an ethics of care does void morality of one of its greatest virtues. Gilligan rightly asserts that complete ethical vision requires an integration of justice and care. Gilligan also emphasises the conditions required before an ethics of care can be realistically incorporated into the moral psychology of a good citizen. She notes that a friendly environment is essential for an individual to enter into the social mode as a caring participant.²⁰

This insight is confirmed through an examination of the socially maladjusted who, through their unfortunate condition, provide clues as to what is necessary to ensure

moral and social well-being. The counselling work of psychologist Tom Kitwood will help in this investigation.

1.3 The concept of ‘moral space’

Kitwood is a psychoanalyst who re-integrates the socially maladjusted into the mainstream. Only his ideas relating to the preconditions for social living, and not his entire psychoanalytical paradigm, will be referred to.²¹

Kitwood’s ideas can be introduced through a rustic Indian saying- ‘rats are not born at dawn’. They have always been there, only at dawn they become visible. Similarly our foibles are often unknown to us, as rats left to lie until caught unawares by a burst of humanity. We often choose to be blind to our faults, and relationships become that light forcing us to look long and hard at ourselves and confront the truth. We notice our greed in our denial of charity, prejudice in our reluctance to welcome. The more unfriendly the social collision, the more likely we are to meet darker sides of our character.

Kitwood points out that we have all experienced the cold heartedness, malice or overt aggression of others. Consequently, we may have become cold and switched off our capacity to care. Rationality, the often assumed trusty guard of our ethical indiscretions, then performs a reversal of roles to justify the demise of our personal humanity.²² We become inhumane to survive in an unsympathetic world, and deny our deficiencies with such tenacity as to deceive even ourselves.

Such depravity can be reversed. However, this ‘moral restoration’ is possible only within a particular milieu. If it was the other’s cruelty that incited our hate, then only when others are kind to us will our hatred diminish; only the charity of others will encourage us to unclench our fists. So Kitwood advises:

Changes such as we have been considering seem to become possible in an interpersonal climate of trust and deep respect. . . . How else could a person acknowledge that new and at first unflattering self image which is, paradoxically, the starting point for growth and change? A therapeutic relationship, then, might be described as one of outstanding moral quality, such as is conspicuously lacking in the everyday world. The defences arose, the feelings were blanked out, the whole inauthentic way of being developed, precisely because this kind of relationship was absent or in scarce supply.²³

Kitwood elaborates through the idea of ‘moral space’. This exists when people express themselves yet avoid oppressing others. Aggression, lying or excessive criticism are all prohibited and personal shortcomings are to be freely admitted. Above all, people are to be accepted as they are:

The heartland of this type of morality is a complete particularism: a person is accepted in his or her uniqueness, so far as that can be comprehended by another; and not made into an instance of anything else, be it a social category, a psychological theory, a moral principle or whatever.²⁴

Certain political conditions are required for such receptivity to materialise. This is particularly so regarding State institutions holding considerable power over the lives of citizens. These institutions should have an environment low in domination and high in expressivity.²⁵ Kitwood represents the various alternatives of political space through a four-quadrant model:

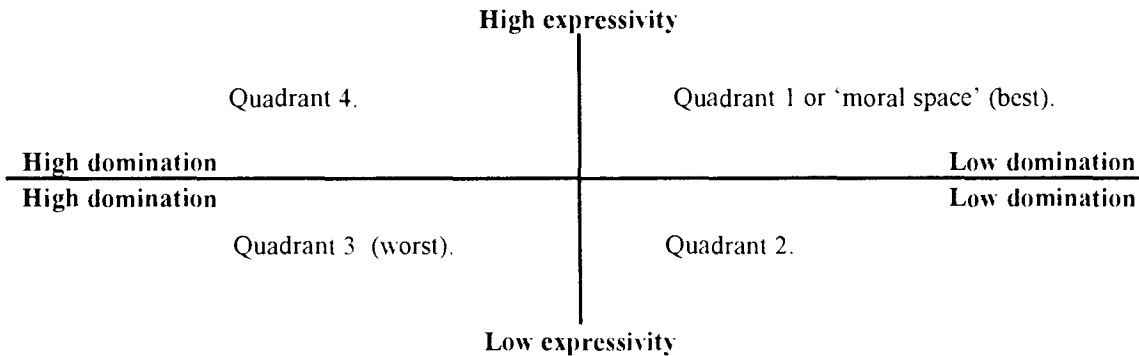


Figure 6. The four quadrants of political space

In contrast to moral space (quadrant 1), if high domination and low expressivity become institutionalised (quadrant 3), the individual finds himself in a society where self-preservation takes priority over moral well being. If society expects citizens to be moral, then it must provide an environment that makes this ambition realistic (i.e. quadrant 1). Kitwood highlights the necessity for:

... the creation of a social fabric which allows an abundance of moral space: a fabric which is based on a trust between persons who recognise, despite all their outward differences, the values of each others' personhood, and carry this through with skill and insight.²⁶

Kitwood's moral space is complementary to the basic structure of society as outlined by Rawls.²⁷ Recall that the State enforced rule of justice does place external restrictions, but only enough to restrain citizens from oppressing each other. This minimal intervention allows miscellaneous conceptions of the good life to flourish. Correspondingly, Rawls' moral person is characterised through the two moral powers of commitment to justice and the pursuit of the good life. Kitwood's complementary psychological thesis is that moral welfare needs an environment of minimal external domination to allow maximum subjective expression. Under these conditions people would feel free to be honest and care for others without fear of exploitation. Hence both Kitwood and Rawls want society structured to help people behave morally well, while still giving them opportunities to realise their hopes of a good life.²⁸

§ 2 Liberal Society and Religious Input

2.1 Religion and the liberal State

Up to this point the discussion has focused on secular morality, with consideration of religious beliefs sidelined. This may have given the impression that moral education should by-pass religious beliefs. Such a notion must be discredited. This chapter now introduces the relationship between religion and the moral education of citizens in a just liberal society.²⁹

There is an ancient, pluriform, and credible claim that our morals can do without our gods. The Cyrenaics echoed the sensibilities of the Carvakas³⁰ that this life was all, and enjoyment was all there was for it. Buddha maintained that there was no God and it was pointless looking outside of our selves for illumination, moral or otherwise. For Jains, man is the measure of divinity, and morality does not need theological dictation. Kant restrained his morals to the shared human reason, and modern greats as Russell and Hare keep God out of their moral picture.

Judith Shklar forwards scholarly substantiation for the common fear that moral atrocities will be conducted in God's name. Her wise and beautiful book *Ordinary Vices* begins with a warning regarding the moral priorities of the religious. Since they have God and not fellow man at the centre of their moral universe, they appeal to standards transcendental to the human condition and oppose sin first, foremost and unconditionally. 'Offences against the divine order - sin, to be exact - must be their chief concern'³¹. This distinguishes religious morality from the secular:

Sins are transgressions of a divine rule and offences against God; pride - the rejection of God - must always be the worst one, which gives rise to all the others. . . . To hate cruelty with utmost intensity is perfectly compatible with Biblical religiosity, but to put it *first* does place one irrevocably outside the sphere of revealed religion.³²

For the religious, opposing sin takes priority over compassion, as confirmed by many a cruel crusade and inquisition.³³ This inhumanity is intolerable and Shklar asks believers to 'turn away from the very idea of sin and to replace it entirely with wrongs done to living beings'³⁴:

It is only when we step outside of the divinely ruled moral universe that we can really put our minds to the common ills we inflict upon one another every day.³⁵

Though Shklar directs her scorn at instances of Christian activity, her critique is one to which *all* religions must answer. No religion can be allowed to use theology to legitimise illiberal or cruel conduct.

Shklar's concerns are supported by Gellner's views on the conditions of liberty. Gellner feels a liberal society is sustained by citizens who are modular in the sense that they can function with others of a different background (Preamble). These persons are not defined or restricted by a particular cultural or religious mould. They are at ease in a range of social circumstances and easy to get on with. The modular person is prepared to fit in with almost anyone.

Modular citizens are committed to a State that believes ideology and political power must constitute different domains of influence. In this State, those who hold political power are not regarded as authorities on all mundane let alone supernatural matters. Even their capacity in political matters is curtailed by the citizens. Similarly, those who claim a capacity for post-mortem or esoteric wisdom cannot automatically assume authority on earth. In liberal polities no one person, or even an association of persons, is attributed with knowledge of the absolute truth and invested with the capacity to regulate public affairs according to this enlightenment. This ensures that State power is restricted in its jurisdiction, so distinguishing such a polity from a dictatorship.

Societies committed to one comprehensive doctrine would approximate to the dictatorship model of government. Here the guardians of political power are also the custodians of ideology as power and ideology become conflated like fireworks on a spinning catherine wheel. With the 'truth' not only redoubtable but also interfering in all matters of daily life, such governments (usually managed by a brutal and/or charismatic person) use divinely justified ends to legitimise their atrocious means. Shklar views such situations as politically intolerable and accuses religions of being their protagonists.³⁶

Shklar is right to be apprehensive about religious influence. However, while her cautionary note on the nature of religious totalitarianism is appropriate in many instances, her wholesale dismissal of 'divinely ruled universes' is too quick. The moral and political significance of religious doctrines is an empirical fact, making the real question not 'religion or not' but 'what type of religion is morally acceptable in the civic sphere?'³⁷ The State must understand each religion that exists within its boundaries, and be sensitive to the political ramifications of various styles of religious belief. Religious styles can generally be categorised into the cultic, fundamentalist or liberal.

2.2 Cults

A typical feature of cults³⁸ is that their members rely on a charismatic leader offering a solution to all personal and social difficulties. The tendency of these messiahs to exploit their devotees often finds them implicated in scandals. These frauds give cults a bad name. Consequently, cults are generally small and isolated communities. This means that while capable of immense influence on a parochial scale, they are politically ineffectual.

2.3 Characteristics of fundamentalism

Fundamentalists have many good qualities. They are generally disciplined, sincere, and dedicated to a life of meaning and truth. Nevertheless, fundamentalism does pose a serious threat to civil society.

Fundamentalist movements are not ineffectual.³⁹ They are not fly by night outfits but the certified articles. They are clean, honest and have come to terms with modernity. Fundamentalists, though their sights may be on heaven, are remarkably down to earth. They realise that such is the expose' power of modern science and the press that authority based upon charisma, magic or other humbugs leads to stardom of only the super-nova type. In contrast, fundamentalism's authority is based upon a transcendental light - a book. Authority based on a revealed text is indisputable. Legitimacy becomes circular and truth, unsullied by scientific scepticism or even fraud, avoids external scrutiny. It does not matter even if the leader of the movement is found wanting since the written word still stands.

Fundamentalist movements often gain popularity because they have an upright demeanour. A massive fundamentalist presence allows for the possibility of an ideologically dominated polity of the sort Shklar and Gellner see as a radical threat to the conditions of liberty (§2.1). Hence the rise of fundamentalist movements could cause complications in the civic sector.

It must be emphasised that fundamentalism is a religious style accessible to any religious tradition. It would be unfair and inappropriate to restrict the critique to any particular fundamentalist movement.⁴⁰ Fundamentalism can prosper at any time, any place and within any religion. Moreover, it is not suggested fundamentalists hold a monopoly on the characteristic difficulties discussed below. Aspects of these characteristics are too often found in more liberal religious styles and even amongst the

secular public. The point is that fundamentalism exhibits these characteristics with exceptional clarity and political venom. Next, emphasis is placed on characteristics that children from fundamentalist backgrounds must be encouraged to avoid. The rationale for how this can be achieved, without violating the goodness and integrity of traditional cultures, is introduced at the end of this chapter and explored thereafter.

2.3.1 Alienation

Fundamentalists feel their moral values and outlook on life are not shared by the liberal mainstream. They suspect that liberal society is an amoral pariah whom they cannot trust. Liberal moral education must counteract the threat such insecurity poses to effective citizenship. This can be done by reassuring fundamentalists that liberal attitudes to freedom enhance, rather than jeopardise, the prospects for even non-liberal (such as the fundamentalist) cultures to flourish.

Liberals believe that a good life is one chosen freely, and that realistic choice requires a range of options. They see microcosmic cultural communities, fundamentalist or otherwise, as providing such choice. Hence a secure cultural footing must be made available to children of all backgrounds. Comfortingly, Kymlicka says:

It is of sovereign importance to this argument that the cultural structure is being recognised as a context for choice. . . . In one common usage, culture refers to the character of a historical community . . . On this view changes in the norms, values, and their attendant institutions in one's community . . . (e.g. membership in churches, political parties, etc.) would amount to loss of one's culture. However I use culture in a very different sense to refer to the cultural community, or cultural structure, itself. On this view, the cultural community continues to exist even when its members are free to modify the character of the culture, should they find its traditional ways of life no longer worthwhile.⁴¹

This rationale is more succinctly expressed in Menachen Mendle of Kotz's ancient admonition:

Take care of your own soul and another's body - but not your own body and another's soul.⁴²

Kotz views autonomy as a part of one's 'soul', interference with which must remain beyond the limits of public authority. However, the educators are not to be neglectful. On the contrary they are instructed to 'take care of another's body'. This is not a call for gymnasiums, cross country runs and cold showers. Rather, educators are urged to consider the full implications of the embodied nature of the human condition. They must be sensitive to the fact that human beings are embodied not only within a physical body but also within a cultural narrative. Concerning embodiment in such cultural bodies, Kymlicka notes that we live not so much in our bodies as through them. Disrupting cultural bodies can find whole communities disorientated, criminally

inclined, or on skid row.⁴³ So while disapproving of cultural incarceration, liberals are conscious of the need to preserve traditional cultures. The liberal approach is to ensure that if a person is rejecting a part of his or her tradition, then that denial is an informed choice. Liberals accept that this requires the preservation of the many cultures through which individuals can make sense of life. Liberals wish to safeguard this variety not only for their own but even those who would prefer to topple the liberal state.

Fundamentalists will never approve of lifestyles different from their own. Nevertheless, if fundamentalists understand why liberals permit plurality to flourish they will, at least, be reassured of their security within a liberal State. Once they no longer fear a secular crusade their alienating paranoia will subside. Ideally, fundamentalists will see that provided they regulate themselves by the reasonable demands of social living they too can live as they see fit.⁴⁴ They will uphold liberalism in the interests of preserving their own traditional roots.

So far attention has focused on how familiarising fundamentalists with liberal policies on pluralism might help to lessen their alienation from, and subsequent suspicion of, the liberal mainstream. Attention now turns to managing the potential reluctance of fundamentalists to regulate their moral affairs in a manner congruent with the conclusions of a liberal moral epistemology.

2.3.2 Fundamentalist moral epistemology

Fundamentalism presents a troubling irony. Political requirements dictate that morality be modelled as respect for the reality of social living. The family is where children learn to integrate themselves into a greater social context.⁴⁵ Fundamentalism guarantees a stable family life and a powerful sense of community. Moral development would surely flourish in such a reassuring atmosphere. But here comes the rub.

2.3.2.1 A rigid theological viewpoint with little room for human reason

Fundamentalists voice a standard complaint against liberal polities that can be paraphrased thus: Liberals want to treat everybody equally. Does not this mean that everybody should have an equal chance of making a go of life? Well, God has revealed to us that a good life requires what your liberal reason sees as narrow-minded bigotry. Hence your liberal demand to respect the freedom and equality of everyone goes against our God given transcendental principles, compromises our self-esteem and effectively suffocates us. If you are genuine liberals, you should give us the right to get on with our illiberal lifestyles.

Such complaints can only be amicably resolved if fundamentalists acknowledge that they have *chosen* to live in a liberal State.⁴⁶ Hence while fundamentalists have a right to grant priority to their texts, they must realise they also have certain obligations to the liberal State. Nagel indicates the way forward:

I believe that the demand for agreement, and its priority in these cases over a direct appeal to the truth, must be grounded in something more basic. Though it has to do with epistemology, it is not scepticism but a kind of epistemological restraint: the distinction between what is needed to justify belief and what is needed to justify the employment of political power depends on a higher standard of objectivity, which is ethically based.

. . . while I cannot maintain a belief without implying that what I believe is true, I still have to acknowledge that there is a big difference, looking at it from the outside, between my believing something and its being true.⁴⁷

Again the requirement is for the capacity to oblige oneself to the shared social mode of moral thinking. Fundamentalists may retain their vision but must acknowledge the privileged status of their revelation. Correspondingly, they cannot expect State support on *all* moral matters. For example, prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors would receive support from a liberal State; a total ban on drinking based on chapter and verse would not. Once justification is only transcendental, fundamentalists must accept the limitations of their case. Nagel summarises this procedure for a liberal moral epistemology; the emphasis is on the need to respect human reason:

. . . it must be possible to present to others the basis of your own beliefs, so that once you have done so, they have what you have, and can arrive at a judgement on the same basis . . .

Public justification requires, second, an expectation that if others who do not share your belief are wrong, there is probably an explanation of their error which is not circular . . . (enabling us to) explain their false belief in terms of errors in their evidence, or identifiable errors in drawing conclusions from it, or in argument, judgement and so forth.⁴⁸

If a moral problem cannot be so resolved, then that problem is not one appropriate for political debate. 'No comment on this moral issue' is to be the State policy. Admittedly, neutrality may be indistinguishable from consent, but liberal citizens intuit that innocence is anterior to guilt and reason alone is to count as evidence. They resign themselves to this sometimes unsatisfactory policy because deviation from it is not reasonably defensible. Of course in private an attempt can be made to resolve a wider range of disputes and through means other than the application of reason. Optional relationships allow for more eccentric and flamboyant approaches.⁴⁹ However, social problems that defy reasonable resolution are to be left clear of public jurisdiction. Such stringent conditions must be applied because being a civilised and tolerable member of the public is an obligation binding upon all.

2.3.2.2 Fundamentalists read their texts in an a-historical context

Fundamentalists give priority to one particular communal vision.⁵⁰ Often there is much that is noble in this vision, but this merit fades on considering more disconcerting possibilities. Fundamentalists uphold a moral agenda enshrined in a canonical text. These texts are regarded as above the social context and transcendental to the tides of change. Consequently, their truth is not open to interpretation by the laity.⁵¹

This position is problematic when one views the original context of fundamentalist texts. Often these texts were compiled during ancient times when different social conditions prevailed. Back then, liberal attitudes were at a formative stage of development. Many of the old views on women, heathens, etc. are no longer acceptable. Importantly, many religious people have, by interpreting religious ideas in context and with vision, catalysed the evolution of liberal attitudes. Regrettably, fundamentalists often ignore these progressive evolutions even within their own religious tradition. If the original texts explicitly promote liberalism then fundamentalists will commit themselves to justice. Often however these texts are not explicitly liberal, and even when they do contain liberal elements the fundamentalists tend to play down those parts.

2.3.3 Summary: the four characteristics of fundamentalism

Fundamentalism represents a threat to a liberal society because of the following characteristics:

- a. Massive presence that enables them to conflate their ideology with political power.
- b. Alienation that prohibits an ethics of care and connection.
- c. Concept of morality founded on a rigid theological viewpoint with little room for restraint, interpretation and alternative human viewpoints.
- d. A tendency to regard texts as existing in a transcendental, context free vacuum.

2.4 Presenting liberalism as congruent with the word of God

Unlike cultists, fundamentalists are rarely content with a few self-sufficient farms and why should they be? Scriptural credibility allows fundamentalists access to a ready made, long established pool of believers from which to recruit. That means many fundamentalists, more sympathisers and even more passive non-objectors. Hence fundamentalists can afford to think big and they do. Their primary ambition is to establish by any means they see fit God's truth on earth. Such ongoing thoroughness requires that ideology and political power be conflated. These people are un-modular

in the extreme and can tolerate none other than their own. Thus they threaten the perpetuation of liberal values.

Liberal societies cannot afford to be indifferent to them. For once, I am reluctant to say, Gellner has failed to emphasise counsel implicit in his own prophetic voice:

But what point is there in vaunting our values, and condemning the commitment of others to absolutist transcendentalism or demanding communalism? They are what they are, and we are what are: if we were them, we would have their values, and if they were us, they would have ours. I am not a relativist - the existence of a culture-transcending truth seems to me the most important single fact about the human condition, and indeed one of the bases of Civil Society But all the same, preaching across cultural boundaries seems to me in most circumstances a fairly pointless exercise.⁵²

Gellner is right to see the futility of cross-cultural slanging and perhaps experience had dampened his optimism. He *was* old when he wrote the above weary words. However, his laissez-faire attitude is too risky. The crucial point to note is that correction of fundamentalism is best done before it gains momentum to create on earth a heaven for the elect and a hell for those outside of the enchanted circle. Indeed, Rawls has warned of the need to pacify the fundamentalist penchant for creating political upheaval:

. . . in affirming a political conception of justice we may eventually have to assert at least certain aspects of our own . . . doctrine. . . . This will happen whenever someone insists, for example, that certain questions are so fundamental that to ensure their being rightly settled justifies civil strife. . . . At this point we may have no alternative but to deny this . . . and hence to maintain the kind of thing we had hoped to avoid.⁵³

The urgency of the above problems will be exemplified by the interaction of religion and State in India. An exploration of this political circumstance will enlighten the English situation since India too is a plural nation-State committed to liberal values. It is multicultural and officially believes multiculturalism is a good thing. However, sections of its majority Hindu community now seems to be questioning this belief.

The last decade has seen the political advancement of 'hindutva' or what many refer to as Hindu fundamentalism.⁵⁴ Unlike its more notorious counterparts hindutva has no gigantic cult of personality. It is conspicuous through voices of frustration or nostalgia depending on the circumstances. Hindutva is many things to many people and its only unifying feature seems to be a vaguely formulated assertion of Hindu pride. The social and political consequences of this resurgent pride are not easy to predict.

If such developments are not to prove politically threatening dialogue between the liberal State and any religious community must ensue within a context in which believers feel comfortable. This means that one must appeal to texts whose authority

believers acknowledge. Liberalisation can then be achieved without affronting the dignity and integrity of religious communities. No other tactic will avail upon devotees of a jealous God. If a liberal society can make Him be heard in a different voice, liberal imperatives will have solid roots. After all, and by the believer's admission, the book is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Many intellectuals who are neither Hindu Nationalist nor Muslim Separatist also argue that India needs a new State ideology that recognises religious pluralism and the importance of faith in people's lives, and stresses the message of tolerance said to be present in all Indian faiths rather than secular neutrality.

Paul Brass

3 THE VIEW FROM BRAHMAN ¹

deśadharmān jātidharmān
kuladharmāmśca śāśvatām
pāṣaṇḍagana dharmāmśca
śāstresmin uktavān manuḥ

Manu I.118

Kinship with fellow beings is inherent in the fact that all are but the children of the Supreme Lord and are indissolubly bound to Him.

Śrīvacana Bhūṣaṇa

§ 1 Liberal Values and the Scope of a Good Life

1.1 Recapitulation

Chapter 1 concentrated on Rawls' model of the person as a *political* being, with a just society modelled as 'a system of fair social co-operation between free and equal persons'. Freedom and equality were recognised as necessary but not sufficient to guarantee a good life. According to Rawls, any version of the good life must be congruent with the values of liberal justice. Hence the good life is restricted, but not defined, by political necessity.

The principles of equality and freedom must not be presumed to be self evident truths.² While all people may be born equal, they do not remain so for long.³ The freedom of all people is an equally precarious ideal.⁴ Since liberal principles are not universally intuitive, one must establish as many sources of liberal influence as possible. Accordingly, Rawls recognised the importance of the communitarian critique and saw the need to establish an overlapping consensus across liberal principles and various communal versions of the good life.

Chapter 2 presented the dangers of a fundamentalist religious style wherein liberal and pacific considerations are subordinated to the 'truth'. Fundamentalism insulates itself from the rational or objective critique of outsiders. Fundamentalist communities can be liberalised only by appealing to doctrines implicit in their own religious texts. This rationale can be applied to religious communities in general. Liberal values must be found from within each community's conception of the good.

A stable pluralism requires inquiries as: Must we model legislators as OP phantoms? Alternatively, could a group of religious believers, un-enamoured by the tactics of the veil, be brought from within their own tradition towards a liberal outlook?

1.2 Conflict across a rigid theological viewpoint and a liberal human viewpoint

The perpetuation of a liberal society requires a consensus across a liberal human viewpoint and the various religious conceptions of a good life. Hence all believers choosing settlement in a liberal society must respond to the following fear held by the secular liberal public: could it be that, from a liberal viewpoint, there is a potential conflict between religious and liberal human perspectives of moral well-being?

The fear arises on the following grounds. The protocol of a believer's moral life is to try to understand God's view on any situation and then streamline behaviour accordingly. Now consider a 'rigid' understanding of God's viewpoint. *Suppose* the believer thinks: God sees the world in all its totality, with each part a minuscule fraction of the whole. This transcendental Divinity is clear on what finds His approval or disapproval. He cares for humankind, but on His own and un-compromising terms. This God is not compelled to care about human existence as humans care for it themselves. Humans must conform to His will, or else be held accountable. Call this the believer's '*rigid theological viewpoint*'.

Now consider a human viewpoint *not* dictated by a God as understood above. Important features of this viewpoint could be as follows: Subjective first person sentiments (these are my pleasures, pains, desires, etc.) can be known only to me. *My subjective viewpoint* is a 'bit' of the world that exists in me and would appear to be mine and mine alone. From this viewpoint, my existence is not just one of many - it is asymmetrically important. To me, I am not just a minuscule part of the universe; I am more important than most other 'bits' of the universe. Not only me but also those who matter to me, as well as my ideas of what constitutes a good life, matter to me asymmetrically.

Concerning a society of such persons, liberal political theory recognises that it is unrealistic to expect any individual to suppress this subjective viewpoint in the interests of society. Some would go further and point out that many of mankind's greatest achievements are products of selfish obsessions whose value to society was not initially evident. Consider, for example, artists. These persons often live very self-centred lives yet occasionally produce works of unforeseen and incomparable value. Hence it could be myopic to equate moral thinking with the *immediate* interests of society. Even apart from considerations of long term utility, liberals hold the freedom to express and

develop one's individuality, as opposed to a-priori allegiance to a group or a pre-conceived version of the good (theological or otherwise), to be a cardinal virtue.

Yet liberals recognise that self interest must have limits. Though individuals matter in themselves, a respect for individuality must be the beginning and not the end of moral evolution. Persons must advance from a subjective viewpoint to a *human inter-subjective viewpoint*. Here persons do not regard themselves as compartmentalised beings but as entities whose destinies are intertwined. It is only through relationships that a person comes to respect others and becomes a complete moral being.

The *liberal human inter-subjective viewpoint* tries to balance the following limits: On the one hand, each individual must be free to pursue his or her version of the good life. On the other, each person must interact with fellow humans (including those with contrary versions of the good life) with justice and care.

Juxtaposing the *rigid theological viewpoint* aside a *liberal human inter-subjective viewpoint* highlights a disconcerting possibility. It cannot be assumed that the *rigid theological viewpoint* would agree with the *liberal human inter-subjective viewpoint*. At worst, the two viewpoints might conflict. *If* believers accord to their God a rigid viewpoint, and *if* believers regard the good as that which accords with their God's rigid viewpoint, *then*, the fear for liberal society becomes that believers will consider themselves above the values of secular morality. Moral attitudes transgressing civic decency might not only be justified but made compelling on a theological basis. Nagel is acute:

An antiliberal critic of Rawls could put the point by asking why he should agree to be governed by principles (i.e. those of justice) that he would choose if he did not know his own religious beliefs, or his conception of the good. Isn't that being too impartial, giving too much authority to those whose values conflict with yours - betraying your own values, in fact? If I believe something, I believe it to be true, yet here I am asked to refrain from acting on that belief in deference to beliefs I think are false (parenthesis added).⁵

Those committed to the perpetuation of a liberal society, sensitive to the rights of believers to remain true to a religio-moral stance, must encourage a formulation of *God's viewpoint* that is not rigid and uncompromising but compatible with political liberalism. The *particular* concern of this Thesis is how Hindu doctrines can be so formulated in strong consensus with the liberal outlook, and subsequently used to discredit illiberal attitudes.

§ 2 Introduction to Hinduism and the Task

2.1 The Great and Ancient Banyan

Hinduism encompasses many ideologies. Lipner has emphasised that care must be taken while speaking of a well-defined Hindu heritage. The variety within Hinduism is conveyed through a telling metaphor.⁶

The pride and joy of the Calcutta botanical gardens (located in a western suburb of the city) is a vast, magnificent banyan tree (*ficus benghalensis*). . . . Like the tree, Hinduism is an ancient collection of roots and branches, many indistinguishable one from the other, microcosmically polycentric, macrocosmically one, sharing the same regenerative life-sap, with a temporal foliage which covers most of recorded human history.⁷

Life's ideal for the religious Hindu varies from context to context, from the sublime to the mundane. The Great and Ancient Banyan harbours birds of every feather in its labyrinthine worlds.⁸

There are few grounds for heresy in this religion of amoeboid flexibility.⁹ Even the trademarks of Hindu ideology, the caste system or deity worship, fluctuate in importance, to say nothing of the plethora of rituals, mythology and 'god-men' of mere denominational significance. In Maharashtra the pot-bellied and innocuous 'Ganapati Bapa' is loved, whereas in Bengal terrifying Kālī is revered affectionately. Some Hindus see miracles everywhere whilst others would not waste their milk on a marble statue. Thus could one go on ad infinitum.

Yet for all its sprawling variety Hinduism is not formless, and some doctrines do have widespread support. For example, the below verse provides an introduction to the Hindu view on the purpose of life:

Bhagavadgītā: In the beginning the Lord of all created beings, having created the creatures along with the sacrifices, said: 'By this (sacrifice), may you prosper: be this your cow of plenty for (your) desires'.

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: In the beginning, at the time of creation, He, the Lord, the Lord of all created beings, beheld all beings, helpless on account of contact proceeding from time immemorial with non-intelligent matter excluded from the distinctions of name and form, dissolved within Himself, unfit to realise the objects of human pursuit and almost inanimate. He, the supremely merciful, through a desire to redeem them, placed them in the state of creation (lit. created them) along with the sacrifices, with a view to the performance (by them) of the sacrifices in the form of His worship. (And He) said thus: 'By this sacrifice, may you multiply; that is, effect your increase and prosperity. Let this sacrifice yield you the desire called *mokṣa* which is the highest end of life as also other desires which are in conformity with it'.¹⁰

The purpose of human life is salvation (*mokṣa*) and the enjoyment of pleasures not contrary to that ambition. *Mokṣa* can take ages. Nevertheless, it is a realistic goal since the soul (*ātman*) is immortal and creation has been designed for salvific purposes. Yet *mokṣa* is the *ultimate* ambition, and Hindus generally look for guidance on humbler daily agendas:

In fact, it seems that a great many Hindus do not actively expect or even seek some post-mortem 'salvation' or liberation. If at all, this is a distant ideal. Religiously, they are more concerned just to stay afloat as they continue life's journey over the hazardous waters of *saṁsāra*. Health, recovery from illness, contentment, economic security, consolation in distress, offspring, success in various ventures, protection from various dangers, possibly a happy rebirth - these are the things that occupy their religious attention. This is not to say that many do not look to *mokṣa* in one form or another as a desirable goal. But the fact is that we cannot generalise. Life's ideal for the religious Hindu varies from context to context, from the sublime to the mundane. The Great and Ancient Banyan harbours birds of every feather in its labyrinthine worlds.¹¹

Hindus pluck like fledglings¹², according to their hunger, from the long standing tree. It is therefore appropriate that the philosophical treatises of Hinduism (e.g. the Vedas, Upaniṣads and *Bhagavadgītā*) are not thought of as de-contextualised, transcendental blueprints but rather as revelations relating to *particular* existential questioning. Respect must be shown to the pluriform and context sensitive character of texts, otherwise one is likely to misunderstand Hinduism's claim of offering a '*sanātana-dharma*':

... the expression 'eternal (*sanātana*) *dharma*' seems to imply that Hinduism cannot or should not undergo change. But this is a highly contentious implication, to say the least. Where does reformed Hinduism - with which Hindu history is replete - fit in? And the multitude of little and great reformers of Hinduism, often regarded as the glory of Hindu tradition by Hindus and non-Hindus alike? It seems that to say that one is a *sanātana*ist is more prescriptive than descriptive. It is chiefly to say what one believes Hinduism should be rather than what Hinduism is.¹³

Sanātana-dharma, rather than being the quintessence of 'some universally recognised philosophy, teaching or code of practice'¹⁴, is better seen as:

... an ancient and continuing guideline for an orientation in the world which may draw on the ancient codes ... but which is relative to one's group circumstances and status and which is flexible enough to require a deliberative response appropriate to the situation.¹⁵

At a later point a possible interpretation of this guideline is offered (§5.2-3). Presently, we note that Hindus must view their scriptures in the context of all dimensions of eternity - past, present and future. To remain of perpetual value, Hinduism must give fresh adaptations to old expressions. One can never be sure that these adaptations accord *literally* with the ancient texts, but provided the spirit of the past is not violated this should not cause concern. What *is* important is that Hinduism must be neither allowed to ossify nor distorted to serve illiberal ends.

2.2 The task, focus, and choice of Rāmānujācārya

Contemporary Hinduism, to remain ever fresh or '*sanātana*', must formulate itself in a liberal manner. Lipner indicates the methodology that must be adopted throughout such an exercise. Notice below how a traditional text is taken and without distorting its spirit its counsel is extrapolated into a modern context:

Śrībhāṣya II.2.3: Now it is [scripture] which declares what is meritorious and un-meritorious action, of the form either of worship to the Lord or the contrary, i.e. action which is either pleasing or displeasing to the supreme Person and which produces its fruit of pleasure or of pain . . . And the Blessed One, the supreme Person . . . having laid down the two kinds of action [in scripture], the righteous and the unrighteous, bestows upon all embodied selves, equitably, the requisite sensuous embodiment to perform such works and the power to control their bodies; then, providing the scriptures, which make known his commands, he enters these [selves] as their ensouling Self to accomplish [scripture's] end, and as the One who permits [all actions] he remains as the Controller.

Lipner: But an objection presents itself. Is not Rāmānuja confining his comments in this regard to Hindus, specifically to the members of his own sect, the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas? . . . No doubt he accords pride of place, in the economy of salvation, to the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. This is only to be expected in the atmosphere of cultural and sectarian chauvinism of his age (and no less a feature of our own religious times, for that matter). . . . However, I believe that if Rāmānuja were to have theologised today, in an age when theologians are becoming open to genuine inter-religious dialogue, the breadth and grandeur of his vision would have prompted him to accommodate all human beings in the divine plan of salvation in the present life . . .¹⁶

Lipner has entered into the spirit of an ancient master, Rāmānujācārya¹⁷, to consider what counsel the ācārya might have offered today. He suggests that Rāmānujācārya would have supported a progressively liberal understanding of God's viewpoint. The present task is to confirm that Rāmānujācārya's philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita¹⁸ can provide a theological basis for a liberal attitude.

By giving certain existing ideas new salience or even the extrapolation of new meanings, the present work tries to 'make known (God's) commands' as insisting upon a liberal attitude. This task requires that only certain aspects of the Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition are focused upon. There will be no mention of the complex ritualistic aspects, the vast narrative tradition, nor the polemic with its arch rival Advaita Vedānta. Also, the discussion will ignore (otherwise important) reflections upon internal controversies relating to the nature of the Highest Heaven or the extremes of devotional mysticism. Instead the emphasis is on what liberal moral, social and political counsel can be extrapolated from the relationship between the Supreme Being and the human person, as represented in Viśiṣṭādvaita.

As indicated, rigid theistic belief potentially poses a general problem regarding moral conduct in this world (§1.2). Does obedience to God conflict with a liberal attitude? The following sections indicate that in Viśiṣṭādvaita, it does not:

- God is not only the substratum of this world (Brahman), but also a Person (§3). This Person is the inner soul of each *ātman* (*antaryāmin*, §4.1) and loves all beings.

- Correspondingly, the *ātman* is not only a knower (*jñātr*) but also essentially the faithful servant of God (*śeṣa-śeṣin* relationship) (§4.1). As such, the *ātman* must attend to God’s exemplary and doctrinal counsel and give glory to God (§5.4.1).
- The counsel from example comes from two sources. Firstly, the believer must try to approximate to the ‘view from Brahman’, represented as a synergy of *Puruṣa* and *antaryāmin* viewpoints (§5.1). Secondly, the believer must try to approximate to the moral psychology of his or her God. This psychological profile of God is based on the *svarūpa* and *svabhāva* virtues (§5.4.2).
- The doctrinal counsel concerns the onto-socio-religious concept of *dharma* as resolved into the three concomitant dimensions of *sva-dharma*, *sādharaṇa-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma* (§5.2).
- The above is complemented by the Vedāntic idea of freedom as (i) freedom *from* hedonistic desires and (ii) freedom *to* realise the full potential of the *ātman* (§5.4.1).
- It is emphasised that the path to *mokṣa* requires a liberal outlook (§5.6).
- In the past, Viśiṣṭādvaita has liberalised ancient ideas according to the social climate. This process must continue, and any use of the Hindu religion to legitimise illiberal activities and attitudes must be discredited (§6).

Taken as a whole, these sections indicate how a liberal moral attitude can be made incumbent upon the believer.

Before focusing on the theology, it is important to explain why Rāmānujācārya, rather than a theologian from Gujarat (where the case-studies were conducted), has been chosen to provide the foundations for a liberal theological paradigm. The explanation rests on the pivotal role Rāmānujācārya has played in influencing both scholastic and popular thought throughout India.

Before Rāmānujācārya, Śaṅkarācārya’s Advaita system was dominant. Here, the empirical diversity of this world is an illusion and only undifferentiated Spirit is real. Śaṅkarācārya relegated all *bheda* and *saguna* texts to the status of stepping-stones towards the undifferentiated reality.¹⁹ Rāmānujācārya subjected Śaṅkarācārya’s position to massive criticism. Rāmānujācārya’s Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta is theistic qualified-monism that insists God is both a distinct moral Person, and the substratum of the universe. Both the One and ‘many in One’ are equally real.

Since Rāmānujācārya’s time, Nimbarkācārya, Vallabhācārya and Rūpa Gosvāmi have added nuances to Rāmānujācārya’s work, without interfering with its fundamental theology. All these ācāryas equate Brahman with the Person of Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa and are known as Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. Madhvācārya, like the other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, accepts Viṣṇu as supreme, maintains that salvation is uninterrupted service to God and upholds the reality and value of the world.²⁰ (However, he differs from the other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas in rejecting the ontological unity of Brahman and the universe).

Concerning the influence of Rāmānujācārya on *popular* religion, his ideas on theistic monism and devotional love (*bhakti*) have greatly influenced the masses. Swāmi Rāmānanda was a follower of Rāmānujācārya’s school, and his disciple Tulsidās Gosvāmi wrote the *Rāmācaritmānas* which is influential in the Gujarati-Hindi belt. Swāmynārāyaṇa, founder of the popular religious movement in Gujarat, advised all disciples to refer to the *bhāṣyas* of Rāmānujācārya for clarification on doctrinal matters²¹. The Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava movement also respects Rāmānujācārya’s teachings. Hence contemporary Hinduism in Gujarat, as throughout India, bears the imprint of Rāmānujācārya’s theology.

It must be stressed that Rāmānujācārya’s theology is presented as but one exemplar. Ultimately, this process of substantiating commitment towards political liberalism must be conducted across *all* the branches, high to low, scholastic to rustic, Brahminical to tribal, of the complex and still expanding Banyan:

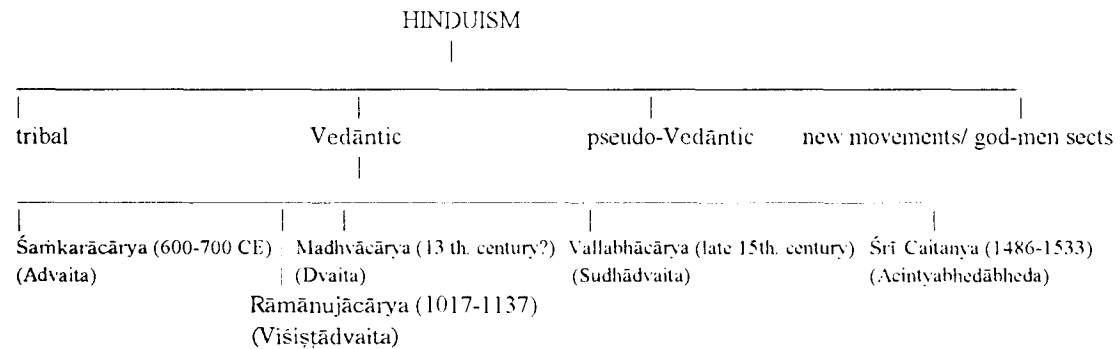


Figure 7. Some branches of the Hindu Banyan²²

§ 3 The Nature of God²³

The texts chosen to represent the nature of God in Viśiṣṭādvaita are taken from the *Puruṣa Sūkta* section of the *R̥g* Veda, some primary Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

3. 1 God in the *Puruṣa Sūkta*: the cosmic giant

This creation hymn is chanted at dawn, when the believer is reminded of his infinitesimally small individuality within the vibrant Whole. In the *Puruṣa Sūkta* God is the material and efficient cause of the universe.²⁴ This is conveyed by a sacrificial narrative. First, the Cosmic Person allows the gods to bind Him to a wooden pillar. Obliging, He becomes not only the sacrifice but the utensils for its performance.²⁵ From Him is produced the universe:

Puruṣa has a thousand heads . . . a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth he transcended [it] . . . He formed those aerial creatures, and the animals, both wild and tame.²⁶

This theme of the particular bound within the universal concludes with both the individual and the universe in God - the human body models the ideal society, and society itself is equated with the body of the cosmic giant.²⁷ Indeed, throughout the *R̥g* Veda we learn about a mesmerising Divinity at one with this mundane world. Like the consuming fire²⁸ and the all encompassing wind²⁹, His works are apparent but His appearance is illusive. He is near yet far. Fascination with this bond between the Creator and creation was the catalyst for Upaniṣadic thought. As the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (intermediate between the Vedas and Upaniṣads) has it:

Verily in the beginning this (universe) was the Brahman (neut.). It created the gods: and, having created the gods, it made them ascend these worlds: Agni this (terrestrial) world, Vāyu the air, and Sūrya the sky. . . . Then the Brahman itself went up to the sphere beyond. Having gone up to the sphere beyond, it considered, 'How can I descend again into these worlds?' It then descended again by means of these two, Form and Name. . . . These indeed are the two great forces of Brahman; and, verily, he who knows these two great forces of Brahman becomes himself a great force.³⁰

The seers who once cowered to God, the material and efficient cause, now sought to *know* Him as the inner self and asked 'What pathway leads to the most secret regions?'³¹

3. 2 God in the Upaniṣads: Brahman

Surendranath Dasgupta opines on the relationship between the Vedas and the subsequent Upaniṣads:

There are four collections or Samhitās, namely *R̥g-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. Of these the *R̥g-Veda* is probably the earliest. The *Sāma-Veda* has practically no independent value. . . . The *Yajur-Veda* however contains . . . many original prose formulas. The arrangement of the verses of the *Sāma-Veda* is solely with reference to their place and use in the Soma sacrifice . . . ³²

After the Samhitās there grew up the theological treatises called the Brāhmaṇas, which were of a distinctly different literary type. They were written in prose, and explain the sacred significance of the different rituals . . . “They reflect” says Professor Macdonell “the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing its ceremonies, discussing its value, speculating on its origin and significance”. ³³

As a further development of the Brāhmaṇas however we get the Āraṇyakas or forest treatises. These works were probably composed for old men who had retired into the forest and were thus unable to perform elaborate sacrifices requiring a multitude of accessories and articles which could not be procured in forests. . . . It is here that we find . . . ritualistic ideas began to give way, and . . . free thinking tried gradually to shake off the shackles of ritualism which had fettered it for a long time. It was thus that the Āraṇyakas could pave the way for the Upaniṣads . . . ³⁴

These Vedas and Upaniṣads were themselves compiled over many years:

Vedāntic literature (from c. 1200 BCE to c. 500)			
Samhitās	Brāhmaṇas	Āraṇyaka Upaniṣads	Later Upaniṣads
<i>R̥g</i> (containing the Puruṣa Sūkta).	<i>Aitareya, Kauṣṭhikī</i> .	<i>Aitareya, Kauṣṭhikī</i> .	<i>Aitareya</i> .
<i>Sāma</i> .	<i>Chāndogya, Pañcaviṃśa, Jaiminīya</i> .		<i>Chāndogya, Kena</i> .
<i>Yajur</i> .	<i>Śatapatha, Kāthaka</i> .	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Taittirīya</i> .	<i>Taittirīya, Īśa, Katha</i> (400 BCE), <i>Śvetāśvatara</i> (100 CE), <i>Maitrī</i> (not later than 500 c.CE), <i>Subāla</i> (not later than 500 c.CE), <i>Mahānārāyaṇa</i> .
<i>Artha</i> .	<i>Gopatha</i> .		<i>Praśna, Māṇḍūkya, Muṇḍaka Jābāla</i> .
Lower limit of ~ 750 BCE for compilation . . . in their final form.	Bulk of Brahmana text redacted by ~ 600 BCE.	Earliest Āraṇyaka ~ 500 BCE?	Latest Upaniṣads c.500 CE.

Figure 8. The Vedāntic literature with indication of dates³⁵

The themes of the Upaniṣads are varied. Nevertheless, ‘Brahman’ is repeatedly discussed and acquires many meanings.³⁶ These meanings coalesce interrelated ideas, sometimes in an apparently confused or contradictory manner. Considering only the most ancient *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, references to Brahman can be listed as follows:

1. Verily, in the beginning this (world) was Brahman, one only.³⁷
2. Gārgya said: ‘The person who is yonder in the sun, on him, indeed, do I meditate as Brahman’ Ajātaśatru said, ‘Please do not talk to me about him. I meditate on him as all-surpassing, as the head and king of all beings.’³⁸
3. Verily, there are two forms of Brahman, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the unmoving and the moving, the actual (existent) and the true (being).³⁹

4. The form of this person is like a saffron-coloured robe, like white wool, like the Indragopa insect, like a flame of fire, like a white lotus, like a sudden flash of lightning. . . . Now therefore there is the teaching, not this, not this for there is nothing higher than this, that he is not this. Now the designation for him is the truth of truth. Verily, the vital breath is truth, and he is the truth of that.⁴⁰
5. This earth is (like) honey for all creatures, and all creatures are (like) honey for this earth. This shining, immortal person who is in this earth and with reference to oneself, this shining, immortal person who is in the body, he, indeed, is just this self. This is immortal, this is Brahman, this is all.⁴¹
6. This is Prajā-pati (the same as) this heart. It is Brahman. It is all. It has three syllables, *hr̥, da, yam*. . . .⁴²
7. Lightning is Brahman, they say. It is called lightning because it scatters (darkness). He who knows it as such that lightning is Brahman, scatters evils (that are ranged against him), for lightning is, indeed, Brahman.⁴³

Brahman refers variously to the Supreme Entity (personal or impersonal), the individual soul, the world of inanimate matter or the entirety of all three. Most commonly, Brahman is that sustaining substratum in which all other entities have only a derivative and dependent existence. Professor Servapalli Radhakrishnan explains:

The word used in the Upaniṣads to indicate the supreme reality is *brahman*. It is derived from the root *br̥h*. 'To grow, to burst forth.' The derivation suggests gushing forth, bubbling over, ceaseless growth, *br̥hattvam*.⁴⁴

Everything originates in Brahman, without Whom nothing can exist. Brahman is the only permanent entity. Brahman is the enduring truth behind everything. Hence Brahman is *satyam*:

In the beginning this universe was just water. That water produced the true (or the real). Brahman is the true. Brahman (produced) Praja-pati and Praja-pati (produced) the gods. Those gods meditated on the real. That consists of three syllables, *sa, ti, yam*. . . .⁴⁵

The topic of Brahman as the substratum is taken further in the *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad.⁴⁶ Now the imagery changes from the baroque *Puruṣa*, celestial craftsman⁴⁷ and rampant progenitor⁴⁸ to a far more contemplative Being. In a moment of tremendous conviction, Brahman wills to become many:

He (the supreme soul) desired. Let me become many, let me be born. He performed austerity. Having performed austerity he created all this, whatever is here. Having created it, into it, indeed, he entered. Having entered it, he became both the actual and the beyond, the defined and the undefined, both the founded and the non-founded, the intelligent and the non-intelligent, the true and the untrue. As the real, he became whatever there is here. That is what they call the real.⁴⁹

Description through *satyam* stresses Brahman's mundane credentials. Nevertheless this is not simple pantheism.⁵⁰ Brahman *has* become the natural world but continues to transcend it through being its prior, unconditioned existence from which the empirical contingencies were derived. *Satyam* therefore depicts the Brahman pregnant with His potential aspects.

In passing, it should be noted that the two epithets of *jñānam* and *anantam* are often applied to Brahman. *Jñānam* approximates to omniscience. Brahman knows the universe in its spatio-temporal entirety. This capacity is not shared by any other being. *Anantam* emphasises the omnipotence and infinite creative potential of Brahman. *Satyam* emphasises Brahman's potentiality, *jñānam* His perfect knowledge, and *anantam* His creative urge.⁵¹

3.3 God in the *Bhagavadgītā*: A Person (*puruṣottamaḥ*)

By the time of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the word Brahman had acquired further nuances.⁵² An important sense is of Brahman as the supreme *Person* (*puruṣottamaḥ*)⁵³. This is true of both the Divine form and the Divine character.

Speaking of these, the *Bhagavadgītā* provides an illuminating juxtaposition. On the one hand we have the kind of God of whose influence liberals as Shklar and Gellner are wary. This God sanctions a holy war.⁵⁴ He reveals a terrifying form '... mighty ... with many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs and fierce with many large teeth' and 'resembling the fire of cosmic destruction'⁵⁵, incomprehensible⁵⁶ and troubling the mind with fear⁵⁷. He is the 'protector of perpetual *dharma*'⁵⁸, 'oppressing this universe with (His) glory'⁵⁹, into whose grotesque jaws are sucked the good and the bad.⁶⁰ It is no wonder the ungodly 'flee in all directions'⁶¹ on sight of this grotesque spectacle⁶². This cosmic Person provides neither 'support, nor peace'⁶³ and 'no comfort'⁶⁴. This is an audience with God as the bedrock of eternal justice in front of whom all stand in their infinitesimal smallness.⁶⁵ This God is angry and uncompromising, and might well inspire crusades of a horrible sort.

However this is not the complete picture. The devotee asks to see, and is relieved to find, the Lord now before him in more pleasing countenance.⁶⁶ This is a God related to humanity as 'a father with (his) son and as a friend with (his) friend',⁶⁷ ever concerned for the welfare of his devotees⁶⁸ and the world at large.⁶⁹ For a deeper understanding of this God, we turn to the Vedāntic concept of the human person.

§ 4 The Human Person

In Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta the human person is regarded as an essential spiritual soul (*ātman*) embodied within a physical body-mind (*śarīra*). The terminology 'essential self' applies to the *ātman* in itself, whereas 'the contingent self' refers to the *ātman* as part of a spiritual-physio-psychological unity, i.e. in the embodied condition.⁷⁰

4.1 The essential self: the servant within whom resides God

A story from Śrī-Vaiṣṇava folklore introduces the Vedāntic concept of the essential self. Upaniṣadic wisdom is encapsulated in the cryptic aphorisms of the *Brahma Sūtra*. In Rāmānujācārya's time, the authoritative commentary on these sūtras, the *Bodhāyanavṛtti*, was in the hands of the (rival) Advaitic school in Kashmir. Rāmānujācārya and disciple Kūrattālvān⁷¹ duly walked there, hoping to study the book. Unfortunately, the Advaitic guardians, fearing Rāmānujācārya would use the *vṛtti* against them, allowed access to the text but for a day. Kūrattālvān memorised the text in time.⁷²

Naturally, Rāmānujācārya enrolled the services of Kūrattālvān as the scribe during the composition of his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, the *Śrībhāṣya*. The amanuensis was to correct his master in case of erroneous dictation. Rāmānujācārya proceeded to dictate his view of the essential self (*ātman*) as a knower (*jñātṛ*). A *sui-generis* relationship was propounded to exist between the *ātman* and consciousness.⁷³

Here is the definitive analogy with clarification:

Rāmānujācārya: That which has illumination for its essence is luminous, not as dependent on something else, but as a lamp. . . . In this way [i.e. as a lamp] the *ātman*, which is verily of the form of consciousness, has consciousness [also] for its quality.⁷⁴

Lipner: The *ātman*, like the lamp - strictly speaking, the flame - is the substrate of consciousness while consciousness may be likened to light. Just as light and its substrate are the dual form of one *tejas* stuff, so also consciousness and its substrate (the *ātman* or knowing self) are essentially of the same stuff. . . . It is not the case that the *ātman* is some sort of spiritual substance possessing a number of properties (such as eternity and unoriginatedness) among which is consciousness, and that all of these are related to it in exactly the same way. Rather, it is the nature of the *ātman* to produce conscious acts. Consciousness is *the* way of the *ātman*'s self-expression; consequently it enjoys a *sui-generis* relationship with the *ātman*. As constituting the *ātman*'s essence, it exists substantively; as separate acts of consciousness characterising and flowing from the *ātman*, it acts attributively.⁷⁵

Jñānatva ('knowledge-ness') expresses that the *ātman* and knowledge are of the same substance. As a quantum of knowledge (*dharmi-bhūta-jñāna*), each *ātman* is a reality unique to itself, occupying a locus in space and time.⁷⁶ On the other hand, through its possession of knowledge as an attribute (*dharma-bhūta-jñāna*), the *ātman* can be thought of as 'pervasive'.⁷⁷ This attributive knowledge can expand or contract.⁷⁸

Each ātmic locus is unique. Having knowledge as an attribute enables the *ātman* to be aware of other *ātman*s, each equally particularly located. As the *ātman* expands its knowledge it becomes increasingly aware of its infinitesimal smallness. Simultaneously,

through knowledge the *ātman* grows. It is only when this expansion of knowledge is complete that the *ātman* has fulfilled its destiny. At this limit, the *ātman* knows where it stands in relation to God and humanity. This contextualisation does not encourage pomposity or world-denial but is a foundation for a vision of universal fellowship. This topic is taken up in later sections on human freedom (§5.4.1) and *mokṣa* (§5.6).

Rāmānujācārya was content with describing the *ātman* through *jñānatva*, *dharmibhūta-jñāna* and *dharma-bhūta-jñāna*. However, Kūrattālvān felt Rāmānujācārya had failed to highlight explicitly a vital essence of the *ātman*'s nature. Kūrattālvān ossified in polite dissent because the master had not stressed that servitude to God, not merely 'knowledge-ness', was an essential feature of the soul.⁷⁹ The master was infuriated and sent Kūrattālvān to Tirukoṭṭiyūr Nambi for his magisterial verdict.⁸⁰

It was to get an authoritative pronouncement in this regard that Kūrattālvān was sent by Rāmānuja to that great preceptor Tirukoṭṭiyūr Nambi. Kūrattālvān had to wait . . . six long months (at Nambi's feet) to get the tag, comprising of just two words with which saint Nammālvār's Tiruvāimōḷi, Eighth Centum, eighth decad, second stanza begins:

'Adiyenullan Udalullan' . . . the first word points to the Lord inside (Nammālvār's) soul and the soul has been referred to as 'Adiyen'(servant) and hence it could be gathered that (Nammālvār) identified his soul as the servant of the Lord, thereby bringing to the fore the '*śeṣatva*' (servant-hood) attributable to the soul.⁸¹

This confirmed that Kūrattālvān was correct since the definitive couplet 'Adiyenullan Udalullan'⁸² means: 'within the servant resides God'. Therefore Rāmānujācārya routinely expressed, through the accessory-possessor relation (*śeṣa-śeṣin*), the centrality of servant-hood. The *Vedārthasaṅgraha*, *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, and especially the *Gadyatraya* hymns, affirm the centrality of the *śeṣa-śeṣin* relationship.

All this does not undermine the *ātman*'s nature as *jñātṛ*; rather it takes the status of being a knower to its theological conclusion. Rāmānujācārya, when speaking of *brahma-bhūta-jñāna* in *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, indicates that perfect and complete knowledge entails knowledge of the *ātman* as the servant of God:

He who has realised the state of the *brahman* and who is tranquil . . . The same to all beings, he attains eminent devotion for Me.⁸³

Perfect *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* bears its fruits in *paripurṇa-śeṣa-vṛtti* or complete surrender to God.⁸⁴ Such servitude could be seen as representing a loss of autonomy. However, the *śeṣa-śeṣin* relation is not oppressive because the Object of one's service is an integral part of one's self.

This idea of an inherent Divinity is famously conveyed in the Sanskrit tradition through a lesson from an enlightened father (Uddālaka Āruṇi) to his unenlightened son (Śvetaketu). ‘Bring me a fig’ the father says. The son does. ‘Divide the fig and tell me what you see’. ‘‘Tiny seeds’’ replies the son. ‘Divide those seeds and tell me what you see’. ‘‘Nothing’’ replies the son. ‘Dear child, that essence which you cannot see is the source of this mighty tree. That which is the smallest entity is the soul (*ātman*) of all, That thou art’ (*tat tvam asi*):

“Existence alone, my dear child, this was in the beginning, one only without a second. . . . It thought, ‘May I become manifold and be born’. . . . (*Chāndogya* Upaniṣad VI. 2. 1, 3) . . . “All these things which are born, my dear one, have their origin in the *Sat*, (i.e., the Existent One), have their abode in the *Sat* and are established in the *Sat*. . . . All this has That (Brahman) for its Self. That (Brahman) is existence. He is the Self. That you are. O Śvetaketu” (*Chāndogya* Upaniṣad. VI. 8. 4, 6-7).⁸⁵

Here an equivalence is postulated between an individual *ātman* and ‘the soul of all’. In the Upaniṣads this Soul is ‘Brahman’, ‘the great’ or ‘the ever increasing One’. The indwelling aspect of Brahman is called *antaryāmin*. The *antaryāmin* is God in the *ātman* of each person:

The grammatical equation, found in the passage - “That thou art” . . . ‘That’ points to the Brahman who is omniscient, who wills the truth, and who is the cause of the world . . . The word ‘thou’ which is equated with ‘That’ sets forth Brahman whose body is that individual self which is associated with non-intelligent matter, because a grammatical equation has to denote only one thing which exists in two forms.⁸⁶

Rāmānujācārya models this unity between Brahman (the universal soul) and an individual soul through the relationship between an *ātman* and the body within which that *ātman* resides⁸⁷, i.e. God:individual *ātman* :: individual *ātman*:body. In a summary of the creation scenario we have:

That which is called “Being” [*sat*], i.e., the Supreme Brahman . . . willed thus: “May I be many!” After he had created [or projected *śṛṣṭvā*] the entire universe consisting of the elements of fire, water, etc., He caused the whole mass of individual souls to enter into this universe existing in the form of a magnificent variety [*vicitra*] of material bodies such as those of the gods, etc., each intelligent soul [*jīva*] into a body befitting its own particular *karma* where it became the self [*ātmā*] of that body. Then He Himself, wholly of His own accord [*svecchayaiva*] entered these souls as their Inner Self . . .⁸⁸

The word ‘body’ has many nuances and Rāmānujācārya defines his usage precisely.

When ‘body’ is used in this Rāmānujan sense it will be called ‘bodyR’:

That substance which, in regard to all things as can be accomplished by it, is completely (and always) capable of being controlled and supported by an intelligent soul, and which has its essential nature solely subservient unto the glory of that (intelligent soul) - that (substance) is the body of that (intelligent soul).⁸⁹

As a 'bodyR' exists to serve its possessor, all persons exist to serve God.

4.2 The contingent self

The dignity and utility of the embodied condition is indicated by Rāmānujācārya's characterisation of the *ātman* as 'the body of God'. At the same time, Viśiṣṭādvaitins, like other Vedāntins, do consider the *physically* embodied existence less than perfect. This section examines the *ātman* within the complex context of its physical body. Particularly important will be the relationship between the *ātman* as a 'doer (*kartṛ*) of actions (*karman*)' and *dharma*.

Vedāntins are routinely concerned with the consequences of *karman*⁹⁰ and the moral character of the (action-consequence) relationship. *Karman* is referred to as 'action that is of a meritorious or unmeritorious nature'⁹¹. Merit and demerit are relative concepts. The most meritorious action helps the *ātman* to escape the cycles of birth and death (*saṁsāra*). To understand the basis on which the merit or demerit of an action is to be judged, one must return to the copious concept of *dharma*.⁹²

Dharma, in a descriptive sense, refers to the essential nature of an entity. For example, the *ātman* is characterised through *dharmi* | *dharma bhūta jñāna* and *śeṣatva*. Concomitantly, *dharma* can be used also in the prescriptive sense of stating what is and what is not to be done.⁹³ *Dharma* as prescription is ultimately intelligible through *dharma* as description - acts are meritorious when in accordance with the knowledge of the *ātman*'s true nature. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa⁹⁴ prescribes the *kartṛ* to '(make) over, with a mind devoted to the self, all actions to Me'⁹⁵. Rāmānujācārya emphasises that:

The meaning (of 'by a mind devoted to the self') is 'by means of the knowledge relating to the essential nature of the self as determined in hundreds of Vedic texts'.⁹⁶

Since Rāmānujācārya regards *śeṣatva* as an essential aspect of the *ātman*'s *dharma* he equates *dharma* (prescriptive) with worship. He refers to 'Vedic *dharma* which is of the nature of worship of God',⁹⁷ '*dharma* as the means for final beatitude',⁹⁸ '*dharma* which is called worship'⁹⁹ and 'the *dharma* of worship'¹⁰⁰. Actions conducted in this spirit are most meritorious, since they are appropriate to the *ātman*'s nature and highest goal of *mokṣa*. Such actions are performed 'from the motive of pure love of God'¹⁰¹ and are not selfish. They have no unfortunate consequences, and do not embroil one further in the cycles of *saṁsāra*. To use Lipner's precise terminology, they are *saṁsāra* transcendent:

Such action eschews the saṁsāric mentality, does not build up for its agent the prospect of future lives in *saṁsāra*, but on the contrary works towards the dissolution of the agent's *karma* and its salvation out of rebirth. Accordingly . . . 'saṁsāra-transcendent' ('ST' for short) action or *karman*.¹⁰²

In performing ST action . . . the individual . . . acts other-centredly without any desire for worldly fruit. ST action is not fruit-intended and does not produce (saṁsāric) fruit.¹⁰³

The opposite of the *ātman* who acts in the knowledge of its *dharma* as the servant of God is the *ātman* who views its existence as self justifying. Such a *kartr* acts in ignorance of its true nature (*dharma*), and correspondingly its actions are *adharmic* and unmeritorious. The actions of such a *kartr* are selfish and fruit intended¹⁰⁴ and hence *saṁsāra*-immanent (SI):

Because *karman* or 'action' in the standard sense implies a self-centred mentality bound up with the necessary production of pleasant or unpleasant fruit for its agent . . . such action [will be referred to as] 'saṁsāra-immanent' ('SI' for short) action or *karman* [parenthesis imposed].¹⁰⁵

However, not all mundane activities are equally incarcerating, and spiritual evolution is not an all or nothing matter. Those actions based on a relatively more mature understanding of the *ātman*'s nature are more meritorious than those based on more ignorant conceptions. Even a selfish person, by extending his identity to include family, caste, nation, humanity, etc. comes closer to identifying his true nature with the substratum of *all* being, i.e. God. Correspondingly, mundane philanthropy, though lacking supreme merit, is an improvement on self-centred behaviour.

§ 5 Formulating the Moral, Psychological and Political Consensus

The moral implications of a Vedāntic understanding of God and His relationship to human persons are now elaborated through an examination of:

- a. resolution of conflict across secular and theological viewpoints (§5.1)
- b. *dharma* as progression towards correct moral orientation (§5.2)
- c. *sva-dharma*:*sanātana-dharma* :: communitarianism:liberal justice (§5.3)
- d. an exemplary psychological profile of God (§5.4.2)
- e. the *puruṣārtha* of life, *mokṣa* and liberal moral thinking (§5.6 and §6.4)
- f. some pits into which believers often fall, and the use of Vedāntic ideas to discredit illiberal activities (§6).

5.1 Resolution of conflict across secular and theological viewpoints

The potential conflict across theological and secular moral viewpoints is recalled. If God's viewpoint was rigid and solely transcendent to the human condition, no grounds would exist for assuming coherence across His and a liberal human viewpoint. At worst, a believer might regard the two viewpoints as conflicting. In reply, by referring to the *Puruṣa Sūkta* and Upaniṣads, it is now shown that the viewpoint of the God of Viśiṣṭādvaita can be formulated in empathy with a liberal human viewpoint.

Recall that the *Puruṣa Sūkta* (§3.1) emphasised God as the Massive, Magnificent and Over-Powering One within whom all beings are located equally. From this viewpoint each human is one amongst millions, no more or no less important than any other. Yet the Upaniṣads intimate an additional viewpoint consequent to God being the inner soul (*antaryāmin*) of each *ātman*. As *antaryāmin*, God has access to every individual's unique subjectivity:

It is impossible for any other entity than Brahman to have an other form, kind of nature, or capacity to act added to its own form, nature and capacity. But the Supreme Brahman possesses every kind of nature and all possible capacities.¹⁰⁶

God is present in each individual and understands entirely each person's subjective viewpoint and appreciates its importance. Hence God's viewpoint, far from being alienated from human emotions, encompasses them all. Such a theological viewpoint is intimately familiar with the complexities of the *human inter-subjective viewpoint*.

Since the *antaryāmin* is an esoteric form of Brahman, His empathy is not apparent. However, as the *avtar*¹⁰⁷, the internal Brahman assumes an external form and activity that makes His anthropo-centric attitude explicit. Rāmānujācārya presents an understanding and compassionate God who makes His heavenly form assume:

. . . the configurations of gods, men, etc., so that it may have that appearance which is suited to the understandings of those (worshippers).¹⁰⁸

And under the pretext of removing the burden of the earth, (but really) for the purpose of becoming the object of refuge even to (unworthy) people like us, He descended to the earth and made Himself visible to the eyes of all men: having done such divine acts as ravished the minds and eyes of all men, (both) high and low (i.e., the saintly and the vulgar) . . .¹⁰⁹

This accessible God is the 'vast ocean of boundless mercy, affability, affection and generosity . . . He (bestows) upon them [all beings] fruits known as righteousness, wealth, enjoyments and the salvation of soul-emancipation, conformably to the wish of each'. The Supreme Brahman is not a rigid dictator, but rather exists in empathic and loving relation with His creation.

Framing the view from Brahman through *Puruṣa*, *antaryāmin* and *avītar* viewpoints reassures us of the possibility of reasonable dialogue across Vedāntic and liberal moral viewpoints. Brahman *would* be familiar with the objective, subjective and inter-subjective viewpoints which liberal moral conduct requires to be respected. Rawls has formulated this commitment through the two moral powers which require that subjective ambitions must be pursued without losing sight of, and consequently transgressing, the (objective) concomitant rights of others. Vedāntic believers should be able to relate to these formulations.

Yet the discussion still falls short of resolving the issue of consensus across Vedāntic and liberal viewpoints. The preceding discussion indicates that the Vedāntic God understands and sympathises with the human condition but does not indicate how He thinks believers should live within it. What is God's position concerning human inter-subjective relations? Unless this question is explicitly tackled, there still remains the possibility that a life lived in accordance to God's viewpoint might be contrary to liberal moral conclusions. So far, The Divine viewpoint is morally indicative but not decisive. For this we return to *dharma* as elucidated in the *Bhagavadgītā*¹¹⁰.

5. 2. *Dharma* as progression towards correct moral orientation

5.2.1 *Sva-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma*

The *Bhagavadgītā* opens with '*dharma-kṣetre*', indicating that the *Gītā* is a treatise concerned with the field (*kṣetra*) of proper conduct (*dharma*). Throughout the text, the pregnant phrase *dharma* appears in at least sixteen verses and with many meanings.¹¹¹ *Dharma* is used in both a descriptive sense as referring to the essential nature of the self, and in a prescriptive sense as action appropriate to that essential nature. Since *dharma* applies to both the essential and contingent self, it entails mundane social, religious and moral implications.

How can these usages be applied to influence believers into adopting a liberal moral outlook? Lipner's exegesis provides a foundation for this enquiry:

The word *dharma* comes from the Sanskrit root *dhṛ*, which means 'to support', 'to undergird', 'to establish'. *Dharma*, then, is that which 'bears up' in some way or other. In some contexts, e.g. the social or civic, the word could well be translated by 'law', but not in others. For traditionally Hindus have also spoken of the *dharma* of something in the sense of the essential characteristic, the basic property, of that thing. . . . This sense of *dharma* is descriptive, not prescriptive. Thus we see that *dharma* can have physical, moral, social and religious connotations, depending on context. *Dharma* is that which properly undergirds or establishes something from a certain point of view, prescriptively and/or descriptively. . . .

Socio-religiously, *dharma* is that which acceptably upholds private and public life, which establishes social, moral and religious order, or at least which characterises the nature of something. This is why the word has been variously translated as ‘law’, ‘virtue’, ‘merit’, ‘propriety’, ‘morality’, ‘religion’, etc. (with the negative *adharma* taking on contrary meanings).... Throughout the history of Hinduism, Hindus have been obsessed with trying to understand, analyse, interpret, determine, codify, articulate and debate *dharma*. This process of shaping and mapping out will continue for as long as Hinduism exists. This is because the implementation of *dharma* is integral to the structure of Hindu living. At the heart of this concept has lain the awareness of two tensions: between order and chaos, and between choice and necessity.¹¹²

The *Bhagavadgītā* too grapples with the tension inherent in the concept of *dharma*. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa initially urges Arjuna, once an excellent hero but now confused and weak hearted, to live up to the *dharma* of a warrior. Arjuna should be brave and steadfast as befits a warrior¹¹³, defend his honour¹¹⁴, conquer evil or gain heaven in defeat.¹¹⁵ (The same imperative to fulfil one’s duties according to one’s social status applies not only to the warrior caste but to all castes¹¹⁶). So strong is His commitment to socio-*dharma* that when humanity strays from this *dharma* He descends to correct affairs:

Bhagavadgītā. For whenever there is decline of *dharma*, and rise of *adharma*, O Bhārata (Arjuna), then I create Myself.¹¹⁷

This then is the Lord as the defender of socio-*dharma*, which Arjuna is instructed to uphold. Yet Śrī-Kṛṣṇa’s ultimate instruction *seems* to contradict and belittle the preliminary teaching:

Completely renouncing all *dharmas*, seek Me alone as refuge. I will release you from all sins. Do not grieve.¹¹⁸

Superficially, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa’s initial and final counsel seem incoherent and contentious - on the one hand socio-*dharma* is to be upheld, on the other it is to be abandoned.

Resolving the apparent contradiction requires a return to the nuances of *dharma*:

We will now consider a longstanding distinction which has important contemporary relevance. This is the distinction between *sanātana-dharma* (everlasting *dharma*) and *sva-dharma* (one’s own *dharma*).¹¹⁹

. . . I have yet to discover a Hindu *sanātana-dharma* in the sense of some universally recognised philosophy, teaching or code of practice. Indeed there can be no such thing, for it presupposes that Hinduism is a monolithic tradition in which there is agreement about some static, universal doctrine.¹²⁰

Thus *sanātana-dharma* can properly only mean an ancient and continuing guideline **for an orientation in the world** which may draw on the ancient codes of *varṇāśrama dharma*, and so on, but which is relative to one’s group circumstances and status and which is flexible enough to require a deliberative response appropriate to the situation. *Sva-dharma* is the personal implementing of this guideline . . . (**bold** imposed on Lipner’s text).¹²¹

Lipner emphasises that *sanātana-dharma* must *not* be seen as an eternal blueprint of what is and what is not to be done. As life’s conflicting duties often teach us, *dharma* is too ‘subtle, obscure and serious’¹²² to find any transcendental generalisations

adequate. *Dharma* must be continually worked out piecemeal, each time sensitive to the social and psychological condition of the moral agent. Rāmānujācārya's *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* reinforces the case:

Behold this great difference! that with respect to those who perform the very same action (behaviourally), it is *by difference of intention alone* that there are some who, partaking even a little bit of [that action's self-centred] fruit, fall naturally [into the cycle of rebirth], whereas there are others who, partaking of that fruit whose nature it is to attain to the supreme Person of unlimited and unparalleled bliss, never return [to this existence].¹²³

Anything absolute concerning correct conduct lies not in any fool-proof code but is rather a matter of orientation. The *Bhagavadgītā* suggests a three step process towards achieving a correct moral orientation. The first step is to rise above one's hedonistic instincts. Obsession with sensual pleasure leads to deranged faculties incapable of discerning right from wrong. The tragic scenario is:

To the man who keeps on meditating on sense-objects there arises abundantly attachment to them. From attachment desire is born, and from desire springs anger all around. From anger comes great confusion (about right and wrong): and from (this) great confusion loss of memory. From loss of memory (there arises) the destruction of (the right disposition of) the mind: and from the destruction of (the right disposition of) the mind, he is lost.¹²⁴

An ancient metaphor conveys the condition of one who lacks self control:

Know the Self as the lord of the chariot and the body as, verily, the chariot, know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as, verily, the reins.¹²⁵
The senses, they say, are the horses; the objects of sense the paths (they range over); (the self) associated with the body, the senses and the mind - wise men declare- is the enjoyer.¹²⁶
He who has no understanding, whose mind is always unrestrained, his senses are out of control, as wicked horses are for a charioteer.¹²⁷

The above 'lord' (self) of the chariot (body) cannot choose his course of action. His senses (horses) dictate a petulant course beyond control. It is no consolation that these dictators are internal to his own embodied personality. In fact, this makes the situation more deplorable. Sympathy is appropriate towards those who commit immoral acts under external coercion, but the person who says 'I couldn't help myself' can at best be pitied.

Many injustices are rooted in hedonistic selfishness. Obsession with sensual desires hampers our ability to think straight, assess the consequences of actions and keep a social perspective. At the extreme limit, we may become oblivious to the hurt we cause to others. Consequently we disrupt the moral order, not only within ourselves but also the social surroundings.

Only when we are neither blinded by lust nor at war with ourselves can we think clearly; and once the senses are subdued we shall be more sensitive to the

consequences of our actions on others. Only then will conduct be both free and not likely to generate moral chaos. Therefore the desired attitude is one of profound detachment: detachment from the objects of desire, the desires themselves¹²⁸, the fruits of one's works¹²⁹, and even the sense of egoistic agency¹³⁰. The imagery of a tortoise conveys this detachment:

When he withdraws the senses everywhere from the objects of the senses, even as a tortoise withdraws its (protruding) limbs, then his understanding is firmly established.¹³¹

This might indicate an attitude of world denial. This is not for what the *Bhagavadgītā* stands. This takes us to step two. The stoic is urged towards detachment and social service, not dejection, disillusionment or irresponsible indifference. The aspirant must act (he has no choice)¹³², but not for selfish gain. He must set an example for others by working 'having regard at least to the guidance and protection of the world'¹³³, and in a way appropriate to his psychological and communal disposition.¹³⁴

So far then, we have the following steps towards the correct moral orientation:

- (1) selfish *adharmic* person → detached and self-controlled person.
- (2) detached and self-controlled person → *sva-dharmic* duty. *Sva-dharmic* activity is social service in conformity with one's communal and social circumstances.

Step (2) in itself represents a high level of moral development. *Sva-dharma* draws the *ātman* out of selfish concerns towards a concern for one's community. It is from within the homely and parochial, good but limited, *sva-dharmic* contexts that one evolves from the purely natural or selfish being. As part of a marriage, family, caste, community, country, etc. one learns that the individual is not the self-defining centre of the universe. One comes to appreciate that other humans hold their lives as dearly as one does one's own, and that life cannot be worthwhile without the art of inter-subjective social living. One's communal *sva-dharma* is the nursery for this important lesson, and only on reaching spiritual maturity is one's communal viewpoint to be seen in a lesser light.

5.2.2 Equality through God in all

5.2.2.1 Ever widening *dharma*: *sva-dharma*, *sādharaṇa-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma*

The third step towards correct orientation takes us to the tremendous theological and moral vision of the *Bhagavadgītā* - the consciousness of God in all beings. This message unifies *sva-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma* into a coherent whole. To work up

to the moral significance of this consciousness, imagine a man who acts in the interests of (say) his wife and hence fulfils his *dharma* as a husband. One might consider this an un-selfish act. But what if, in love, he regards himself and his wife as one person? The same act would then have a self-interested dimension. Similarly, one's *dharma* to family, if it blinkers one from responsibilities to the community, can be selfish. Even communal philanthropy may be selfish if not extended to all humanity.¹³⁵

The baseline for a broader understanding of *dharma* is set by ancient Law Codes which speak of moral requirements incumbent upon all, regardless of communal background or stage of life. This humanitarian baseline is *sādharaṇa-dharma*:

We read in Manu: 'Non-injury (*ahimsā*), truth (*satya*), not stealing (*asteṣa*), purity (*sauca*), control of the senses (*indriyanigraha*) - Manu has declared this to summarise *dharma* for the four castes' (10.63). The *Viśiṣṭha* Law Code says: 'Avoiding backbiting, envy, pride, egoism, unbelief, guile, boasting, insulting others, hypocrisy, greed, infatuation, anger and discontent is approved *dharma* for all the stages of life'.¹³⁶

Sādharaṇa-dharma emphasises that any legitimate concept of *sva-dharma* must satisfy certain moral demands that apply to one and all. As Lipner illustrates through the example of *ahimsā*, *sādharaṇa-dharma* too concerns moral *orientation* that must be appropriate to the situation, and not inflexible.¹³⁷ For example, while the Kṣatriya Arjuna (as much as any Brāhmaṇa) must retain a calm and peaceful orientation, circumstances still oblige him to war. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa encourages Yudhiṣṭhira into an act of deception, and, in another epic, a debate between Śrī-Rāma and others illustrates that devotion to truth (*satya*) is a far from straightforward matter.¹³⁸ All virtues are similarly complex and context sensitive, and often right and wrong can be distinguished 'by difference of intention alone'.

The third step requires a broadening of one's moral perspective. Now the emphasis is on advancing from communal and even humanitarian orientations, to a life focused on serving God. Recall:

Completely renouncing all *dharmas*, seek Me alone as refuge. I will release you from all sins. Do not grieve.¹³⁹

This instruction to 'abandon' *dharma* is a guarded and qualified one - hence it comes at the *very* end of the Divine teaching. Before the directive becomes intelligible, let alone virtuous, one must know the nature of the *ātman*, respect the welfare and stability of society, and love God. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa's teaching to Arjuna indicates that what

is to be abandoned is not *sva-dharma* itself but a blinkered perspective on *sva-dharmic* and *sādharaṇa-dharmic* duty:

Lord Kṛṣṇa tells his friend and devotee Arjuna that as a Kṣatriya it is his (Arjuna's) duty and natural role to fight in a just war, and that the best possible reason for doing this is not personal gain but the disinterested pursuit of (*sva-*) *dharma*, motivated by wholehearted love for Kṛṣṇa as God.¹⁴⁰

Though Lipner is speaking specifically on Śrī-Kṛṣṇa's advice on the matter of war, the counsel is also applicable to more satisfactory activities. It is not enough to do good works; ultimately, the egoistic sense of having done good must be given up. Correspondingly, philanthropy should not be a 'forced' or self-conscious activity, but a natural effervescence from a life dedicated to God. This is *sanātana-dharma*, 'the one broad and vast rule of living consciously in the divine and acting from that'.

5.2.2.2 Characteristics of the *sanātana-dharma* orientation

A person 'motivated by wholehearted love for God' sees the world permeated with the Divine spirit.¹⁴¹ Brahman is the sacrifice, sacrificer and to whom all is to be sacrificed¹⁴², womb and resting place of creation¹⁴³, unifying thread¹⁴⁴, Primal creator, 'Unborn and All-pervading'¹⁴⁵. He is 'seated in the hearts of all embodied beings . . . the beginning, the middle, and end of embodied beings'¹⁴⁶.

Correspondingly, the believer no longer restricts his or anybody else's identity through caste, religion, nation or other divisive categories. Instead every being is known as an instance of the Divinity as *antaryāmin*. This knowledge is not mere intellectual awareness; it regulates the entire being. The moral corollary of this immersion in God is conduct with the universal welfare in mind:

The man, who, having given up all objects of desire, lives without attachment, the sense of possession and the sense of egoistic self-importance - he attains peace. This is the (brāhmi) state . . .¹⁴⁷

The wise see alike in regard to one well endowed with learning and humility, a Brāhmaṇ, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater (or an outcast).¹⁴⁸

The sages who are freed from dualism, whose minds are well directed, and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, become cleansed of all sins and obtain the bliss of the brahman.¹⁴⁹

He who is equal-minded towards well-wishers, friends, foes, those who are indifferent, neutrals, hateful persons, and relatives, and even towards the good and the sinful - he excels (in fitness for the practice of yoga).¹⁵⁰

He whose mind is engaged in yoga (or vision of the self) has equality of vision everywhere: he sees his self as existing in all beings (i.e., selves) and all beings (i.e., selves) in his self.¹⁵¹

He who sees Me in all (selves) and sees all (selves) in Me - to him I am not lost, nor is he lost to Me.¹⁵²

The attitude of equality is being equable in mind in relation to one's self, friends and enemies, and in relation to both what is good and what is disastrous (as affecting them). The natural disposition which feels happy at all selves when they are seen, is joyous goodwill.

{ff. Sampatkumaran: As Tātparyachandrikā points out, Śrī-Rāmānuja here has in mind the description of the *Viṣṇu-bhakta* (the devotee of the Lord) in *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (III. 7. 20) as *sama-matir-ātma-suhṛd-vipakṣa-pakṣe* (even-minded with reference to the sides of one's friends and enemies)}.¹⁵³

It is this universal or eternal orientation, appropriate to every *ātman*, which is the *ātman*'s 'eternal' or *sanātana-dharma*. This is God orientated action that is context sensitive, but not context limited. To summarise the main characteristics of the *sanātana-dharma* orientation:

- a. It is a moral orientation appropriate to the *ātman*'s knowledge of its true nature as defined through *dharmi/dharma bhūta jñāna and śeṣatva* (§4).
- b. *Sanātana-dharma* should not be regarded as in a confrontational stand against *sva-dharma*; rather it is the mature orientation for *sva-dharmic* activity. Even post-enlightenment, it would be misguided, not to say misleading to lesser lights, to act as if the performance of one's communal *sva-dharma* was unnecessary. Hence the 'abandonment' of *dharma* is not so much an abandonment of socially orientated actions but a revolution in orientation regarding those actions (See §6.4).
- c. From a *sanātana* viewpoint the *ātman* is aware that it is not an independent, self fulfilling entity but a particular aspect of a spiritual and all embracing whole. Correspondingly, concerning all other individuals, it is because of the universal indwelling Self that a person is to be loved as a finite part of the Supreme Being and an embodiment of the Divine.¹⁵⁴
- d. In conclusion, identity and corresponding moral sense become animated by an understanding of people in God (*Puruṣa*) and God in people (*antaryāmin*). All persons are not only equal before God but also equal in God, and must be appropriately treated.

Hence we can represent three steps towards moral maturity as:

- (1) *adharmic* person (selfish orientation) → detached person (stoic orientation)
- (2) detached person (stoic orientation) → *sva-dharma* orientation (communal orientation)
- (3) *sva-dharma* orientation that is congruent with (Δ) *sanātana-dharma* orientation of universal justice.

5.3 *Sva-dharma:sanātana-dharma* :: communitarianism:liberal justice ¹⁵⁵

The political implications of the relationship between *sva-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma* will now be made explicit. It has been noted that the *Bhagavadgītā* holds a superficially contradictory position on the question of *dharma*. Initially, God is the upholder of *dharma* but ultimately He appears its antagonist. This contradiction was resolved by suggesting that the correct *sanātana* orientation requires the ‘abandonment’ of only a limited and blinkered view of *sva-dharma* and not the abandonment of context sensitive duty as such.

Hence the relationship *sanātana dharma* has to *sva-dharma* is similar to that of liberalism to communitarianism. Both *sanātana-dharma* and liberalism are moral orientations requiring flexibility and goodwill in their expression. Also, in both the *sanātana-dharma* and liberal orientations, there is a recognition that individuals learn their sense of identity, purpose and moral values from their social arrangements - hence the communitarian position is respected:

But the renunciation (*sannyāsa*) of works which are invariably concomitant (with one’s caste and stage in life) is not proper. . . . ¹⁵⁶

Man gains supreme beatitude when each person is devoted to his duty. . . . ¹⁵⁷

However, both the *sanātana-dharma* orientation and political liberalism stress that while communal contexts deserve respect, communities and their norms are not self-fulfilling and final. An *exclusive* communitarianism is to be rejected, and all communities must regulate themselves through a vision of belonging to a greater whole, and oblige themselves to universal responsibilities. This calls for a congruency (Δ) or ‘over-lapping consensus’ across communal *sva-dharmic* activities and a universal or *sanātana-dharma* orientation. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, Lipner and Rawls all insist upon such a regulation of communal contexts. Bhagavān Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and the Vedāntin Lipner formulate these commitments as a *sva-dharma* congruent with a *sanātana-dharma* orientation of equanimity and service to God in people and people in God. The liberal Rawls formulates the same commitment through the principle of justice as fairness:

sva-dharmic activities Δ *sanātana dharma* orientation
communal activities Δ with orientation of universal justice

The moral psychology of a person in the *sanātana-dharma* orientation is now indicated through an exploration of the Vedāntic idea of freedom. This investigation too will

involve further nuances of *dharma* - this time *dharma* as realisation of one's full potential through devotion to the Supreme Person.

5. 4 The Vedāntic idea of freedom as a basis for a *saulabhya* moral psychology

The moral significance of freedom *from* the pull of the senses has been introduced (i.e. steps one and two, §5.2.1). The idea of freedom as freedom *to* realise one's full divine potential will now be considered. While these Vedāntic ideas of freedom are not explicitly related to the political counterparts (Chapter 1§2.3) they do indicate a moral psychology that is potentially liberal. Hence they provide a grounding upon which liberal ideas can reach full political expression.

5.4.1 Freedom to realise one's potential

Only action in conformity with knowledge of the *ātman*'s true nature is free. This aspect of freedom can be expressed through Rāmānujācārya's body-soul model. Recall that this depicts the total personality as a compound of soul (*ātman*) and body (§4.2). Whereas some schools of Vedānta stigmatise the body, Viśiṣṭādvaita takes a more balanced and dignified attitude towards embodied existence, the body itself and the material world in general.

The *ātman* is the sentient principle that inhabits a body. The bodyR is that which finds its purpose or fulfilment in assisting the *ātman* to realise any given ideal. As with a well-controlled horse drawn-chariot, the bodyR can help the *ātman* advance towards its goal or ideal.

Ideals exist in a hierarchy. Each realised ideal can be seen as serving as a bodyR for the realisation of a greater ideal. For example, at the most basic level ideals include the natural pleasures. It is easy to see how an individual's bodyR helps to realise these pleasures. But there are also higher, co-operative ideals. Consider the ideal of 'being in conjugal love'. This requires two well-balanced persons, each finding increasing fulfilment in the co-operative ideal. The lovers cannot remain self-satisfied, but must enlarge their purpose. The realised ideal of conjugal love then serves as a bodyR for the realisation of the family ideal. The ideal family then acts as a bodyR for the realisation of the ideals of caste; the realised ideal of caste then acts as a bodyR for the realisation of the communal ideal. And so on in ever widening and fruitful associations. At every stage, each bodyR helps realise an ideal, and each realised ideal acts as a 'bodyR' for the actualisation of a greater ideal; concomitantly, the person views the

self as belonging to an ever greater body. Hence an isolated freedom is no freedom at all but a straight jacket prohibiting the realisation of one's full potential:

Darwin in his decent of man observes: As man advances in civilisation and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races . . .¹⁵⁸

Rāmānujācārya would agree with the above, but would also insist that humanity is not the most profound bodyR with which one can identify; nor is humanity the highest ideal. If freedom is seen as 'freedom to realise one's full potential or highest ideal', then the above progression must be taken to the theo-logical conclusion. It is only on viewing one's self as the bodyR of God that one has fulfilled oneself and reached the highest ideal. Therefore, *dharma*, in the descriptive sense of one's true and most fulfilled nature, can be equated with worship of the Supreme Being (i.e. the *ātman*'s highest ideal)¹⁵⁹:

That is, soon indeed he becomes one whose mind is exclusively concerned with My worship with all its auxiliaries . . . For it is worship of this kind which was indicated by the word, '*dharma*' . . .¹⁶⁰

Recognising his or her highest *dharma* as worship of God, the devotee acts for the pleasure of God. What is this pleasure? Care must be taken not to be presumptuous on so vast a topic. Nevertheless, the *Bhagavadgītā* indicates how the *ātman* can please God and hence fulfil its *raison d'être*.

Since the essential nature of the *ātman* is that it is the servant of God, it follows that in the embodied condition also it should worship God.¹⁶¹ There are two aspects to this condition of worship.

Firstly, the *ātman* must be obedient to God. Prescriptions concerning proper conduct (*dharma*) must be obeyed. God expects the following from the devout (the list is complementary to the behaviour of a person who acts from the *sanātana* orientation, §5.2.2.2):

He who does work for Me, who holds Me to be supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment and who is devoid of hatred in relation to all beings - he, O Arjuna (Paṇḍava), attains Me.¹⁶²

He who has no hatred in relation to all beings, who is friendly and merciful (towards them), who is free from the sense of possession and egotism, to whom pain and pleasure are alike, who is patient.¹⁶³

Who is contented, who is always given over to meditation, who has a controlled self, who has firm convictions, whose attention and intelligence are dedicated to me - that devotee of Mine who is like this, is dear to Me.¹⁶⁴

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: That devotee of mine . . . has no hatred in relation to all beings, that is, is free from hatred even in relation to those who hate him and those who hurt him. . . . He is friendly,

showing a friendly disposition to all beings, even to those who hate him and hurt him. He is merciful, showing mercy to them when they are suffering. . . .

. . . His attention and intelligence are dedicated to Me . . . in the faith, “The Lord, Vāsudeva Himself, is worshipped through works carried out without desire for fruits. And (so) worshipped, He will bring about for me direct vision (of the self)”.¹⁶⁵

Secondly, all worship must add glory to God. Rāmānujācārya says of the *śeṣa-śeṣin* relationship:

This is, in all cases, the relation between the principal and the accessory: the accessory is that whose nature (*svarūpa*) is to be given over to the tendency to render due glory to another; that other is the principal.¹⁶⁶

The idea of the *ātman* ‘rendering glory’ to God is more subtle than straightforward subservience. How could a finite, imperfect entity render glory to an infinite and already perfect Being? This enquiry is complicated by Rāmānujācārya’s insistence that the Lord has nothing to gain from this world:

Elsewhere (that is, in the case of other beings), though the body depends for its existence on the self, still there is help for the existence of the self by the body. To Me, however, there is no help at all of that kind by them. The meaning is that mere sport is the purpose (served by them in relation to Me).¹⁶⁷

Considering this, it is best to think of how the *śeṣa* can offer glory to the *śeṣin* as ‘what scope does the *śeṣa* offer for the Lord (*śeṣin*) to exhibit and enjoy His *inherent* greatness?’ Rāmānujācārya has not blessed us with a thorough answer, but has said enough to allow an authentic extrapolation. Consider Rāmānujācārya’s use of the term *vibhūti*, which refers to the Lord’s magnificent greatness:

Rāmānuja considered the term *vibhūti* to express the fact that finite being is related to God as a manifestation of His lordship or glory. *Vibhūti* can therefore be equated with *aiśvarya*, which means sovereign dominion, but generally it is “dominion” in the sense of being ruled (*niyāmya*) rather than “dominion” understood as the power of rulership or control (*niyamana-śakti*) that Rāmānuja wants to emphasise about *vibhūti*. It is always a description of the body (*śarīra*), not of the self within the body (*śarīrī*); of the mode (*prakāra*), not of the underlying substance so qualified (*prakāri*). This distinction implies no separation, however, and the passage from *Śrībhāṣya* (1.3.7) makes clear that when our minds have been freed from the false view of things produced by *karma* we shall experience God’s realm manifesting His Lordship as having a nature that is good and productive of happiness, like the nature of God Himself. The concept in Christian theology that most nearly conveys the meaning of *vibhūti*, insofar as it expresses both the finitude and the essential goodness of God’s universe, is “Creation”: “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psalms. 19:1).¹⁶⁸

The human *ātman* is a unique *vibhūti* of God. Speaking of the enlightened *ātman*, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa says ‘I am inexpressibly dear to the man of wisdom (*jñānin*) and he too is dear to Me’¹⁶⁹. He further refers to the devotee as *His* very soul, and says He cannot sustain Himself without such a devotee.¹⁷⁰ The God-believer relationship culminates in ‘*priyah-priyāyārhasi*’¹⁷¹, confirming that *śeṣatva* (servitude to God) is a pleasant

condition for all parties.¹⁷² This intimates that one way in which the *ātman* renders glory to God is by offering Him scope for a (much prized)¹⁷³ loving inter-subjective relationship. God allows the *ātman* free-will because loving relationships are impossible unless each partner is a viable entity in his or her own right.

Also, notice that the person so dear is the *jñānin* - a man of knowledge. This person knows the self, and its relationship to God (i.e. its *dharma* in a descriptive sense). This is not merely a formal or passive knowledge. The *jñānin*'s knowledge that God is 'the place of origin as well as the place of dissolution of the whole universe'¹⁷⁴, means that he constantly meditates on God:

What is enjoined in Vedānta texts such as, "I know this great Person of sunlike lustre who is beyond the *prakṛti*. . ." (*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* III.12.7), is knowledge (*vedana*) (of the Lord): it can be expressed (more specifically) by the words, meditation (*dhyaṇa*) and worship (*upāsana*): it is of the form of direct vision: in it is contained remembrance; and it is inexpressibly dear. This (knowledge) is enjoined here (when the direct means to final release has to be taught) in "Be one whose mind is placed in Me".¹⁷⁵

In Śrībhāṣya also Rāmānujācārya has explicitly equated knowledge with devoted contemplation and worship. Speaking of knowledge as the means for salvation he says:

The statement that the cessation of ignorance in itself constitutes final release, and that it results solely from the knowledge of the Brahman is admitted (by us). It has (however) to be discriminated, of what form that knowledge is which it is desired to enjoin . . . It is surely not the knowledge arising out of (the syntax of) sentences, because such knowledge results logically from the sentence itself, even without an injunction (enjoining that knowledge), and because also the removal of ignorance does not result from just such so much alone.¹⁷⁶

. . . . Hence that 'knowledge' alone which is different from the knowledge of the syntactical meaning of sentences, and is imported by words such as *dhyaṇa* (meditation), *upāsana* (worship), etc., is what it is desired to enjoin by means of Vedāntic passages.¹⁷⁷

Further, *dhyaṇa* (or meditation) is of the form of a succession of memories (or remembrances), which is unbroken like a stream of oil. For, firm memory is declared to be a means of final release in this passage, viz.: "The memory becomes firm; when such memory is obtained, there is the loosening of all knots" [*Chand.* VII.26.2] . . .

All this has been well explained by the *Vākyakāra* (Ṭaṅka). He says - "*Vedana* (or knowledge) is *upāsana* (or worship). . ." ¹⁷⁸

The *jñānin* comes to 'live in the Lord'¹⁷⁹. *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa* refers to 'Those who, resorting to this knowledge, attain possession of the qualities that characterise Me'¹⁸⁰, and Rāmānujācārya often cites the Upaniṣadic text "Being untainted, he (i.e., the wise seer) attains the highest degree of equality (with the Brahman)" (*Muṇḍakopaniṣad* III.1.3)¹⁸¹. This is not a loss of identity, but a harmony of being. As in all happy relationships, the partners are well matched; the *jñānin* and God have natures appropriate to each other¹⁸². Aspiring to this requires an approximation to the view from Brahman, and consequent streamlining of behaviour. Then, *jñāna* (knowledge),

dhyāna (meditation) and *upāsana* (worship) reach fruition in identifying oneself entirely with the Object of worship:

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: Renouncing all *dharmas* . . . with the complete renunciation of the sense of agency, possessiveness in works, fruits and such other things, in the manner taught: (having done so), continually think of Me as the agent, the object of worship, the goal of attainment and the means.

ff.: When carrying out a religious act, the ignorant person looks upon himself as the agent, a divine entity as the object of worship, *Svarga* or some other thing as the fruits and ritual as the means. But Arjuna is called upon to look upon God the Internal Ruler of the self as the agent, God the Internal Ruler of the gods as the object of worship, God as the immediate and ultimate object of attainment and God as the means, the giver of fruits [*Tāparyachandrikā*].¹⁸³

Lipner's observation is apposite concerning such an act of surrender:

In this case the devotee has not surrendered one whit of his moral freedom, but as one who has acquired a 'holy will' - we may borrow the Kantian expression with perfect propriety here - spontaneously and in total harmony with the wishes of the Lord, the devotee may cry in the spirit of a Paul, 'I act: now not I. The Lord acts in me'.¹⁸⁴

'I act: now not I. The Lord acts in me' (see § 4.2). Such a dedicated person lives life not only as an offering to God¹⁸⁵, but is also animated by the Divine spirit. As *Rāmānujācārya* says 'He is *Brahma-karma-samādhi* who meditates in this way on all work as being made up of the Brahman on account of its having the Brahman for its soul'¹⁸⁶. Those believers aspiring to such immersion should acknowledge that if an authentic psychological profile of their God could be substantiated, then they should oblige themselves to that precedent.

5.4.2 The Divine virtues

An opportunity to substantiate such a psychological profile is provided by *Rāmānujācārya*'s eulogy of the Divine character, *Śaranāgatigadya*.¹⁸⁷ The following epithets construct a distinct personality:

<i>jñāna</i>	all pervading knowledge
<i>bala</i>	ability to bear the entire worlds by sheer will
<i>aīśavarya</i>	mighty rulership
<i>vīrya</i>	ability to bear and rule all the worlds without even a sign of any tiredness
<i>śakti</i>	wonderful and unimaginable power and ability
<i>tejas</i>	ability to get things done without any assistance
<i>sauśīlya</i>	ability (of the superior) to mix freely (with inferiors)/ mixing as one of the beings with whom one mixes
<i>vātsalya</i>	tender affection which causes even faults to be enjoyable
<i>mārdava</i>	softness of feeling which brooks no separation from beloved devotees
<i>ārjava</i>	straightforwardness in word, deed and thought
<i>sauhārda</i>	friendliness
<i>sānya</i>	being equally accessible to all irrespective of apparent differences
<i>kārunya</i>	mercy
<i>mādhurya</i>	being sweet even to enemies
<i>gāmbhīrya</i>	unfathomable mind
<i>audārya</i>	generosity not caring for return

cāturya ability to turn even the hostile to friendliness
kṛtajñatā: remembrance
paraduḥkhaduḥkhi feeling the suffering of others as if it were one's very own
anālo-citaviśe-śāśeśalokaśaraiya a resort for all, regardless of character or birth
praṇatārthihara boundless motherly affection that overflows into seeing even faults as virtues
āśritavātsalyaika jaladhe the quality of (motherly) affection which is the basis of His (entire)
 Being.¹⁸⁸

5.4.2.1 *Svarūpa and svabhāva*¹⁸⁹

Scholars have classified the Divine virtues into *svarūpa* (virtues of primordial essence) and *svabhāva* (God's virtues related to His creatures). The *svarūpa* virtues are:

Those qualities, indeed, which are 'equal to the entity'- they are necessarily involved in the knowledge relating to that entity, because they are the properties that define the essential nature of the entity; they, like the essential nature of the entity, continue everywhere. And those qualities are existence, knowledge, bliss, purity and infinity But those qualities of mercy, etc. which are made out as belonging to the Brahman whose essential nature has been (already) determined, even though they remain inseparably associated with the possessor of the qualities, are not necessarily involved in the knowledge of the Brahman.¹⁹⁰

Before creation, there was only the 'Brahman, one without a second', 'who willed to become many and be born'. This primordial Brahman could be described without reference to any other entity. Foremost of the *svarūpa* virtues are those of the *satyam-jñānam-anantam trio* (§3.2). Additions such as immaculate purity (*amalatva*), bliss (*ānanda*), omnipotence (*bāla*), invincibility (*vīrya*) and splendour (*tejas*) can also apply to Brahman before the creation. Hence these qualities express the distance between the universe and a Brahman whose essential nature cannot be 'grasped by speech or thought'.

However, this austere characterisation is enriched by a cascade of tender *svabhāva* qualities such as *sauśīlya*, *vātsalya*, *mārdava*, *ājaya*, *sauhārda*, *sāmya*, *kārunya*, *mādhurya*, *kṛtajñatā*, *audārya*, and *paraduḥkhaduḥkhi*. These virtues present a personal Brahman. The *svabhāva* virtues are relational, and therefore require a plurality of sentient beings to give scope for their expression.¹⁹¹ Creation fulfils this purpose and allows the primordial Brahman to blossom into the personal God of religion. A metaphor from the 12th century successor of Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Parāśarabhaṭṭar swāmikhal, makes clear God's need for companions:

God . . . wanders about (seeking to do some favour for His devotees) like a cow that has just delivered a calf, bellowing because her teats are irritated by the fullness of her udders and perplexed as to what she should do [because her calf is absent]. This state of God is known even in the case of Rāvaṇa [a hideous person] [parenthesis not supplied].¹⁹²

A cow without her calf - so much love to offer yet none to share it with - this would be the fate of the Brahman without creation. The affective response that such metaphors elicit has prompted scholars of Viśiṣṭādvaita into making a distinction within the *svabhāva* virtues.

5.4.2.2 *Paratva* and *saulabhya*¹⁹³

It is now customary to sub-divide the *svabhāva* virtues into *paratva* and *saulabhya*. The *paratva* virtues emphasise the Majesty of God while the *saulabhya* His courtesy and tender solicitude. It is only after a close inspection of where the balance lies between these two categories that Rāmānujācārya's psychological profile of God can be understood.

The balance between these two categories is illustrated through a conversation between God and Goddess Śrī in the presence of a sinner.¹⁹⁴ God initially insists upon a reckoning of the sins. The Goddess however urges her Lord to shift His perspective. God should look to His own moral priorities rather than judging the moral status of the sinner:

My Lord! if you really wish to exercise your qualities of *mercy, love* and *kindness*, you have now a glorious opportunity which you cannot afford to skip off except at the risk of perpetuating the enormous distance between You and Your subjects. As regards Your sense of involvement in . . . standards of justice, retribution and things of that sort, You can jolly well invoke these norms in respect of the myriads of your subjects who are still straying far, far away from You (i. e. those deliberately dissociating themselves from your forgiveness). Surely you should draw the line in the case of those who seek Your hand . . . and acknowledge them with open hands, in vindication of your special quality of '*vātsalya*, tender solicitude, which enables you to see good in evil and thereby love even the evil doers'. The argument holds good with the Lord, all too willing as He is to temper mercy with grace (parenthesis not supplied at exactly the inserted point).¹⁹⁵

The Goddess can be interpreted as appealing to God to mollify his sense of justice with grace. She does not deny that humankind is wretched, but still invokes that 'special quality of tender solicitude that enables God to see good in evil and thereby love even the evil doers'. The hitherto indignant Lord readily obliges, an indication that the *saulabhya* virtues eclipse *paratva* virtues in God's psychological character.¹⁹⁶

5.4.2.3 *Vātsalya, sauśilya* and *paraduḥkhaduḥkhi*

Rāmānujācārya acknowledges that the Lord's perfection might alienate Him from a vice ridden humanity. However 'having the quality of motherly affection as the basis of His entire nature' (*āśritavātsalyaika jaladhe*) inherently dictates to the Lord that a judicial misanthropy should be avoided. Like a mother who loves her children

regardless of their faults, God pardons humans. Rāmānujācārya and his successors emphasise this:

Rāmānujācārya: (the Supreme Brahman . . . is) the ocean of boundless . . . maternal solicitude (*vātsalya*) . . . the refuge of all without exception and without regard to their particular qualities . . .¹⁹⁷

Kūrattālvān: Thy forgiveness [*kṣamā*] is great . . . Then how can we make the mistake of thinking that Thy *vātsalya* is only for those who are eager to obtain Thee, for Thou naturally showest Thy *vātsalya* to all creatures without distinction . . .¹⁹⁸

Sudarśana Sūri: *Vātsalya* means considering even a fault as a virtue, as does the mother cow immediately after the delivery of her calf. This state is the extreme limit of *kṣamā* (patience, forbearance or forgiveness).¹⁹⁹

Periyāccān Piḷḷai: Because of His love (*prema*), even the defects of His dependants appear as virtues.²⁰⁰

Vedānta Deśika: God has been described as “Śaraṇāgata-vatsalah”. This means that His *vātsalya* is His affection for those souls whom He has promised to save, and this affection (*prīti*) goes to the extent of ignoring . . . their faults.²⁰¹

Through the analogy of the incontestable of bond between a mother and her new born child, the metaphysical unity between God and humanity is given emotional appeal and moral substance. The two associated *saulabhya* qualities of *sauśīlya* and *paraduḥkhaduḥkhi* are corollary to *vātsalya*. As with *vātsalya*, *sauśīlya* inherently prohibits misanthropy through its commitment never to ‘make inequality hurt’:

Śīla is the quality whereby superiors mix intimately with inferiors, not as a stratagem, but as a genuine expression of their nature. Or it means such behaviour of the Lord’s that His dependants will not be frightened, remembering that He is God [Īśvara].²⁰²

Though God is greatest, He mixes freely with His inferiors. Emphasis on *sauśīlya* establishes that its opposite, snobbery, is no trivial vice. The snob does not care about people; he just wants to be seen in the right place at the right time and most of all with the right crowd. Such is the snob’s need to feel superior that he uses birth, merit or religion to humiliate others. *Sauśīlya* is the antithesis of such snobbery.

Paraduḥkhaduḥkhi is one who feels the suffering of others as if it were his own.²⁰³

The relationship between such empathy and forgiveness is brought out in Rāmānujācārya’s commentary²⁰⁴ on verse one of saint Nammālvār’s *Tiruvāimoli*²⁰⁵, ‘Meditate oh mind on the dazzling, distress dispelling feet of the Supreme Lord’.²⁰⁶

A superficial reading has the Lord removing the suffering of others, and this is true. However, according to Rāmānujācārya it is the *Lord’s* suffering to which the Ālvār alludes. Due to estrangement from the Lord, a person suffers many miseries. As *antaryāmin*, the Lord feels these pains and becomes distressed. The person’s suffering

would cease on returning to the Lord's feet, consequently making Him the happiest person. It is in this context of restoration that the feet are 'distress dispelling.'²⁰⁷

Taken as a whole, the *saulabhya* virtues represent a psychological profile of a God who is forgiving, welcoming and sensitive to the suffering of others. The thrust of God's exemplary nature is straightforward and compelling. An attitude of tender solicitude is best, and misanthropy (manifested by an unforgiving, snobbish and cold hearted attitude) is to be avoided.

Rāmānujācārya would regard it churlish to feel that the freedom of the individual would be compromised through an attempt to make one's moral orientation and personality congruent with such a Divine character. Recall that not only is the *ātman* the servant of God but also, through being His body, one with Him. To subordinate entirely to God is to find, not lose, one's self:

Ultimately, we derive our value and dignity as persons in our capacity as servants, as accessories, of Brahman the supreme Value. And we realise our value through devoted service, which may none the less be a genuine friendship.²⁰⁸

The individual *ātman* is a part of Brahman and can be fulfilled only when located within the greater Brahman-ic context. Only through immersion in the Divine nature can the human personality become enlarged to reach its ultimate dharmic and moral perfection. A community of believers upholding such aspirations, and with a moral psychology appropriate to their God as profiled above, would be both good Hindus and good citizens in a liberal polity.

5.5 Summary

It is now seen that:

- 1) An approximation to the synergy of *Puruṣa* and *antaryāmin* viewpoints sets the limits of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedāntic moral thinking. One must respect objective (*Puruṣa*), subjective and inter-subjective viewpoints (*antaryāmin*).
- 2) A multi-faceted meditation on *dharma* has shown Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta's commitment to an attitude of equality and universal good will.
- 3) The four steps towards spiritual and moral maturity can therefore be represented as:
 - (i) *adharmic* person (selfish orientation) → detached person (stoic orientation)
 - (ii) detached person → *sva-dharma* orientation (communitarian orientation)
 - (iii) *sva-dharma* orientation must be Δ *sanātana-dharma* orientation (orientation of universal justice)

(iv) the *sanātana* orientation is characterised by a spirit of universal justice and a *saulabhya* moral psychology of *vātsalya*, *sauśīlya* and *paraduḥkhaduḥkhi*. Truly, only God can forgive without reservation, extend the requisite care, and bear the suffering of all. However, to try to do so should be the believer's ideal. A collation of Divine virtues to emulate and vices to abjure is given below:²⁰⁹

God's virtues to emulate	Vices to abjure
<i>Vātsalya</i> : unconditional love that will forgive of its own inherent nature.	Refusal to forgive evil; vindictive attitude.
<i>Sauśīlya</i> : courtesy to even those contrary to His nature.	Snobbishness, formation of cliques that isolate portions of humanity to a second class status.
<i>Paraduḥkhaduḥkhi</i> : empathy with the suffering of others regardless of the rights and wrongs of the situation.	Indignant refusal to acknowledge the suffering of others. Worse still, participation in the distribution of retributive dues.

Figure 9. Vedāntic virtues

5. 6 *Mokṣa* as a teleological regulator of *puruṣārtha*

The above must be related to moral development over an entire life consistent with the ultimate goal of *mokṣa*. Lipner has observed that post-mortem *mokṣa* is a distant ideal, and that subtlety and ingenuity are required in making it relevant to daily life. His citation of *Bhagavadgītā* VII.11 helps in applying *dharma* to that task:

In relation to those who are possessed of strength. I (am) (their) strength as dissociated from desire and attachment. And in all beings I am. O Arjuna (Bharatarṣabha), that kind of desire which is not opposed to righteousness.²¹⁰

Verses preceding the above speak of God who is 'the savour in the waters'²¹¹, the 'fragrant smell in the earth' and 'life-giving principle in all beings'²¹². The overall teaching is that the good things in life should be enjoyed, but not in a morally irresponsible way, and not without thanks to God, the origin and support of all.²¹³ Such a life can be 'a cow of plenty' concluding in '*mokṣa* . . . as also other desires which are in conformity with it'.²¹⁴ This implies the complementary hierarchy:

The quest for *mokṣa*
↑
(must be congruent with)
pleasures (*kāma*) < prosperity (*artha*) < moral conduct of daily life (*dharma*)

The above indicates a realistic scenario of human moral development. It begins with a recognition that humans are selfish creatures, with desires not necessarily involving the greater good or spiritual aspirations. Selfish desire is not altogether a bad thing, for the creative potential of *kāma* makes it preferable to a useless lethargy. However, a person lost in hedonism dissipates his energies and his achievements are limited. The

accumulation of prosperity calls for self-control, as well the ability to work with others in a civilised and trustworthy manner. Hence the pursuit of *artha* takes the person one step closer to the moral ideal.

Advancing from *artha* motivated to *dharma* motivated action marks the true transition to moral action. To act *dharma* is to act with knowledge of one's true nature. As a prerequisite, one begins by enlarging one's concept of identity and duty from the personal to respect the *dharma* towards the spouse, one's caste, nation, etc. Here *dharma* is a 'very subtle and difficult matter'. Identities and interests clash, and with that comes conflict regarding the correct course of action. The only way out of this mire of contradictions is through a broader vision of one's identity and *dharma*. One comes to realise that even after one has enjoyed the pleasures and prosperity of life and fulfilled all obligations to progeny and the manes, one is still left with a sinking feeling that 'Is this life and no more?' Once this enquiry becomes gripping the person delves for an enduring concept of *dharma*.

For those at this advanced stage of moral evolution, the scriptures teach that virtuous, communal and even humanitarian activity is not the ultimate. All actions, whether pursued virtuously or not, produce fruit that one must experience. Bad deeds have predictably unsavoury consequences²¹⁵, and even meritorious deeds have serious drawbacks. Their rewards are pleasures which, in extreme cases, may be celestial. These pleasures escalate the person's desires. Once the credits are exhausted, the soul is deposited back to earth²¹⁶- but now with an enlarged appetite²¹⁷. Trying to satisfy this involves the soul further in deeds and consequences. Hence, the person is more embroiled in this world than ever. Actions and fruits, like the dense foliage of an ancient Banyan, form a complicated nexus of cause and effect which never satisfies and is hard to escape.²¹⁸ Disillusionment with this state of affairs acts as a springboard launching one in earnest to the ultimate goal - '*athāto Brahma-jijñāsā* (Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman)²¹⁹:

Here the word then is used in the sense of coming immediately after; the word therefore is used in the sense that that (enquiry) which has been concluded (viz., the enquiry into the Karmakaṇḍa) is the reason (for undertaking the present enquiry).

By the word Brahman is denoted the Highest Person . . . For the sake of attaining immortality He alone has to be desired and to be known by (all) those who are afflicted with the three miseries. Hence, the Lord of All is indeed the Brahman who forms the object of (our present) enquiry.

Jijñāsā is (literally) the desire to know. . . .

What is said is this - As the (ritualistic works learnt from the earliest part of the Mīmāṃsā are capable of producing only small and transitory results, and as the knowledge of the Brahman... is capable of producing infinite and indestructible results, for this reason alone, immediately after the antecedent knowledge of works, the Brahman has to be desired and known.²²⁰

Knowledge of Brahman is not merely a factual awareness of the meaning of the revealed texts, but a constant meditation on God which is 'unbroken like a stream of oil'.²²¹ Knowledge, like meditation, is a form of active worship.²²²

Meditation, knowledge and worship - individually and more so collectively - imply a total involvement with the Divine nature. Such involvement represents the final stage of moral development wherein the entire being becomes lost in God and enters His mode of being. A desire for this *mokṣa* now animates the self, and not the parochial concerns of old. The soul strives to transcend the cycles of repeated birth²²³, seeks absolute purity²²⁴ and knowledge, and acts in accordance with the *ātman*'s real nature as the faithful and moral servant of God²²⁵.

The beauty of the concept of *puruṣārtha* is that it sees the pursuit of goals 'against a horizon of seeking *mokṣa* or spiritual emancipation'. This world is a ground for 'soul building.' The tragedies and frustrations of life can at any point cause disillusionment, which could easily degenerate into lethargy or escapism of various forms and degrees. Such disillusionment must be avoided. Those with only an immature knowledge of the self cannot grasp enduring peace through knowledge of the *ātman*. Hence the easily accessible idea of communal or *sva-dharmic* identity and duty is introduced as a moral 'half-way house'. From a life of no meaning, one moves on to an existence of relative and limited value. In time, this too will exhaust its fascination. However, by then the communal man will have developed in greater measure the godly qualities of self-sacrifice and restraint. Such a mind is progressively primed to confront the inadequacy of life not with escapism but a steady evolution of vision.

Lipner helps one relate *mokṣa* to the *sanātana-dharma* moral orientation for life in *this* world. Speaking of the status at *mokṣa* of the knower and his knowledge about the world, he spots that:

Though the individual *ātman* undergoes fresh embodiment at each rebirth, shedding in the process for all practical purposes any memory of its previous empirical identity, is there no sense in which, when liberation has been attained, the empirical identity of each embodiment can be said to have made a lasting impression on the self-awareness the soul carries into its final state? In other words, when the liberated *ātman* attains salvific communion with its Lord after its *samsāric* journey of many births, of many lives each with its joys and sorrows, loves and hates, and complement of human relationships, does it lose all connection with the memory of these as completely as it does

with the corruptible bodies that were their fields of experience? This is an important question, for its answer reflects Rāmānuja’s view on the importance of human living and its social relationships. This leads us to a consideration of personal identity in *mokṣa*.²²⁶

But what is the content of this mokṣāic I-awareness? . . . In *mokṣa* is the whole saṁsāric experience ‘blacked out’? Rāmānuja, as in other cases, has not gone into this issue, but the evidence exists to formulate an answer on his behalf.

To begin with, in *mokṣa* the *ātman*’s awareness is expanded not contracted. The *ātman* shares in the all-knowingness of the Lord. Surely this means, if the ātmanic I of *saṁsāra* continues, duly enlightened, as the ātmanic I of *mokṣa*, that the liberated *ātman* cannot be ignorant of the experiences of which it was really (if only contingently) the subject during its saṁsāric pilgrimage.²²⁷

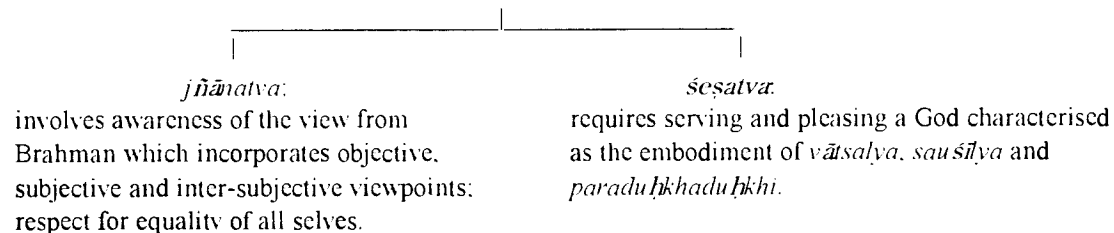
Rāmānuja is not saying that the liberated soul ceases to perceive the evil and suffering of the world, which indeed continue; on the contrary, he is saying not only that the liberated soul continues to keep in touch with the world, but also that . . . The world can no longer become the arena to embroil it in . . . egoistic and misguided relationships. Instead the liberated soul experiences the world in its divine rootedness and as the means for the expression . . . of the Lord’s justice and mercy. . . . Paradoxically, what was before but the instrument of *saṁsāra* has now become a part of the experience of liberation: *saṁsāra* has become *mokṣa*, for Brahman is in all and all is in Brahman. In *mokṣa* the soul has come home.²²⁸

The liberated *ātman* not only recalls all the tribulations felt on the path of salvation but, very importantly, senses the difficulties experienced by the *ātman*s still bound in *saṁsāra*. He feels their suffering as if it were its own. Even before *mokṣa*, though the *ātman* does not have the complete knowledge and empathy indicated above, it still strives to approximate to the ideal viewpoint. In conclusion, the relationship between *mokṣa* and a liberal morality can be indicated as follows:

a. The teleological character of progressive and complementary *puruṣārtha* indicates that mundane activities should be congruent with the quest for *mokṣa*.

b. *Mokṣa* = attaining to Brahman and knowledge of the *ātman*’s nature.

Ātman’s nature is characterised through:



c. Consistent with a. and b., the aspiring devotee necessarily conducts his or her mundane activities in a thoroughly liberal manner.

Figure 10. *Mokṣa* and morality

The need to regulate everyday life through these guidelines leads on to the concluding discussion of some moral pitfalls into which believers often stumble. Enough has already been said to establish the need for a liberal outlook. However, the ingenuity with which some believers ignore the obvious obliges one to be emphatic. The next section considers certain types of Hindu offenders who see their faith as a basis for

neglecting liberal moral practice. An attempt is made to discredit their illiberal tendencies by applying ideas already introduced.

§ 6 Some Pits into which Believers Fall

6.1 A 'fundamentalist' tendency to de-contextualise texts and concepts

It is understandable if believers, feeling that the world is corrupt and full of dross, turn to their religious texts for guidance. Unfortunately, believers in the quest to get at the root of truth, often fail to appreciate the original context in which the text arose. Consequently they fail to interpret appropriately the text in the contemporary context. They are even incapable of recognising that the particular interpretation they hold may not be the original. Errors such as these are prevalent in the fundamentalist religious style wherein the text is thought to contain the transcendental truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Vedāntins might be thought particularly prone to this infelicity because of their regarding their most ancient scriptures as *apauruṣeya* or impersonal in the sense that:

. . . no personal agent, supreme or otherwise, has determined of his own accord the referential relation between Vedic words and their objects (i.e. the denotativeness of words), and the order in which these words occur in the Vedas.²²⁹

This might indicate that (re)interpreting these *apauruṣeya* texts is tantamount to gerrymandering with the word of God. However, the introductory discussion (§2.1) indicated that this impersonal, timeless or eternal aspect of Vedāntic truth concerns a particular orientation or way of looking at man's place in God's world *as it exists today*. It is the spirit, and not the letter, of truth that is timeless and which should demand eternal allegiance.

Consider for example a tale from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* Upaniṣad that makes clear how even a single syllable of Vedāntic wisdom can, and should, mean different things to different people:

The threefold offspring of *Prajā-pati*, gods, men and demons, lived with their father *Prajā-pati* as students of sacred knowledge. Having completed their studentship the gods said, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir'. To them then, he uttered the syllable *da* (and asked) 'Have you understood?' They (said) 'We have understood, you said to us "*dāmyata*," "control yourselves".' He said, 'Yes, you have understood.'

Then the men said to him, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir'. To them he uttered the same syllable *da* (and asked) 'Have you understood?' They said, 'We have understood. You said to us "give".' He said, 'Yes, you have understood.'

Then the demons said to him, 'Please tell (instruct) us, sir'. To them he uttered the same syllable *da* and asked, 'Have you understood?' They said, 'We have understood. you said to us

“*davadhvam*” “be compassionate”.’ He said, ‘Yes, you have understood.’ This very thing the heavenly voice of thunder repeats *da, da, da*, that is, control yourselves, give, be compassionate.²³⁰

We see that a single syllable is to be interpreted differently by different persons, depending on their particular dispositions and circumstances. It is therefore appropriate that Vedāntic ideas should evolve, sometimes in directions a decontextualised and superficial consideration of the original text might seem to prohibit.

Those Hindus inclined towards a rigid interpretation of concepts must reflect upon how leading lights have often developed ideas in revolutionary and controversial directions. This progression has been a spiral and not disjunctive process. The arc of this spiral moves forward not by abandoning an old idea but by, through each turn of the coil, returning to that idea and advancing it through new experiences. Progressively the idea is taken towards full maturity.

The process of spiral evolution will be illustrated with one traditional idea (the status of a Śūdra)²³¹. The journey up the coil pertaining to the concept of ‘Śūdra’ will begin from the *Rg* Veda (~ 800 BCE). This work appears to decree a hierarchy of human persons. The Śūdra is bottom of the pile:

His face became the priest; His arms
Became the warrior-king; His legs
The tradesman, and from His feet
Were born the lowly serf.²³²

Hinduism’s main book of law, the *Mamu Smṛiti* (‘composed mainly between c.200 BCE-200 CE’²³³), too offers ample scope for the exploitation of the Śūdra. If he is to better his lot in a future life, he must be ‘attentive to his betters (*utkṛṣṭaśuśrūṣu*), soft spoken, humble (*anahamkṛṭa*), and dependent on the Brahmin (and other twice born *varṇas*)’.²³⁴

Rāmānujācārya appears to accept this menial status for Śūdras who ‘should not be taught any rules of conduct, and he also should not be taught any religious rites’²³⁵.

Concerning their spiritual aptitude, He says in the *Śrībhāṣya*:

It is not possible for one untutored in what Brahman’s proper form is, and in the kinds of worshipful meditation on that form, and also having no right to perform the various things ancillary to the preceding, such as recitation of the Veda, the [ordained] sacrifices, and so on, to be equipped to bring the worshipful meditations to a [successful] conclusion. Even though one may be desirous [of following the above discipline], without the [proper] qualification one cannot have the right [to embark upon it].²³⁶

This seems a divisive position: incompetent Śūdras have no right to study the Vedas, etc. and without this knowledge they cannot have the capacity to gain salvation.²³⁷

However, it is a qualified prohibition. Rāmānujācārya does *not* maintain that Śūdras have no business meddling in religion, only a particular subset of religious activity is prohibited. He recognises that Śūdras could be virtuous beings worthy to *begin* treading the long path to salvation:

. . . while arguing under Brahma Sūtra, I.3.33f. for the ineligibility of Śūdras to attain liberation *qua* Śūdras . . . Rāmānuja explicitly allows for piety and spiritual wisdom in a Śūdra. . . . members of the excluded categories, by the means of a virtuous life, may so qualify themselves by birth in the next or a future life as to be directly eligible for embarking on the path to salvation.²³⁸

Rāmānujācārya acknowledges that Śūdras are capable of taking the first steps towards salvation since ‘the knowledge gained by the Śūdra through hearing Itihāsas and Purāṇas is intended for the destruction of sins’²³⁹.

Though a complete treatment is beyond the present scope, it is relevant that Rāmānujācārya looked at salvation from two viewpoints.²⁴⁰ The *Śrībhāṣya* concentrated on the viewpoint of one who strives for salvation through his own efforts. This is the view from man ‘looking up’. However, under *Śrībhāṣya* I.1.1²⁴¹, I.3.1²⁴² and III.2.34²⁴³ hints are given of *God’s* initiative in ensuring salvation. The *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* elaborates on this view from God ‘looking down’:

(for) . . . becoming the object of refuge even to (unworthy) people like us. He descended to the earth and made Himself visible to the eyes of all men: having done such divine acts as ravished the minds and eyes of all men. (both) high and low (i.e., the saintly and the vulgar) . . .²⁴⁴

God strives for the salvation of Śūdras as much as He does for that of the higher castes. Consequently, Śūdras *are* fit for salvation since nothing (including incompetence or ritual impurity) can repel the Lord’s redemptive grace. ‘For, finding refuge in Me, O Arjuna, even those who may be of sinful birth, women, Vaiśyas and similarly Śūdras, even they reach the supreme goal’²⁴⁵. Rāmānujācārya sees in *Bhagavadgītā* II.3, VII.14, XV.4, and especially XVIII.66²⁴⁶ further indications of support for all those facing difficulties in their religious life. When it comes to crossing the ocean of *samsāra* all can rely on the same boat.

This indicates an increasingly sympathetic position towards Śūdras. According to Dasgupta, the *Śrībhāṣya* (somewhat dismissive of Śūdras), was completed between CE 1117-1127.²⁴⁷ Sampatkumaran suggests that the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* (more sympathetic towards Śūdras) was written after the *Śrībhāṣya*.²⁴⁸ This would make

Rāmānujācārya ~ 115 years old when he wrote the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*. We can therefore assume the latter attitude towards Śūdras representative of his final position. Indeed, little indicates that Rāmānujācārya approved of caste discrimination *outside* of the strictly ritual or scholastic context. On the contrary, throughout his life he was humane. He respected immensely the lower caste Kāñcīpūrṇa. Later, he introduced lower castes into aspects of temple worship and, through ritual initiation²⁴⁹, the community of the twice born. He also taught to non-Brahmin Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas esoteric meanings previously withheld.²⁵⁰

A cynic might regard these developments as patronising and too limited. After all, Kāñcīpūrṇa *was* the dear disciple of the master Yamunācārya, hence Rāmānujācārya was bound to show Kāñcīpūrṇa respect. Cynics might also suggest that Śūdras initiated by Rāmānujācārya retained the stigma of low birth, while un-initiated Śūdras remained outsiders. Most fundamentally, Rāmānujācārya had not discredited the idea of hierarchy, but merely offered some menials the chance to elevate. Today this seems inadequate, but in the twelfth century the opportunity represented a radical reform.

Two centuries along the spiral coil of tradition, Maṇavālamāmuniḡaḷ jīyar (CE 1370-1443) developed Rāmānujācārya's hint that discrimination against Śūdras applies only to the *ritual context* and not their status as respectable, religious and loveable human beings. Maṇavālamāmuniḡaḷ gave a radical twist to the idea of hierarchy. He not only discredited the view of Śūdras as a pit-class; he regarded them more exalted than the higher castes.

He defended this revolutionary conclusion using an established Rāmānujan concept: the soul (*ātman*) as the servant of God or *śeṣa*.²⁵¹ Maṇavālamāmuniḡaḷ regarded the Śūdra as attuned to the *ātman*'s nature as a *śeṣa*. Unlike their high caste brethren, the Śūdra is disposed towards the virtue of selfless service and unlikely to fall prey to the greatest pitfall - pride:

The eminence or greatness of one's birth is not to be gauged from the caste in which one was born but from the extent to which it helps adherence to the essential nature of '*śeṣatva*' (servanthood). Actually, a devotee, born in a high caste, is liable to feel self-conscious and super-eminent . . . Chances are that humility, which alone is the hallmark of excellence, is not . . . in him . . . On the other hand, the devotee, born in the lower caste, stands a very good chance of being humble, right from birth . . . Real eminence, therefore, goes in the reverse order and rightly belongs to the devotees in the lower castes . . .²⁵²

Maṇavālamūnigaḷ realised that glorifying the humility of Śūdras provides scope for the unscrupulous to exploit them. He therefore stressed that ultimately the *ātman* of a Śūdra (no less than that of a Brahmin) is *śeṣa* only to God. The Śūdra is not a dog's-body at the disposal of the higher *varṇas* but one amongst equals at the feet of the all embracing *Puruṣa*. This is supported by two of Maṇavālamūnigaḷ's favourite episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

- Śrī-Rāma's friendship with the lowly hunter Guha - 'their terrible disparity not with standing'²⁵³.
- 'Śrī-Rāma ate with relish, the fruits offered by Śabarī of low caste . . .'²⁵⁴.

It is noteworthy that Maṇavālamūnigaḷ also related that Śrī-Rāma (i) accepted the outsider Vibhīṣiṇa without hesitation²⁵⁵ and (ii) held Himself accountable to even common citizens²⁵⁶, yet avoided relating (iii) the Śambūka episode wherein Śrī-Rāma punished a Śūdra for performing Vedic rites.²⁵⁷ Such selectivity from a modern writer might be merely an attempt to appear politically correct. However, Maṇavālamūnigaḷ was speaking to an audience that would not have reprimanded him had he *not* emphasised Śrī-Rāma's love for Vibhīṣiṇa, Guha or Śabarī, or had he *highlighted* the punishment of Śambūka. His selective exegesis indicates strongly his commitment to presenting a God above the prejudice of nationality or caste hierarchy. Correspondingly, orthodox believers must have an egalitarian attitude and treat all people decently:

. . . it is not as if offence thrown at the devotees belonging to the higher castes will alone prove ruinous while there is no harm in offending devotees of lower descent. Well, so far as the 'man of God' is concerned, there is absolutely no distinction of high and low, by reason of descent, learning and conduct.

Brahminism. . . . will be self defeating, if it breeds conceit and engenders animosity towards the Lord's devotees.²⁵⁸

The cynical might impute that Rāmānujācārya and Maṇavālamūnigaḷ reserved their egalitarian sentiments for Śūdras who were the Lord's devotees, and not to all per se. Yet such criticism ignores the emphasis the tradition has put on (say) Sītā's kindness towards even cruel rākṣasīs²⁵⁹ or the virtue of *vātsalya* (§5.4.2.3).

In accordance with God's example, the believer must treat all persons, Śrī-Vaiṣṇava or otherwise, with compassion. The message of the *ācāryas* was that it is wrong to be

snobbish and they discredited snobbery within their community. Within their context, they respected the plurality of human natures.

By rejecting such a progressive outlook in favour of an oppressive castesim (or any other form of illiberal discrimination), the contemporary Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition would find itself in a confrontational position not only with political liberalism but also ancient texts and illuminaries maintaining that the person who does not know and respect the self in all knows nothing. This is testified by the folklore on ancients as Jānaśruti²⁶⁰, Satyakāma and Haridrumata²⁶¹, and Umā and the Yakṣa²⁶². Traditionalists must not ignore that:

Brāhmaṇahood deserts him who knows Brāhmaṇahood in anything else than the Self. Kṣatriyahood deserts him who knows Kṣatriyahood in anything else than the Self. The worlds desert him who knows the worlds in anything else than the Self. The gods desert him who knows the gods in anything else than the Self. The Vedas desert him who knows the Vedas in anything else than the self . . . All deserts him who knows all in anything else than the Self. This Brāhmaṇahood, this Kṣatriyahood, and these worlds, these gods, these Vedas, all these beings, this all are the Self.²⁶³

Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas of the twentieth century must, by remaining true to God, the scriptures and the ācāryas, correct not only caste prejudices but also those of gender²⁶⁴, nationality²⁶⁵, species²⁶⁶, etc. Then the tradition will move still further up the spiral without violating the foundation. If orthodoxy requires loyalty to tradition, then orthodoxy within the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition demands steering towards a humanitarian attitude.

The nurture of humanitarian attitudes towards the traditionally oppressed, illustrated here with a particular tradition, must become a universal goal. All branches of the Banyan, must be encouraged to look to their own sources of ‘orthodoxy’ for a humanitarian summons to which believers must answer. Only then will the ‘Old roots in the Ancient Banyan continue to produce green leaves’²⁶⁷.

6. 2 The crusader or ‘the ends justify the means’ brigade

Fanatical believers are inclined to feel that having ‘seen the light’, they may use any means to establish the kingdom of their God on earth. The doctrine of *karmayoga* can contribute towards refuting this rationalisation.

Karmayoga is work performed without any selfish attachment to the fruits of action. The recurring message of the *Bhagavadgītā* is that the *karmayogi* must act; but to act *dharmically* is that person’s right, and ‘never to the fruits thereof’.²⁶⁸ The *karma yogi* works not only in a spirit of altruism but also with a knowledge that the consequences

of his actions are beyond his control. After Śrī-Kṛṣṇa shows Arjuna warriors drawn headlong to their dreadful conclusions, He tells him that no one can alter a fraction of the Divine plan:

Even without you, all these, the warriors who remain in the enemy forces, shall cease to be. ²⁶⁹

If one takes the context of the teaching as a whole, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is emphasising that Arjuna must ‘have the courage to change what one can, the humility to know what one can not, and the wisdom to know the difference’²⁷⁰. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa’s implication is ‘Can you be sure that your action (inaction is itself an action) will guaranty the result you desire? I, your God, tell you that you can not. So act only in a *dharmic* way, and leave the rest to God’.

The zealot must realise that when one cannot guaranty the outcome of even earthly endeavours, how can inhumane and *adharmic* ‘means’ justify transcendental ‘ends’ beyond one’s control. If after having used *adharmic* means to achieve (supposedly) ‘godly’ ends, one fails to achieve those ends, what then? - only the karmic burden of sin to no purpose. Rather than such a pretentious and precarious path, the *Bhagavadgītā* advises that the way one goes about one’s work is most important. Since only the means are in our control, there must be a shift of emphasis from ends to means, and a commitment to keep these means dharmic.

However, pat may come the zealot’s reply:

(i) ‘Śrī-Kṛṣṇa Himself urged Arjuna to fight, so we too claim legitimacy for our holy crusade’.

(ii) ‘Similarly, Bhagavān Rāma dispensed violent justice to reprobates as Rāvaṇa.

Hence even if we cannot guaranty the outcome, we shall do our God’s work and try as best we can to follow in His footsteps’.

However, the zealot claiming Divine precedent must stand corrected. Firstly, war was not Śrī-Kṛṣṇa’s first but his very last and reluctant choice. In fact, it was no choice at all, for the forces of evil were determined on destruction. But an even more forceful argument avails itself. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna not merely to fight, but also insisted that Arjuna remain calm, collected and compassionate throughout his battles. War is often inevitable, but only a war fought in a spirit of equality, altruism and mental poise is just. Only a person ‘who is delighted only with the self’²⁷¹, for whom nothing ‘is to be

gained by what is done²⁷², fights without incurring sin. Zealots rarely satisfy these rigorous requirements.

Secondly, it is indeed true that the incarnated Lord routinely puts a violent end to the activities of reprobates. However, the accounts of these events also establish that the ultimate intention and outcome - the 'ends' - is not retribution but reconciliation. Even in the final conquest demons such as Rāvaṇa are not God forsaken but are reconciled with the Divine nature:

His (Rāvaṇa's) spirit entered the Lord's mouth . . .²⁷³

Mandodari (wife of Rāvaṇa): From its very birth this body of yours had taken delight in injuring others . . . yet Rāma has granted you a place in His own highest realm: I bow to him, the blameless, all-inclusive Absolute!²⁷⁴

(The gods): . . . Even this monster of monsters has won to your sphere; at this we marvel!²⁷⁵

Episodes such as these suggest that once the human moral character degenerates beyond a certain limit the redemptive patience of God's grace can wait no more and hence takes matters abruptly into Its hands. What follows such a conquest of good over evil is an instantaneous *mokṣa* or salvation, not a career in the pits of hell.²⁷⁶

Justice is not merely tempered with mercy, but it is consummated in it, and the aim of punishment is not retribution but redemption. *Danḍana* or punishment is *dayā-kārya* or the work of compassion.²⁷⁷

Zealots and egoistic vandals do not wield their rods with such compassionate intent. Nor can they pretend to the detached, calm and collected constitution incumbent upon those who would 'fight without incurring sin'. Hence these aggressors must ask whether their ends and means could ever constitute a coherent, *dharmic* and godly whole, and if not, restrain their activities accordingly.

6.3 Holier than thou

6.3.1 Personal sanctimony

A belief in an immortal *ātman* contextualises our present experience into a more extensive history. Sampatkumaran, speaking of the repetitive cycles of 'Hindu time', tells us that:

Immense periods of time known as *yugas* and *kalpas* figure largely in ancient Hindu speculations about the creation and dissolution of the universe At the end of a Brahmā's life-period (311,040,000,000,000 solar years) a grand dissolution takes place in the universe, and even the elements are resolved into subtler states. Finally, the whole universe with all its souls is absorbed into the Lord, and remains indistinguishable from Him, till another Brahmā is created.

As creation and dissolution are believed to be without beginning and without end, a series of Brahmās are postulated, one succeeding the other.²⁷⁸

These spatio-temporal infinitudes find their moral significance in the Hindu doctrine of *karma*. *Karma* refers to the consequences of action:

'*karma*: Meta-empirical, personal deposit of (morally) meritorious and unmeritorious unenlightened action, to be expended in *saṁsāra*'²⁷⁹.

Karma doctrine proposes that every action produces consequences incumbent upon the subject. Past lives influence present events, which then influence the character of future births. However, this is not a fatalistic doctrine. Only three things are determined before birth: (i) psychological disposition at the time of birth, (ii) the life span and (iii) events for enjoyment or suffering that constitute an ethical bank balance.²⁸⁰ None of this is to deny either the capacity or obligation for autonomous moral action. As Lipner has clarified:

... one's karmic bank has been distinguished as consisting of three types of karma. These are as follows:

1. *Prārabdha* karma. This is the karma that has begun to mature in one's life. One can do nothing about this, whether karma be good or bad; one must experience it.
2. *Kriyamāṇa* karma. This is karma in-the-making, the residue of merit or demerit that one is freshly storing up.
3. *Sañcita* karma. This is already accumulated karma which is not being activated. When or how the combination of (ii) and (iii) will mature is not easily predictable.

Free will has a role to play in the context of all three kinds of *karma*. Thus it is up to the individual to decide how to cope with one's *prārabdha* karma, whether this will be attempted dharmically or not. . . . In the case of *kriyamāṇa* karma, the exercise of free will can be given much significance. One can strive to integrate factors beyond one's control in building up one's life or paradoxically one can 'choose' to be overwhelmed by them. And in the case of *sañcita* karma one is given the option of seeking to wipe it out.²⁸¹

A tale from the Mahābhārata illustrating the above workings of *karma*²⁸² warns of the precarious nature of assuming a moral high ground over others. Here is a summary:

There is a feud between two sets of cousins, the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. The Kaurava Duryodhana challenges the Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira to a game of dice. Duryodhana insists his die be cast by uncle Śakuni, sleight of hand. All are aware that this spells disaster for Yudhiṣṭhira. Yet he accepts. He could and should have resisted; but every man has weaknesses and Yudhiṣṭhira's time had come. As the night goes on, Yudhiṣṭhira is set in a losing streak. A victim of his *prārabdha karma*, he commits a horribly immoral act - he wagers away his chaste wife Draupadī to another man.

Yudhiṣṭhira is an exemplar of virtue - 'Dharmarāja' - king of *dharma*. One would have expected that his *kriyamāṇa karma*, even in the most trying of circumstances, would have been more noble than it proved to be. Yet he allowed himself to be overwhelmed by *prārabdha karma* and succumbed to a common addiction. What was

true of Yudhiṣṭhira could be true of any one of us. No person knows the full catalogue of his or her sins, nor when past impressions may come to bear their fruit. An infamous wretch may soon be on the moral up-and-up, while a saint's halo may be just about to slip. We meet each person in but an instance of his or her own karmic history and there is no way of knowing who is or is not 'holier than thou'. Life on earth is flanked by an infinity of problems, possibilities and options. Such an ethics located in eternity calls for constant humility and prohibits a supercilious attitude.

6.3.2 My Hanuman is bigger than yours

Even amongst those not prone to aggressive crusades or pretensions of moral superiority there is a tendency to insist that one's *form* of religiosity (if not one's actual personal development) is superior to the next man's, i.e. a 'my Hanuman is bigger than yours' mentality. This raises the question of how the believer should treat those of different religious dispositions. Here are some decisive quotations:

Whoever take refuge in Me howsoever, even so do I favour them. O Arjuna (Pārtha)! men experience My form in all ways.²⁸³

Whichever devotee desires to worship with faith whatever manifestation (of Mine) - in relation to every such devotee, I make that same faith of his unshakeable and firm.²⁸⁴

Those, however, who, being devoted to other gods and being (also) possessed of faith, worship them, they, too, without following the ordered rule, worship Me alone. O Arjuna (Kaunteya).²⁸⁵

Śrī-Kṛṣṇa insists that all forms of devotional expression must be respected. Even unorthodox forms of worship reach the Lord, who responds to the faith of a sincere believer. Given that the Lord himself fortifies and rewards such devotion, it is inappropriate for the believer to look down upon religious expressions that do not accord entirely with his predilections.²⁸⁶

6.4 The sexy sage school

There exists an undesirable Hindu type best described as belonging to the sexy sage school. Professor R.C. Zaehner characterises the sage through a moral eccentricity of Rasputine proportions. This sage finds 'right' and 'wrong' juvenile notions to be left behind on reaching enlightenment (which no doubt he is confident of having reached). Zaehner suggests this is typical of Hindus; read his taunt:

Can we, then, be surprised if the sage, fully liberated from the bonds of space and time and therefore from the whole world of 'appearance' in which alone the opposites of good and evil have any validity, should act out his life in accordance with either the good or evil aspect of God since, when all is said and done, they are the same? (for) Hindus postulate wrong at the very heart of truth.²⁸⁷

Zaehner proposes Hindus believe that on attaining spiritual maturity the shackles of conventional morality are shed and one is free to do as one pleases.²⁸⁸ Thankfully, Lipner has exposed this ‘tendentious’ nonsense as not at all in line with the orthodox tradition:

The terms in question are *puṇya* and *pāpa* and *sukṛta* and *duṣkṛta*. In context, these pairs do not mean ‘virtue’ and ‘vice’ in the western sense, but mainly the ‘merit’ (*puṇya/sukṛta*) and ‘demerit’ (*pāpa/duṣkṛta*) generated by good and bad observance of traditional ritualistic religion. . . . It does not mean that the sage may commit murder or dismiss everyday morality with impunity, as the Vedāntins, . . . have always been quick to point out.²⁸⁹

One such Vedāntin is Rāmānujācārya. It is illuminating to consider his rendition on the verse into which Zaehner and certain maverick Hindus have misread so much:

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: “Then the man of wisdom, shaking off merit (*puṇya*) and demerit (*pāpa*), and being untainted (by contact with the *prakṛti*), attains the highest degree of equality (i.e., similarity with the Brahman) [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. III.1.3]”. Hence, all selves, when free of association with the *prakṛti*, are similar to one another and similar to the Lord of all.²⁹⁰

Rāmānujācārya would agree with Zaehner that the sage does indeed rise above ‘the bonds of space and time’. However, Rāmānujācārya would point out that the escape from the cycle of *puṇya* and *pāpa* entails two preconditions. Firstly, enlightenment requires the grace of God and is not a free-lance or self-styled enterprise. Secondly, it is not without the most exacting moral standards. All would-be sexy sages take note:

This self cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much hearing. He is to be attained only by the one whom the (self) chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature.

Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach this (self) through right knowledge.²⁹¹

Equally significantly, the liberated one on reaching the enlightened state not only shares in the splendour of Brahman, but also the moral perfection of the Divine character. The *Bhagavadgītā* leaves no doubt concerning the high moral character of such a liberated one:

He who is the same in grief and joy . . . who . . . regards alike blame and praise of himself . . .

Who is equal in regard to friends and foes: . . . who has given up all undertakings - such a person is said to have transcended the *guṇas*.²⁹²

The sage’s orientation towards the world is absolutely spiritualised. He attains the ‘view from Brahman’ and corresponding moral psychology, not a licence to sin. Rather than becoming blind to conventional morality, he expands the orbit of his concerns to adopt a universally fair and caring disposition.

6. 5 Conclusion

The view from Brahman is pregnant with moral connotations. From the *Puruṣa* viewpoint, each person is seen in his or her own objective smallness. From the *antaryāmin* viewpoint, God feels the asymmetric importance that each places on his or her existence. Synergy of both viewpoints finds a vision that is aware of the complexities of inter-subjective human social living. The God of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta responds to this awareness with a moral psychology characterised through the virtues of courtesy (*sauśīlya*), welcome (*saulabhya*) and unconditional love (*vātsalya*).

In support of this, we can follow how the tradition of Viśiṣṭādvaita came to view the Lord's attitude towards humans. Firstly, Rāmānujācārya taught that the Lord tries to help mankind towards salvation through giving the sacred scriptures that make clear His viewpoint and expectations:

And the Blessed One, the supreme Person . . . having laid down the two kinds of action [in scripture], the righteous and the unrighteous, bestows upon all embodied selves, equitably, the requisite sensuous embodiment to perform such works and the power to control their bodies; then, providing the scriptures, which make known his commands, he enters these [selves] as their ensouling Self to accomplish [scripture's] end, and as the One who permits [all actions] he remains as the Controller.²⁹³

Though He gives guidelines, He is not a rigid, unyielding God (§1.2), but one who attempts to empathise with the human condition. Rāmānujācārya's successors went further to teach that God is not bitter or confrontational with those who break His commands. This lack of resentment towards an errant humanity has its active dimension in a vigorous desire for reconciliation.²⁹⁴

Maṇavālamūnigaḷ gave many examples to illustrate the Lord's 'robust optimism' overflowing into seeing goodness where little exists.²⁹⁵ He speaks of God's gratitude towards even the 'the Eve-teasers' who visit the temple not to worship but to admire 'members of the fairer sex worshipping there'²⁹⁶ and a farmer who, pursuing his straying cow, accidentally circumambulates the temple²⁹⁷. He speaks of the *antaryāmin* sustaining the *ātman*, 'right inside the region of (the) heart, like unto the fond mother lying down and fondly hugging the babe, fast asleep, from behind its back'²⁹⁸. God's sense of punishment and retribution is dwarfed by a desire to bestow 'His special grace, after allowing maximum latitude to the erring subjects'²⁹⁹. Indeed,

the later tradition interprets ungodly behaviour as an opportunity for the exhibition of God's grace:

No doubt, the qualities of *saulabhya* (easy accessibility), *sauśīlya* (graciousness) and *vāṅsalya* (tender solicitude) are also displayed by the Lord in His . . . transcendental manifestation, presiding in the High heaven . . . But in that land of perfect bliss and perpetual splendour, these qualities can hardly be perceptible in such a marked degree, as they are in this land of darkness, delusion and despair. There is all the difference between the two spheres as between a light burning in broad daylight and one shining forth in a dark room.³⁰⁰

How does the tradition expect the devotees of such a God to behave? There appear to be two different, but ultimately complementary, positions. Firstly, the devout are to avoid those not in conformity with God's will:

He shall keep himself severely aloof from the worldlings whose contact would be detrimental to his essential nature.³⁰¹

The cynical might take the above for arrogance or puritanism. However, it must be remembered the devout must also recount their own shortcomings³⁰², remain aware of their 'ignorance yet to be cleared up'³⁰³ and dwell on their 'bankruptcy of merit'³⁰⁴. Such believers will try to be humble, and resist feeling sanctimonious (§6.3). To borrow from the Christ, they are more eager to purify themselves than investigate the specks in the eyes of others. Their separation from non-believers stems from an awareness of their own frailty, not a sense of superiority or snobbishness.

Very importantly, when the devout find others disobeying their God, they are not to become indignant or launch themselves into crusades. Instead:

Far from looking down upon the fellow-beings, in the light of their defects, the Prapaṇa shall view these defects as his own, even as one associates oneself with the defects of one's nearest kith and kin, making common cause with them. Kinship with the fellow-beings is inherent in the fact that all are but the children of the Supreme Lord and are indissolubly bound to Him. There is, however, no possibility of these defects coming to the notice of the Prapaṇa who stands pledged not to think, even for a moment, about those who do not meditate on the Lord . . . As a matter of fact, the Prapaṇa is not to disclose to the Lord and his devotees, the wrongs done to him by the worldlings, even as Sītā, the Divine Mother, made no mention of the insults and injuries heaped on her by the Rākṣasīs, during her captivity in Lanka, either to Hanumān, who visited her on the spot, or later on, to Śrī-Rāma.³⁰⁵

Such believers pray that humankind may come to God but do not, under the pretext of doing God's work, intrude on others. Instead, they concentrate on living dharmic lives while striving for *mokṣa* and its associated compassionate moral vision. The greater public can be reassured that such believers are unlikely to be a nuisance or a threat to civil society. All this makes for a potential consensus across the liberal and Vedāntic outlooks as summarised below:

	Liberal	Vedāntic
Moral Protocol	Morality as the exercise of two moral powers. The first power is the capacity for an effective sense of justice. The second moral power is the capacity to rationally pursue a conception of the good.	Believers attempt to streamline their behaviour with the viewpoint of a God intimately familiar with two viewpoints: (i) <i>Puruṣa</i> : awareness of the objective equality of all persons and (ii) <i>antaryāmin</i> : awareness that each life is lived with subjective and asymmetric importance, yet within an inter-subjective context.
Moral psychology	Ethics of care and connection and commitment to providing low domination moral space.	Approximation to moral psychology of God demands a commitment to forgiveness, courtesy and empathy. Misanthropy is the greatest vice.
Political Outlook	Justice as Fairness. Recognise all as having the moral power to have a conception of the good congruent with justice as fairness.	One's own (communal) <i>sva-dharma</i> is not absolute but is a particular case of universal <i>sanātana-dharma</i> moral <u>orientation</u> of equality and love to all beings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret your texts in the context of the times. • Do not rely on your ends justifying your means. • Do not be a religious snob. • No one is so spiritually advanced as to be above the moral law. • Pray for others, but do not impose your religious beliefs upon them.

Figure 11. Liberal moral protocol, psychology and political outlook and Vedāntic counterparts
Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta could provide a protocol, psychology, teleological motivation and corrective towards a liberal outlook. Admittedly, in its present form, the attempt to establish a strong consensus has left many political, moral and social challenges unanswered and much to be deduced by the believer himself. However, enough has been said on the outlook and nature of the Vedāntic God to constitute substantial and liberalising advice. It remains to be seen if this advice has been heeded by, or even offered to, the Hindu youth of India today.

Service of the country, service of humanity and self-realisation or knowledge of God are synonymous terms.

Gandhiji (Young India, April 1928)

4 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The future development of ethnology lies in its role of first handmaiden to a general theory of human society, a theory trying to achieve a deeper grasp of human nature and of human history. Such a theory would give us, within limits, the power to foresee the course of events, and in a dim future, when this power is universally recognised, it might improve and influence those in authority. It would also - and this is of no lesser value - be useful in creating a saner attitude, finer and wider ideals in the minds of men. For the destinies of mankind are shaped not only by the policy from above, but also the slow, invisible changes which are always at work in all the individuals of a community.

Bronislaw Malinowski

§ 1 Research Rationale

1.1 Introduction

Rawls emphasised the need for an overlapping consensus across the principles which govern a just liberal society and the comprehensive doctrines that animate the lives of its citizens. The comprehensive doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta has been shown to have potentially a strong consensus with a liberal outlook. What remains to be researched is how familiar and respected are the liberal ideas of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

1.2 The sociological ideology of this researcher

Before proceeding with the research proper, the ideology of the researcher must be stated. This researcher believes that worthwhile research should produce an interpretative theory that is both a description and a critique that stimulates social improvement. This conviction upholds two cardinal principles:

1.2.1 Principle one: Understand your context but do not romanticise

1.2.1.1 Understand your context

Principle one requires an attempt to understand the beliefs of any culture as if from 'inside' its social context. This embryonic stage of field work *is* the time for patient listening, sympathy and an open mind, to grasp the nuances of belief in the new social situation. Professor Winch's pioneering work advocated such a radically communally contextual approach:

. . . ideas cannot be torn out of their context . . . the relation between idea and context is an *internal* one. The idea gets its sense from the role it plays in the system.¹

Before Winch, many sociologists studied the behaviour of societies with which they were unfamiliar as a scientist might investigate the natural world.² Winch objected to their attempt to understand human behaviour through the categories and methods of empirical science:

Perhaps social science has not yet found its Newton but the conditions are being created in which such a genius could arise. But above all, it is urged, we must follow the methods of natural science rather than those of philosophy (i.e. Wittgenstein's latter philosophy) if we are to make any significant progress.

I propose . . . to attack such a conception of the relation between the social studies, philosophy and the natural sciences (parenthesis not supplied by Winch)³.

Winch urged that the European's empiricist spectacles are inappropriate if we (Europeans) are to understand the goings on of a novel culture. Instead, the researcher must surrender his own scientific framework to the native's point of view. This is necessary because understanding another cultural system is not the same programme as understanding the physical world. For example, the earth attaches no meaning to its revolutions around the sun and the apple is not aware of any compulsion to fall. The activities of inanimate objects can be understood without reference to feelings, emotions or beliefs. However the human social world is not amenable to understanding based on measurements alone.

One cannot have direct and complete access to unfamiliar societies merely through what can be heard, touched, smelt or measured by an outside observer. There is more to people than that. A person not only moves but has a notion of movement - one that includes why one has moved, whether movement is found to one's liking, what others think of one's movements, etc. Many of these considerations are emotional and social. Hence the sociologist trying to understand novel behaviour must not hastily think 'ah yes, this is an instance of . . . ', because:

Two things may be called 'the same' or 'different' only with reference to a set of criteria which lay down what is to be regarded as a relevant difference. When the 'things' in question are purely physical the criteria appealed to will of course be those of the observer. But when one is dealing with intellectual (or, indeed, any kind of social) 'things', that is not so. For their *being* intellectual or social, as opposed to physical, in character depends entirely on their belonging in a certain way to a system of ideas or mode of living. It is only by reference to the criteria governing that system of ideas or mode of life that they have any existence as intellectual or social events. It follows that if the sociological investigator wants to regard them *as* social events (*as, ex hypothesi*, he must), he has to take seriously the criteria which are applied for distinguishing 'different' kinds of actions and identifying the 'same' kinds of action within the way of life he is studying. It is not open to him arbitrarily to impose his own standards from without. In so far as he does so, the events he is studying lose altogether their character as *social* events.⁴

To further discourage jumping to conclusions, Winch teaches that the sociologist who does not understand that 'social relations are expressions of ideas about reality' understands little.⁵ It is not just that the sociologist is unfamiliar with the social etiquette and norms of the novel society. Rather, the society may be founded on an entirely different notion of reality, a notion that has little to do with scientific paradigms. This applies not only to the content of social reality, but also to its purpose.

Winch challenges the assumption that, like the scientist, members of alien cultures view their situation exclusively in terms of causality and induction. When the scientist attempts to understand a situation he or she:

- Starts by making meticulous and numerous observations (empirical foundations).
- As the mass of data increases, certain general patterns are perceived to emerge, i.e. B has always been preceded by A. So assume A caused B (Causality).
- An attempt is then made to describe the relationship between A and B in the form of a natural law, i.e. since in the past A then B, so in the future A then B (Induction).

Winch says that such an enterprise is concerned primarily with control and production - understand nature to control and exploit it. Scientific man is so absorbed in this empirical, causal and 'production' orientated enterprise that he assumes that this style of thinking is ubiquitous. However, much of the behaviour within certain societies has nothing to do with controlling nature and Winch laments:

... of the general difficulty we find ... of thinking about such matters at all except in terms of 'efficiency of production' - production, that is, for consumption. ... Our blindness to the point of primitive modes of life is a corollary of the pointlessness of much of our own life'.⁶

An example is given of ancient rites relating to the harvest. By performing an act of worship, natives may not be seeking to increase the chances of a good crop based on faith in the scenario: A(worship) \Rightarrow B(good crop). Instead their beliefs may bypass a concern for the causal and inductive relationships between worship and physical laws to become expressions of communal identity, humility, contriteness, etc.:

... it is of very great importance to them that their crops should thrive. Clearly too they take all kinds of practical 'technological' steps, within their capabilities, to ensure that they *do* thrive. But ... A man's sense of the importance of something to him shows itself in all sorts of ways: not merely in precautions to safeguard that thing. He may want to come to terms with its importance to him in quite a different way: to contemplate it, to gain some sense of his life in relation to it.⁷

... crops are not just potential objects of consumption: the life he lives, his relations with his fellows, his chances for acting decently or doing evil, may all spring from his relation to his crops.⁸

If we insist on viewing such relations through empiricist spectacles we will fail to grasp the more profound dimensions to the novel events. Consequently, we may judge such beliefs and relations as wrong or misguided. We are to resist making such judgements. 'Assume attempts at meaning not mastery', is Winch's general counsel to sociologists confronted by eccentric alien activities.

So far, so good.

1.2.1.2 But do not romanticise

Winch is wise, but I believe he has got carried away by his own momentum. He tumbles from exposing the limitations of empiricism, to challenging the veracity of a universal logic. This comes to light in his astonishing critique of Vilfredo Pareto. He objects to Pareto's categorisation of actions as logical or illogical, i.e. logical actions are those with a purpose, with that purpose being consequently (not accidentally or incidentally) realised.⁹ This is too superficial for Winch:

A large part of the trouble here arises from the fact that he has not seen the point around which the main argument of this monograph (ISS) revolves: that criteria of logic are not a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are only intelligible in the context of, ways of living or modes of social life. It follows that one cannot apply criteria of logic to modes of social life as such. For instance, science is one such mode and religion is another; and each has criteria of intelligibility peculiar to itself. So within science or religion actions can be logical or illogical . . . But we cannot sensibly say that either the practice of science itself or that of religion is either illogical or logical; both are non-logical. . . . Now what Pareto tries to say is that science itself is a form of logical behaviour (in fact *the form par excellence* of such behaviour), whereas religion is non-logical (in a logically pejorative sense). And this, as I have tried to show, is not permissible.¹⁰

Different communities have always had different gods, but Winch wants logic to be equally parochial. This is taking the critique of empiricism and logic too far. It is correct and important to recognise that human life (i) cannot be adequately described in the manner of the physical sciences, (ii) must be understood in its social context, but wrong to (iii) insist that all beliefs should be routinely catapulted clear of rational critique into independent realms of 'meaning'.

Though the communal viewpoint is not insignificant, it is not absolute. The social world, though influenced by the participants' ideas about it, is not *just* a function of those ideas. It, no less than the physical world, *can* sensibly be analysed in terms external to the minds of the participants. Just because a society lives by its own lights does not mean that without that light all is darkness; or that the said community cannot be illuminated by the lights of others - be they of empiricism or Aristotelian logic.

Rather than feeling that context is everything one must ask questions of the following kind: Is a pre-determined commitment to refuse to judge the beliefs of novel societies the only alternative to an empirical, logical and critical social science? Must a respect for communal meaning compel us to leave all beliefs free from critique? Are all truths context dependent? Should we allow all context dependent meaning to be considered justified? Can we assume all beliefs are valid in one realm of discourse or another? Affirmative answers to such questions would be disputable. Yet affirming this bundle of related propositions is what Winch seems to incline towards along the lines:

If we were to interpret unfamiliar beliefs through empirical, logical or causal categories, we would find some of these beliefs misguided. Yet we should resist the temptation to view these beliefs as wrong. Recommendation? Do not view bizarre beliefs in scientific terms. Assume an alternative realm of meaning. Hence, ensure that the beliefs under investigation are beyond criticism.

The difficulty with the Winchian commitment to a non-empirical, non-critical, context-bound-logic kind of sociology is that, ironically, it imagines communities within an *artificial contextualisation* that loses touch with the prevalent tides of social change. Profound inter-cultural interaction makes it unrealistic to view cultures as niches of internal meaning. Hence while it is true that behaviour must be understood in context, the modern context is not as Winch might prefer. Consider again his complaints about Pareto, who Winch suggests is involved in a ‘fundamental confusion’, i.e.:

... the philosopher will in particular be alert to deflate the pretensions of any form of enquiry to enshrine the essence of intelligibility as such ... For connected with the realisation that intelligibility takes many and varied forms is the realisation that reality has no key. But Pareto is committing just this mistake: his way of discussing the distinction between logical and non-logical conduct involves setting up scientific intelligibility (or rather, his own misconception of it) as the norm of intelligibility in general ...¹¹

It is wrong of Winch to describe the claims of logic as pretensions, and deceptive to suggest that such ‘pretensions’ are restricted to the scientific community. Science has illuminated many realities which would have otherwise remained in atavistic darkness. Most humans are empirically and logically minded people living in a material world, and thinking governed by logic and empiricism is now prevalent across all cultures and chromatic divides. Hence the tractor aside the tract, the Almanac aside the oracle for today’s Gungadins.

It is now members of the societies under investigation, and not just colonial anthropologists or Europeans, who are inclined to think scientifically and be critical of many traditional beliefs. An authentic understanding of any unfamiliar society must acknowledge that these societies take empiricism and induction seriously enough to view them as undermining or at least modifying traditional niches of meaning. Perhaps Winch might suggest to these societies that both traditional and scientific realms of discourse are independent and true in their own way. Yet this too is problematic. It may be uncomplicated for an *academic* hopping across two continents to entertain mutually exclusive worlds of meaning. This exercise becomes painful if not absurd for a native sitting on the fence in his back-yard.

To sum up: Winch has performed yeoman service in alerting us to the de-humanising possibilities of an exclusively empirically orientated sociology. Simultaneously he has, to use Popper's terminology, highlighted that many human beliefs and much of social living itself, must be viewed as belonging in 'world III'. In world III, beliefs exert influence which they do not hold in the purely physical world I. The social world is a function of our beliefs and attitudes in a way that the physical world is not. All this is correct.

Yet this need not compel one to the abandonment of scientific frames of reference. In fact, *it may be closer to the insider's point of view to be respectful of the universal validity of the scientific outlook, and correspondingly critical of many traditional beliefs.* Ironically, Winch's cardinal principle to understand cultures on their terms, *now* requires the sociologist to acknowledge the massive dominance of logical, causal and empirically based modes of thinking in all corners of the world. Recognising this does not dehumanise sociology, but places it in its correct overall context.

One cannot understand any society without a realistic appreciation of the problems felt by its members. Societies the world over are putting their faith in scientific thinking because they feel this is an effective way of dealing with life's problems. Such a programme may prove, more or less than, successful - but it will not do to pretend that a faith in science does not represent a dominant narrative of our times. Hence traditional paradigms must be viewed aside, not exclusive of, the ubiquitous influence of science. Those who adopt Winch's romantic subjectivism are in danger of condemning their accounts to fiction. Bauman is decisive:

Ethnomethodologists claim to have a particular knack for descending to the level of 'everyday life' from the abstract heights of the official sociology inhabited by imaginary homunculi. But it is a strange everyday life they descend to: hardly anybody eats there his everyday bread, even less bakes it, let alone earns it - though, as a naive observer one would say: eating and baking and earning bread seem to constitute eighty percent of the everyday life of eighty percent of everyday people¹²

1.2.1.3 Three dimensions to understanding

The preceding discussion indicates that there are (at least) three dimensions to 'understanding' a novel social situation.

Firstly, in the Winchean sense, to understand is to grasp what is going on in the minds of the subjects that are being studied. Consider for example a sociologist trying to understand a Rajput suttee¹³. A Winchean understanding of suttee would mean no more or less than grasping what the event means in the mind's eye of parties involved.

This first dimension to understanding (Undim₁) involves understanding and representing authentically the situation.

The second dimension to understanding (Undim₂) builds on Undim₁. It consists of mapping the relationship between Undim₁ and empirical data relating to the underlying activity. Undim₂ looks at behaviour from the viewpoint of rationality. Given that the sociologist understands the goals of the subjects under study, what chance does the sociologist hold for the subjects under study to achieve those goals? For example, the sociologist asks: If the goal of the suttee is to stop the wife's intolerable separation from her husband, then how likely is immolation to achieve this? Alternatively, if the purpose of the suttee is to increase the prestige or wealth of the family, once again the sociologist inquires into the chances of success. Undim₂ would focus our attention on the fact that suttee can constitute a full spectrum of rational/ irrational social behaviour, from selfless love to barbaric exploitation.

A third dimension to Understanding (Undim₃) involves situational analysis. Here, having gained Undim₁, one tries to determine the psychological or sociological causes which induced the subjects to think or act as they did. In Undim₃ one would ask: Why does the sati feel death is preferable to a life of separation from her husband? Or perhaps, why have family members degenerated to the extent of exploiting kin for social or financial gains? Intoxicants, mental disorder, legends, rumours, greed or peer pressure are the sorts of factors that play a part in Undim₃. During this attempt to understand how and why certain social behaviour came into being, the sociologist reconstructs in his mind's eye scenarios which may or may not share characteristics already considered in Undim₁ or Undim₂.

All forms of understanding must have Undim₁ as their substratum. However, it is possible to undertake Undim₂ and Undim₃ independently of each other. Of course, all forms of understanding will be illuminated by the other forms and hence a complete understanding must incorporate Undim_{1,2} and ₃.

1.2.2 Principle Two: Recognise the ethical responsibilities of social science

1.2.2.1 Acknowledge the need to establish the cross-cultural values of justice

Principle one emphasised that if we are to understand the world as it is, the tendency to romanticise must be resisted. By not recognising the trans-cultural domination

empirical thinking holds upon the world's masses, the researcher will misunderstand the problem solving context of most social situations.

There is a parallel trans-cultural moral dimension of social change that requires that the most urgent areas of sociological inquiry will be ethical problems.

Once morality was a communally determined affair. A sociologist practising in such a world devoid of cross-cultural norms might simply seek to understand unfamiliar phenomenon through the moral categories that prevail locally, and keep his moral sensibilities to himself^{d4}- as Captain Kirk obligated to the 'Prime Directive' might do.

However, the highly plural nature of today's world no longer allows for mutually exclusive moralities. People of one culture influence, and are influenced by, people of other cultures. Hence there must be certain trans-cultural rules to regulate, in as an unbiased way as possible, conduct across cultures. Rawls has tried to determine these rules through the bargaining of the 'original position' (Chapter 1§1). He concludes that all cultures must abide by the principles of justice and the values of freedom and equality. Hence one must ask: 'how does any behaviour, regardless of its communal meaning, measure up against the very great liberal values?' Immersion in local meaning is no substitute for such a moral inquiry. Rather, it is an essential pre-requisite for understanding whether justice as fairness is, or is not, in jeopardy.

1.2.2.2 Be prepared to make moral judgements

Suppose the researcher produces two sentences attempting to describe a particular moral attitude of a novel culture (S1, S2). Since observations may be deceptive or incomplete, these sentences will fail to describe with perfect accuracy and sensitivity the moral attitude of the subjects. This is represented as θid (inevitable deviation). θid is an indication of the inherent limitations of inter-cultural understanding. θid is kept to a minimum by knowing the language, asking the right questions, communal immersion and long term field work:

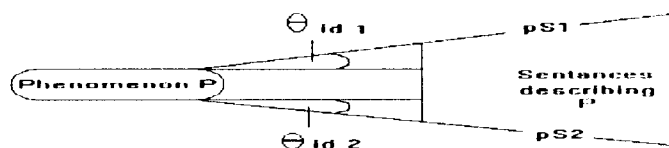


Figure 12. Describing a cultural phenomenon

Principle two represents a shift from the descriptive to the judgmental. The researcher must no longer be content to act as a passive receptacle of meaning but must now judge (against the yardstick of liberal justice) the moral status of the novel culture's moral attitudes. Those sentences describing moral phenomena of the novel culture which the researcher finds acceptable according to the yardstick of liberal justice are to be categorised as 'good'. Those sentences which describe moral attitudes that are unacceptable according to the yardstick of liberal justice are categorised as 'bad':

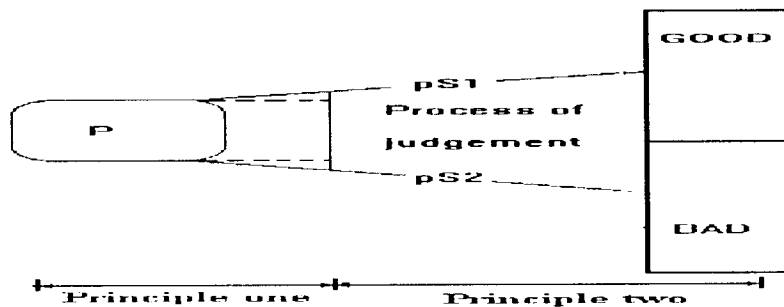


Figure 13. Judging a cultural phenomenon

While making these judgements, the researcher must never confuse a hierarchy of moral attitudes (desirable) for a hierarchy of personnel (intolerable). Two temptations must be resisted. Firstly, one must not assume that because all people are equal, so too *all moral attitudes*. This would amount to viewing all unfamiliar phenomena through an 'ethnographic' lens that refracted all sentences into the 'good category'.

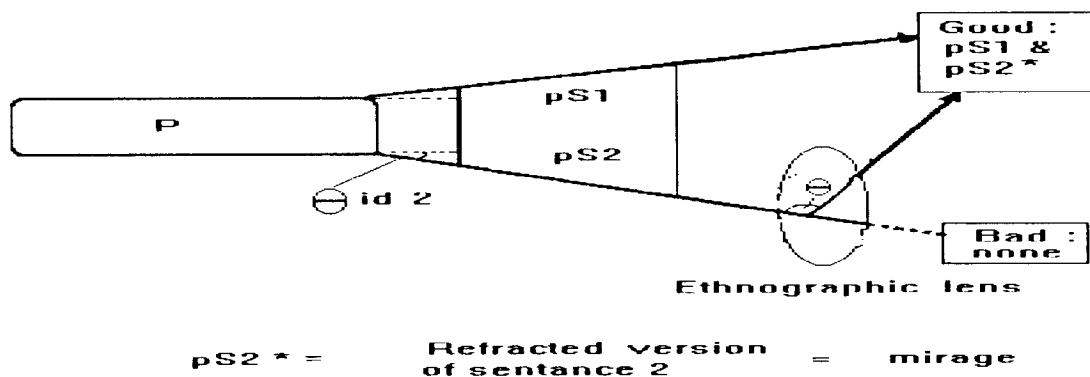


Figure 14. Misguided egalitarianism that is to be avoided

The researcher must resist, just as some of the subjects under study may be doing, a sloppy egalitarianism that insists that the moral world of the unfamiliar community is always good, worth preserving, full of tremendous psychological perspicacity, healthily

organic, etc., etc. Vigilance must be maintained to judge where the precious cross-cultural principles of justice are in jeopardy. It is irresponsible to avoid such scrutiny. Secondly, and equally importantly, researchers must not feel supercilious when they see a novel culture deficient by the standards of liberal justice or with members acting irrationally. Researchers must remember that had they been in a similar problem situation to the subjects, they too could have erred. Liberal justice and rationality is an ideal towards which all peoples should be evolving. That some are cultures are a closer approximation to the ideal than others has nothing to do with race or chrome. All people share the same potentiality for civil behaviour, and one must look down on the sin and not the sinner. Understanding of the Undim, and Undim, kind must discover the causes and motivations for illiberal or irrational behaviour, so as to help the subjects elevate, and not to condemn them.

1.3 The desirable working model

1.3.1 Positionality and practical reason

The preceding discussion indicates that the researcher should not maintain a neutral or value free position. Any view is 'a view from somewhere' and hence limited by the circumstances and perspective of the viewer. This limitation can be transcended only by omniscient God; only He is capable of an absolutely objective viewpoint. However, human limitations need not mean that either the research or the interpretation of data must be conducted in a purely subjective manner. Instead, a type of objectivity can be achieved through respecting the importance of 'positionality'. 'Positional objectivity' requires stating one's viewing-point and acknowledging that this position is but one of many. Objectivity is achieved when the researcher's account is capable of being grasped and rationally critiqued by another person at the same locus as that of the researcher:

. . . the objectivity of an observation or an analysis can be judged not only in uncompromisingly universalist terms (what Thomas Nagel has called the view from nowhere . . .), but also with reference to identified 'positional' perspectives - as the view from a specified and delineated somewhere. . . .

The nature of the observations and the conclusions drawn are inescapably influenced by the position of observation. These positional features need not be related to our subjectivity, as they may not satisfy the defining attributes of being 'subjective', such as (1) 'having its source in the mind', and (2) 'pertaining or peculiar to an individual subject or his mental operations [The shorter Oxford Dictionary, Vol. II, Clarendon Press, Oxford].

. . . Positional objectivity is an interpersonally sharable understanding - a sharing that objectivity in any form must minimally demand. But that shared understanding is specifically in terms of the view from some identified position. The interpretations of history and of culture are peculiarly mediated by the positional features of observation and interpretation.¹⁵

'Positionality' not only determines the scope of possible observations but also the type of interpretations drawn from the data. In particular, it is inevitable that the researcher's viewing point, e.g. particular concerns and agenda, will have a bearing on (i) what aspects of the data are considered relevant and (ii) the subsequent interpretative theory put forward. Concomitantly, the researcher must be eager to engage his or her positional viewpoint in dialogue with other positional viewpoints (both at the same locus and other loci than his or her own) in the hope of arriving at an extended shared understanding of the situation.

Positional objectivity also requires the researcher to be sensitive to the ethical responsibilities of research. Just because a positional viewpoint is particular does not mean that the researcher is free to say anything he or she likes. Instead, responsibility must be taken for the fact that any interpretation of a given social situation may have a bearing (however small) on the lives of the community being researched. The researcher therefore produces theories as a co-participant in influencing the future course of social affairs, and not as an insensitive or disinterested outsider.

This marks a shift " . . . away from pure epistemology (and also metaphysics) to 'practical reason'." Now the researcher is acutely sensitive to 'examining the practical consequences of adopting one perspective rather than another'.¹⁶ Of course, the researcher does not create theories based on an anticipated pragmatic value, independent of the facts of the situation. However, the researcher does acknowledge that, given numerous positional viewpoints exist, the viewpoint and interpretation chosen should be such as to help elevate humankind.

1.3.2 Towards a better world through conjecture and refutation

Research should provide an academic analysis which contributes towards making the world a morally better place. This has a decisive bearing on the situations chosen for social inquiry.

There are an almost infinite number of social situations to be understood. The positional viewing-point of this researcher is that the choice of which situation to study must be made with respect to a concern for the preservation of liberal political values. If situations exist where these values are in jeopardy, then these situations must be understood if they are to be corrected. Alternatively, the researcher may sense that a certain social situation is in such good moral order that one can learn from that

example. Usually, most situations will have a mixture of bad and good elements; but in all cases, situations must be chosen for their moral significance.

Then an attempt should be made to understand how the situation under study came into being. This requires, as a first step, understanding the views of the subjects themselves (Undim₁). However, this cannot be the full story. The researcher should remain aware that while some elements of the social world are purely subjective entities, many other elements have an objective status outside of the minds or perceptions of the subjects under investigation. All these complex elements, imaginations and insights uncovered during the research must be co-ordinated into an explanatory 'tentative theory'.

This approach assumes that human beings strive to behave rationally. Hence, when the sociologist is trying to explain the behaviour of his subjects he must refer to the outside world. Note that the assumption should be that subjects strive to be rational, not that they always succeed. It is possible that the subjects' viewpoints (as summarised in Undim₁) may represent a resounding failure to respond rationally to their present predicament.

The next stage is to subject this 'tentative theory' to critique from knowledgeable scholars. These criticisms will educate the researcher and prompt a modification of his understanding of the original problem situation. Hence one achieves a closer approximation to the problem situation 'as it is'. This in turn stimulates the imaginative production of revised theories. And so on, and so on - progressively getting closer to the truth while exposing new and important problems at each stage. Karl Popper is the famous exponent of such an approach:

The activity can be represented by a *general schema of problem-solving by the method of imaginative conjectures and criticism*, or, as I have often called it, *by the method of conjecture and refutation*. The schema (in its simplest form) is this:

$$P_1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P_2$$

Here P_1 is the *problem* from which we start, TT (the 'tentative theory') is the imaginative conjectural solution which we first reach, for example our first *tentative interpretation*. EE ('*error-elimination*') consists of a severe critical examination of our conjecture, our tentative interpretation: it consists, for example, of the critical use of documentary evidence and, if we have at this early stage more than one conjecture at our disposal, it will also consist of a critical discussion and comparative evaluation of the competing conjectures. P_2 is the problem situation as it emerges from our first critical attempt to solve our problems. It leads up to our second attempt (*and so on*). A satisfactory understanding will be reached if the interpretation, the conjectural theory, finds support in the fact that it can throw new light on new problems - on more problems than we expected; or if it finds support in the fact that it explains many sub-problems, some of which were not seen to start with. Thus we may say that we can gauge the progress we have made by comparing P_1 with some of our later problems (P_n , say).¹⁷

1.3.3 The relationship between theory and empirical data

Three points need to be clarified regarding the relationship between theory and empirical data in the working model.

(i) An important role of empirical data in this model is to detect and highlight problems that really matter. Then, the researcher's findings will be viewed as reflections upon a real world problem and not some 'ethnographic fiction'. (ii) Fresh data helps to monitor the changing face of these problems. It also helps in the elimination of errors in the preliminary understanding of these problems. Throughout this process, it is accepted that empirical data can prove nothing, they can only move understanding closer to truth. Even a little data can prove invaluable in stimulating this perpetual process (see important note § 5.1.2.2).

(iii) The temptation to laboriously collect data in the hope of producing a seamless theory must be resisted. Instead, the researcher must state to the scholastic community his 'tentative theory' boldly, clearly and as early as responsibly possible. The learned scholars will expose limitations in the 'tentative theory' and hence accelerate the growth of knowledge. The researcher must also recognise that a failure to find the 'tentative theory' false does not prove it to be true. It means only that given one must believe something, one goes for the 'tentative theory' which is the better bet - for the time being. Should further data emerge, the 'tentative theory' must be again re-appraised.

1.3.4 The working model

The 'problem situation'	The 'tentative theory'	'Error elimination'
State the 'positionality' of the research viewpoint.	Generate a 'tentative theory' (TT) ₁ to explain (Undim ₁) and the response of subjects.	Expose (TT) ₁ to the critique of scholars.
From this viewpoint, try to grasp of the problem situation as perceived by the subjects (Undim ₁)	Include as far as possible in (TT) ₁ the three dimensions of understanding:	Use the critique of the (TT) ₁ to eliminate errors therein.
What has been their response to this problem situation?	i. (Undim ₁): an insider viewpoint.	Collect more data to modify (TT) ₁ to the point of (TT) ₂ .
Make a judgement on whether the problem situation is one of moral significance and hence worth contemplating further.	ii. (Undim ₂): a consideration of the rationality of the response. iii. (Undim ₃): a sociological account of the origins of the examined situation.	Re-assess and re-state one's understanding of the problem situation. Finally present conclusions back to the society that has been studied. Dialogue and social progression. Repeat process.

Figure 15. The working model

The remainder of this chapter concentrates on the ‘problem situation’ stage. It tries to get a (Undim₁) grasp of the views of Indian young Hindus with regard to the Hindu-Muslim situation. This situation is taken as a type for multicultural tension. This chapter concludes with an outline for a ‘tentative theory’¹. Chapter 5 will then explore various (Undim_{2/3}) aspects of this theory. The post-doctoral future will continue ‘error elimination’ and subsequent modifications of the ‘tentative theory’.¹⁸

§ 2 The Empirical Investigation on Young Hindus

2.1 ‘Hindus’

As an introduction to the religious and sociological background of the young people under study, one should recall that Hinduism is a pluriform tradition (Chapter 3 §2.1), with the word Hindu having many meanings. Lipner’s purview of what Hinduism is often said to be confirms that Hinduism cannot be circumscribed or defined precisely:

- The Hindus themselves call their religion the *sanātana dharma*, ‘eternal *dharma*’ . . . and any writer on Hinduism who accepts [this] definition . . . must choose between producing a catalogue which will give . . . the maximum number of facts . . . or . . . attempt, at his peril, to distil from the whole mass of his material the fine essence that he considers to be the changeless ground from which the proliferating jungle that seems to be Hinduism grows.
- Acceptance of the *Veda* as revealed scripture is certainly the most basic criterion for anyone to declare himself a Hindu . . .
- Within Hinduism, one person’s sacred scripture is by no means necessarily someone else’s. This individual may assign a minor role to a god whom another individual worships with deep devotion as . . . Lord of the world . . . Even the doctrine of reincarnation . . . is *not* a universally accepted part of Hindu teaching and faith. . . .
- As [Indian] government officials see it, every Indian is automatically a Hindu unless he or she specifically claims adherence to another religion . . . [Hinduism is not a religion but] a collection of religions . . . containing elements of shared traditions, and religions that have continually influenced each other down through the ages, and that have jointly contributed to forming the culture of India.
- The caste system, though closely integrated into the [Hindu] religion, is not essential to it . . . Even the profession of belief in the authority of the *Veda* is not essential.
- Caste is the Hindu form of social organisation. No man can be a Hindu who is not in caste . . . Here, then, we have the Hindu world-theory in all its permanent essentials: God real, the world worthless; the one god unknowable, the other gods not to be despised; the Brahmanas with their Vedas the sole religious authority; caste a divine institution, serving as the chief instrument of reward and punishment; man doomed to repeated birth and death, because all action leads to rebirth; world-flight the only noble cause for the awakened man and the one hope of escape from the entanglements of sense and transmigration.
- Hinduism can be described as many religions . . . and it also pervades Hindu life as lived in the world in every nook and cranny . . . Hinduism differs fundamentally from Christianity in this, that for its followers it is not an alternative to the world, but primarily the means of supporting and improving their existence in it . . . salvation [*mokṣa*] is never the object of the religious observances and worship of the Hindus.
- The three . . . divisions of the Vedānta, the Upaniṣads, the Brahma Sūtra and the *Bhagavadgītā* . . . form together the absolute standard for the Hindu religion. . . . *Mokṣa* is spiritual realisation. The Hindu dharma says, Man . . . lives or must live by his life of spirit. *Mokṣa* is . . . the fulfilment of the spirit in us in the heart of the eternal. This is what gives ultimate satisfaction, and all other activities are directed to the realisation of this end.

- . . . the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. . . . metempsychosis is the shibboleth of the Hindu religion.
- The Hindu's Hinduness does not depend on any particular religious belief . . . Neither does the Hindu's Hinduness rest upon considerations of food and drink . . . The basis of Hinduness, its essence, are the duties of caste and stage of life and the one-centredness directing them . . . We find its beginning in the Veda and its completion in the Vedānta.¹⁹

These juxtapositions highlight that the Hindu fellowship is a family of traditions. Further, regional and temporal politics permitting, it allows bi-valent membership with faiths great enough to exist in their own right. Many Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Parsees and even Christians are comfortable with being viewed as sharing in the Hindu fellowship. I myself have an uncle who is a Jain, a cousin whose Christian wife happily accepts being treated in all matters of ritual as a Hindu, and family friends from the Parsi and Sikh communities. None object to being informally considered as Hindus.

From a sociological point of view, this brings us to the crux of the matter. The only Indian community who find their religious beliefs and identity sit uncomfortably under the umbrella term 'Hindu' is the Muslim. Perhaps the 'fundamentalist' character of Islam makes it inevitable that it would resist associations with such a theologically flexible body of persons as the Hindus. In any case, one of the few sure things we can say about a Hindu is that he or she is not a Muslim.²⁰

2.2 The two stages of empirical research

This study into the moral attitudes of young Hindus concerning pluralism was conducted in two stages.

Stage 1 (§3): A landscape survey²¹ (1994) was conducted to get a feel for the attitudes of young Hindus towards the existence of God and the soul. These were taken as rudimentary markers of religious belief. Views on the Hindu-Muslim situation were also explored. Little work has been reported to indicate if young Hindus were in consonance with the rise of illiberal attitudes towards multiculturalism.²²

The survey sampled mainly from the middle class Hindu community. The original intention had been to sample exclusively from the Brahmin community, but many Baniyas were also included in the sample. Moreover, the likelihood of members of the greater Hindu fellowship responding to the introductory question 'are you a Hindu?' with 'Yes', meant that a broad sample was bound to have included those who were Hindus in the looser 'not Muslim' sense.

The contours detected by this survey determined the focus for the case-study research.

Stage 2 (§5-7): The case-studies (1995) focused on the attitudes of the young Hindus towards the Hindu-Muslim problem situation. These findings were juxtaposed aside the understanding the young Hindus have of the Vedāntic God. What influence did religious beliefs exert on attitudes towards the Hindu-Muslim problem? The case-studies concluded with preliminary exploration into conceptions of Hindu and Indian identity.

During the case-study stage, the sub-set of Hindus was more narrowly defined. These were Hindus from the Anāvīl Brahmin community of South Gujarat, and not Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Parsee or Christian.

§ 3 The General Landscape (1994)

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Sample composition and sampling routine

553 Young Hindus from the states of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi were questioned. The sample population was broadly homogenous regarding economic status (middle class), education (up to secondary level) and age (16-18)²³.

The credentials of the participants were established through direct questioning.

The survey was conducted on public transport (2nd class A.C., 1st class, or Luxury Coach); religious discourses (*kaṭha*) and Brahmin weddings between 7 March-23 August 1994. These environments contained a high percentage of the social set under study.

The following procedure was routinely adopted:

The researcher in his usual aspect introduced himself as a doctoral researcher at the University of London. The researcher's 'tilak' (religious insignia) made it clear he was a Hindu. It could be argued that this communal identity should have been concealed. However, care had been taken by the researcher to emphasise to the subjects that the researcher's views were irrelevant, and that there were no 'right' or preferred answers and only truthful answers were sought.

- Subjects were told that the responses would be reported in a doctoral thesis. They were also asked if they objected to their (anonymous) responses being used in other publications. None objected.
- In mass gatherings such as *kathas* (religious discourses) and weddings, an announcement was made at an appropriate point (i) introducing the researcher and

research, (ii) requesting parents to ensure the co-operation of their children, (iii) emphasising the need for honesty, (iv) clearly indicating the box at the exit point in which responses were to be returned and (v) thanking participants in advance for their co-operation. Subsequently questionnaires were distributed personally by, or under the supervision of, the researcher.

On some occasions (sometimes at weddings but more often on trains and buses) the entire procedure was conducted on a one-to-one basis and the questionnaire was completed in the presence of the researcher.

- During the research term five school masters from three schools, came forward promising they would get surveys completed by their students. The offer was accepted on the condition that the masters follow the spirit of the researcher's procedure. These masters returned within a month just less than eighty completed questionnaires (i.e. ~ 15 % of the total sample). The results from these 'master returned' surveys were generally consistent with the overall trends.

3.1.2 The landscape survey questionnaire

i. The questionnaire

Age male/female

Please answer the following questions with: yes, no, or not sure response. Be truthful.

Religious questions

[1] Do you believe in God?

[2] Do you believe that there is a part of a person that carries on living after death?

Encouragement to view multiculturalism as a good thing

[3] Have you had teaching in school that inter-cultural harmony is a good thing?

[4] Have you had teaching outside of school that inter-cultural harmony is a good thing?

Attitudes towards multiculturalism

[5] Is your best friend a Hindu?

[6] Is it possible that your best friend could be a non-Hindu?

[7] Do you think the Law of the land should be made to suit Hindu principles (i.e. to suit only Hindus)?

[8] Do you think any particular community should be treated better than anyone else?

[9] Do you think India should be a country only for Hindus?

[10] Is it important for different communities to understand each other's values and customs?

[11] Are you interested in the values and customs of other communities?

Have they been taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

[12] Has anyone taught you that **ALL** human beings have an immortal soul?

[13] Has anyone taught you that the soul in **ALL** human beings is of divine origin?

[14] Has anyone taught you that that this **ENTIRE** universe is a part of God?

Optimism for the future of multiculturalism

[15] Do think it is possible for different communities to help each other?

[16] Do you think inter-community harmony will one day become a reality in India?

[17] Do you think inter-community understanding presents more trouble than it is worth?

(The questionnaire was also available in Gujarati and Hindi. However, the majority of subjects responded to the English version).

ii. The emergent nine categories

Since both questions 1 and 2 of the landscape survey have three possible responses, the responses generated nine possible categories:

Category	Description	Abbreviation
1	Believe in God / believe in the soul	(G+ / s+)
2	Believe in God / do not believe in the soul	(G+ / s -)
3	Do not believe in God / believe in the soul	(G - / s+)
4	Do not believe in God / do not believe in the soul	(G - / s -)
5	Agnostic about God / do not believe in the soul	(G? / s -)
6	Agnostic about God / Agnostic about soul	(G? / s?)
7	Agnostic about God / believe in the soul	(G? / s+)
8	Do not believe in God / Agnostic about soul	(G - / s?)
9	Believe in God / Agnostic about soul	(G+ / s?)

Since the number of responders under categories (7, 8 & 9) was negligible, the data from these categories is not reported beyond section (§ 3.2.1).

The five sections of landscape survey analysis:

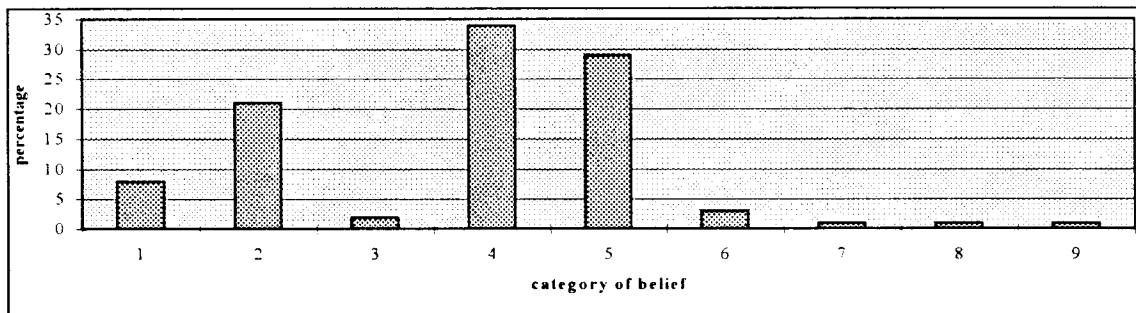
The responses for the categories were summarised in chart form under the following five sections based on the sections of the questionnaire:

- 3.2.1 Distribution of belief (Q 1, 2)
- 3.2.2 Encouragement to view a multiculturalism as a good thing (Q 3, 4)
- 3.2.3 Good attitude towards multiculturalism (Q 5-11)
- 3.2.4 Experience of having been taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts (Q 12, 13, 14)
- 3.2.5 Optimism for the future of multiculturalism (Q 15, 16, 17).

3.2 The landscape survey data

3.2.1 Distribution of belief

Data figure 1 shows the distribution of belief with regard to belief in God and the soul:



1. (G+ / s+)	8 %
2. (G+ / s-)	21 %
3. (G- / s+)	2 %
4. (G- / s-)	34 %
5. (G? / s-)	29 %
6. (G? / s?)	3 %
7. (G? / s+)	1 %
8. (G- / s?)	1 %
9. (G+ / s?)	1 %

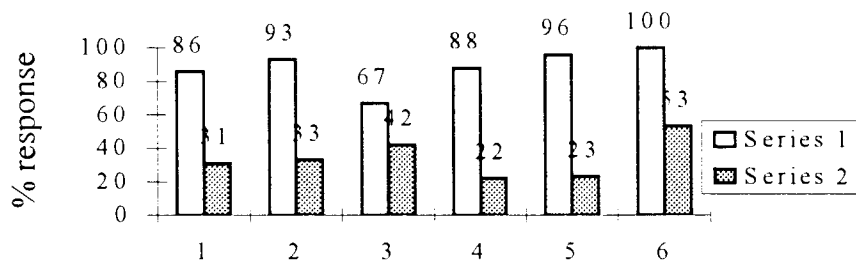
Data figure 1. Distribution of belief

It is seen that while over 60 % of this sample thought the existence of God to be a possibility less than 20 percent entertained the possibility of an immortal soul.

The responses for the remaining questions (3-17) were analysed for the categories 1 to 6. Categories 7, 8, 9 (<1 %) are not reported. The percentage affirmative response for each category is reported in (§3.2.2-5).

3.2.2 Encouragement to view multiculturalism as good

Data figure 2 shows the percentage affirmative response from each of the categories 1 to 6 regarding the encouragement young Hindus had received to view multiculturalism as a good thing:



- 1. God+/Soul+ 2. God+/Soul- 3. God -/Soul+
- 4. God -/Soul- 5. God?/Soul- 6. God?/Soul?

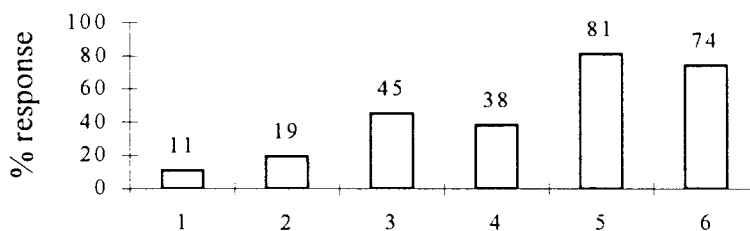
Series 1: Encouragement within school, Series 2: Encouragement outside

Data figure 2. Encouragement to view multiculturalism as good

This shows schools were trying to encourage the young Hindus to view multiculturalism as a good thing. The influence from outside school was far less supportive.

3.2.3 Good attitudes towards multiculturalism

Data figure 3 shows the percentage affirmative response regarding having good attitudes towards multiculturalism.²⁴



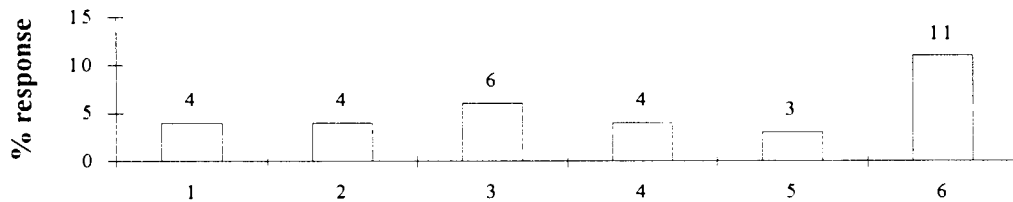
- 1. God+/Soul+ 2. God+/Soul- 3. God -/Soul+
- 4. God -/Soul- 5. God?/Soul- 6. God?/Soul?

Data figure 3. Good attitudes towards multiculturalism

It is noteworthy that the ‘religious categories’ report the lowest affirmative responses regarding good attitudes towards multiculturalism, while the agnostic communities report the highest. The difference is striking.

3.2.4 Taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

Data figure 4 shows the percentage affirmative response regarding having received Vedāntic teachings with the liberal implications emphasised:



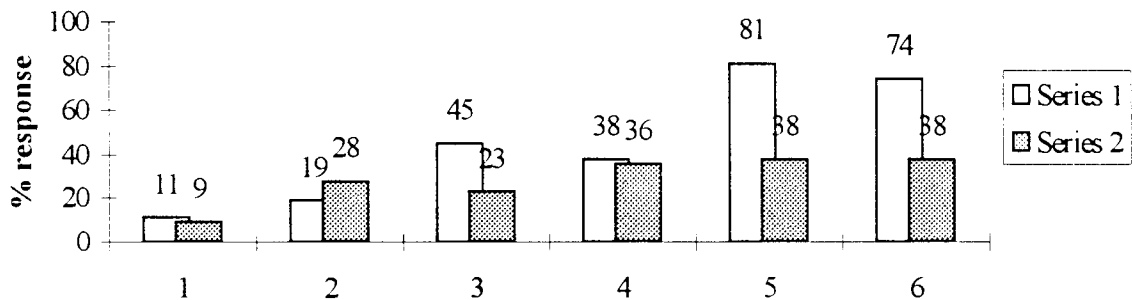
1. God+/Soul+ 2. God+/Soul- 3. God -/Soul+
4. God -/Soul- 5. God?/Soul- 6. God?/Soul?

Data figure 4. Taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

This shows none of the categories report a high percentage response for having received Vedāntic teachings with the liberal implications emphasised.

3.2.5 Optimism for the future of multiculturalism

Data Figure 5 shows the percentage affirmative response from each category regarding optimism for the future of multiculturalism in India.



1. God+/Soul+ 2. God+/Soul- 3. God -/Soul+
4. God -/Soul- 5. God?/Soul- 6. God?/Soul?

Series 1: good multicultural attitude Series 2: optimism for future

Data figure 5. Optimism for the future of multiculturalism

This is the most depressing finding of all. Even those with a good attitude towards multiculturalism are not optimistic that a harmonious multiculturalism will ever become a reality.

§4 From Landscape Survey to Case-Studies

4.1 Salient features of landscape survey data

Considering §3.2.3 and §3.2.5, it would appear that young Hindus with an agnostic outlook regarding the existence of God or the soul have the attitude most appropriate to life in a multicultural society. Those with a belief in God or a metaphysical soul have tended towards a more parochial and illiberal outlook. A cynic could claim that the survey data supports Shklar's insistence that the less 'divinely ordained universes' interfere in public life, the better (Chapter 2 §2.1). While the data is emphatic in showing the poor correlation between metaphysical conviction and a good attitude towards multiculturalism, the cynical conclusion is too simplistic. Hinduism has a reputation for upholding liberal values, and Chapter 3 has indicated that the tradition has the resources to legitimise a liberal attitude. The problem is that this potential is not being realised.

The poor attitudes of young believers may be due to their not having been taught the liberal implications germane within the Hindu faith. Since in India religion cannot be taught in State schools, teaching the liberal implications of Hindu faith could only be carried out by parents or through the wider religious community. Were these mentors competent, or committed, to conduct such teaching? The data suggests not (§3.2.4). At worst, it may be that Vedāntic ideas are being distorted by perfidious influences. The high percentage of unwholesome responses from the 'religious' young Hindus may be due to the influence of distorted religious ideas.

4.2 Focus for the case-study investigations

The landscape data focused attention upon the following lines of enquiry for examination using a case-study method:

- a. What is a young Hindu individual's attitude towards multiculturalism.
- b. What relationship exists between the individual believer and traditional religious beliefs.
- c. Does religion exert a dominant influence upon the young believer.
- d. Is the relationship between the individual and his religion congruent with political liberalism.

The case-studies were organised in three parts:

In part one (§5) the focus was on the attitudes of the young Hindus towards the Hindu-Muslim problem situation.

In part two (§6) attention shifted to the understanding the young Hindus have of the Vedāntic God. Did their concept of God have an influence on their moral and political thinking? Here data will be presented around the central concept of ideal human motherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship.

In Part three (§7) ideas on Indian and Hindu identity were explored.

§5 The Case-Studies Part One: The Hindu-Muslim Situation

5.1 The methodology

5.1.1 Lines of enquiry

The following lines of enquiry were used to study attitudes relating to the Hindu-Muslim situation.

a. Resume of each young Hindu

With the help of child and parents a resume of each young Hindu was developed.

The format was:

Name, gender, d.o.b., age at time of research	Parental details
School record:	Father's occupation:
Hobbies:	Mother's occupation:
Ambitions:	Which party would the father vote for:
Does child consider himself/herself religious:	Which party would the mother vote for:
Which political party would youngster vote for if he/she could vote:	

In addition to the resume each young Hindu completed a simplified version of the Rokeach 'values ranking' survey²⁵ that was returned two months after the case-studies were otherwise completed. (The values survey and data are presented in §7).

b. Landscape survey of each young Hindu

Each case-study young Hindu completed the general landscape survey through conversation with the researcher. Their responses were tape-recorded and are extensively presented.

c. Interviews structured around Ayodhyā

To determine attitudes towards multiculturalism, a loosely structured interview method was used. Examination was limited to a consideration of the Hindu-Muslim situation.

The discussion was initiated by asking what the responders felt was the cause of the

traumatic riots of 1992-3. Such an emotive issue was chosen to bring out emotions that a more placid line of questioning might have failed to detect. Subsequently, the following issues were covered: problems associated with the Muslim presence in India; Muslim friends or possibility of such friendships; aspects of Muslim culture that India as a nation could learn from; and general attitudes towards the Muslim presence in India.

All interviews were conducted in English but participants were not obliged to respond in English, since their mother tongue was known to the researcher. All members of the household above the age of twelve were interviewed. After the initial interview session, the elder members of the household were not required to contribute further but often so did. Notes were made during the interview and the responses organised immediately thereafter. The summary of the responses was read to the responders at least one day after the interview to confirm an authentic representation of views. The time lapse also allowed subjects to reflect on their initial responses and change them if they wished.

In addition, the young Hindus were asked to imagine themselves on a pilgrimage to an unspecified religious centre and describe their feelings, hopes and thoughts while on such a visit. A BBC world broadcast on the demolition of the Ayodhyā masjid was then shown to represent what they were confronted with on arrival at the pilgrimage centre. Their feelings and attitudes towards the proceedings were noted using the standard interview procedure.

Before turning to the case-study data, some comments are given concerning

- (i) composition of the sample and the researcher's relationship to sample members and
- (ii) limitations of sample size.

5.1.2 Introductory comments

5.1.2.1 Sample composition and the researcher's relationship to sample members

The researcher began his work intending to pursue twelve case-studies in total. All these young Hindus were from the Anāvil Brahmin community.²⁶ Moreover, all came from religious families, so making it possible to examine the influence of religion on social and political outlook.

However, after about a month the problems associated with a single researcher with limited time conducting twelve case-studies became overwhelming. Consequently sample size was reduced to six.

Two young Hindus from each of the age groups twelve, fourteen and sixteen/seventeen were then studied. However the data from the twelve year olds was totally unimpressive. Even after weeks of interaction the researcher was unable to gain the confidence and attention of these younger children who remained uninterested in the questions. Whatever they did say had little bearing on the issues. Moreover, their views seemed to vary from meeting to meeting in a manner the researcher found very frustrating. Unlike the older subjects, they were keen to get away from the interview. Since no coherent picture emerged, the twelve year olds were dropped from the case-study research and their contributions are not reported.

This left the below four young Hindus whose views are reported viz.:

Harshad: Male, 14 years

Nitin: Male, 14 years

Pushpa: Female, 16 years

Radha: Female, 17 years.

These young Hindus were bright, talkative and proved capable of producing interesting data over a span of three months. Total research 'contact time' with each young Hindu varied from 25-30 hours. Of this time only a sum total of 5 hours (maximum) was spent in a formal interview situation. The rest was spent in general conversations relating to the themes under investigation.²⁷ Although there was no fixed day of meeting, subjects were always given notice of at least one day.

Approximately an additional 30 hours were spent with each of the young Hindus in an informal context of watching Hindi movies, dining with the family, playing or watching cricket²⁸. These informal interactions proved invaluable in gaining the confidence of the subjects. Prolonged access was possible because the subjects lived in the same housing complex or 'society' as the researcher's grand-parents and other family members.

There are unique problems as well as opportunities posed by the researcher being a member of the community he is researching:

1) Care must be taken not to allow personal 'hidden agendas' (e.g. reluctance to present one's community in too bad a light, prejudices towards other communities, etc.) to influence either the selection of data presented or the conclusions. Though the researcher may be a mouthpiece for his or her people, it is inappropriate to act as their defence within an academic research context.

2) The researcher must resist considering himself a 'know it all'. The researcher must try to remain as sensitive as an outsider to the possibility of misunderstanding, stereotyping or portraying insensitively the subjects.

3) Membership of the community under study can work both ways in bringing forward an open response from the subjects. On the one hand, familiarity puts subjects at ease to express themselves fully. Alternatively, the subjects might have fears about the confidentiality of their responses. Care must be taken to reassure subjects that their views will not be made public within their own community, and concerning the greater public, their views will be presented with names changed.

5.1.2.2 An important note on sample size

It is acknowledged that a handful of case-studies is statistically not significant, and cannot generate enough data to make any inductive generalisations. Given that the sample was drawn from a population set of millions, a handful of (even) entirely unanimous case-studies²⁹ would not indicate reliably that a similar result would emerge from the next case-study.

Nevertheless, the researcher hopes that the case-studies will make a useful contribution to research on the following grounds:

1) Since the researcher was a member of the community researched he was able to juxtapose his limited findings aside his wider experience. In effect, he has been acquiring data on this community all his life, and he tried to bring this experience to bear upon his reflections. His sample did not contradict his wider experience.

2) The data was viewed aside the academic literature as well as respected publications such as *The Times of India* and *India Today*. This juxtaposition indicated to the researcher that he was focusing on important issues and not just 'barking up the wrong tree'. Hence the case-studies are presented as *illustrative* of a (suspected) wider trend, and not as sufficient evidence in themselves to show that such a trend exists.

3) A small sample set is still a part of the real world. Even if the problem situation is at present small scale, the problems may escalate and become significant for the greater world. Hence such situations must be investigated and findings presented.

4) Above all else, the data and conclusions are being presented tentatively. The researcher intends to accumulate both further data and the critique of scholars that will help in providing closer approximations to the truth. The researcher is trying to say something worthwhile upon which can be built progressively truer theoretical structures. Even four case-studies can contribute towards this perpetual process.

5.2 The case-study data

Conscious of the above limitations, the data from the four case-studies of Harshad, Nitin, Pushpa and Radha is now presented:

5.2.1 Harshad

a. Resume of Harshad

<p>Name, gender, d.o.b., age at time of research: Harshad, male, 1/3/80, 14.</p> <p>School record: Good.</p> <p>Hobbies: Cricket, films, funfairs.</p> <p>Ambitions: None.</p> <p>Does the young person consider himself/herself religious: No.</p> <p>Which political party would youngster vote for if he/she could vote: Doesn't care.</p>	<p>Parental details:</p> <p>Father's occupation: Doctor.</p> <p>Mother's occupation: School teacher.</p> <p>Which party would the father vote for: BJP.</p> <p>Which party would the mother vote for: BJP.</p>
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Data figure 6. Resume of Harshad

Harshad was an unexceptional fourteen year-old boy. He was fanatical about cricket and Hindi movies and found school work a chore. He thought it important to be ambitious but had not yet found his goal. Harshad did not claim to be religious and did not go to the temple unless under parental pressure. However he believed in God, enjoyed listening to religious stories, and prayed voluntarily in the morning and night. The ethical aspects of religion did not seem to feature much in his thoughts on God.

b. Landscape survey of Harshad

(Except for tittles, interviewer in normal print, subject in bold)

Religious questions

Belief in God

Do you believe in God? **Yes.** Do you think God can do anything? **Yes.** Do you think God knows everything? **Yes.** Do you think God is everywhere? **Not really.**

Belief in the soul

Do you believe in the soul? **Don't know.** Do you think people carry on being something after they die or is that the end? **Person carries on living somehow.** Do you believe in heaven and hell? **Don't know.** Do you believe in reincarnation? **Don't know.**

Encouragement to view multiculturalism as a good thing

Have you been taught in school to respect Muslims? **Yes, especially in the samaj shashtra (social studies) lessons. All the time it comes that India is a land of many religions.** Do people outside of school tell you to respect other religions? **Yes, in school they always teach us to remember this even outside of the school.** Yes, but do people who are not (your) teachers like your parents or others tell you to respect others? **No. My parents no. Father hates Muslims.** Do you think it is good that India has people of all religions? **Yes, Because all religion is religion.**

Taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts?

Has anyone taught you that being a good Hindu means respecting even Muslims? **Yes.** What did they teach you? **That all humans have religions and that we must respect them.** Who taught you? **In school.** Did they explain why? **No. But it is a school rule. If you say something against a Muslim then you are punished.** Are Muslims punished for saying bad things about Hindus? **Even if they do it we are punished.** Is that fair? **I don't want to be punished.** Yes, I understand but is it fair that Muslims are not punished? **Grandfather says they are not punished because Hindus are frightened they will make riot if they are punished. And that will be worse for all of us so they are not punished.** I see. Have religious people taught you that Muslims are God's children too? **No.** Have they taught you that they are just as important as you to God? **No.**

Optimism for the future of Multiculturalism

Do you think there will be peace in India between Hindus and Muslims? **Don't know.** Do you worry about it? **When there is trouble I worry but otherwise there is a Muslim community and we have Hindu society so they are different. But when there is trouble I worry.** Do you pray for peace? **When there is trouble I do yes.**

c. Harshad and family on Ayodhyā

Harshad was asked his views on Ayodhyā and the Hindu-Muslim situation. The wider family was interviewed separately. While the interviews were loosely structured, care was taken to ensure the following enquiries were made:

Enquiry	Harshad	Father	Mother	Grandmother	Grandfather
Perceived cause of Hindu-Muslim riots	Masjid.	Politics, Pakistan.	Masjid.	Cow slaughter, temples desecrated, rapes.	Politics, Pakistan.
Other problems associated with Muslim presence	No.	All social problems, overthrow of India.	No.	All problems, overthrow Hinduism.	All social problems.
Muslim friends	Never.	Never.	Possible.	Never.	Yes.
Anything to learn from Muslims	No.	Islam is a very noble religion.	Dedication to religion and loyalty to each other.	Dedication and loyalty.	Dedication, loyalty, courage.

Data figure 7. Harshad and family on Ayodhyā

Harshad was clear the Masjid issue had caused the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1992. Concerning the actual vandalism, Harshad said he would have felt little emotion had he

been there. He viewed the demolition as an act of retaliation and considered the Hindu vandals free from blame. Harshad's thinking on the Muslim presence in India was restricted to the Masjid demolition. He had no Muslim friends and no knowledge of Muslim culture; nor did care to learn. He considered friendship with a Muslim an impossibility and thought nothing could be learnt from the Muslim way of life.

Yet Harshad was not without redeeming features. He did not feel the Muslim presence in India was inherently bad. No doubt he sympathised with the vandals at Ayodhyā but he would not have joined in himself. Interestingly, he made a distinction between his religion and his politics:

The people who broke the Masjid did nothing wrong (pause) Rāma would have stopped them breaking the Masjid. He loves everyone so he doesn't want anyone to get hurt. But just because he loves them doesn't mean we have to (pause). But Rāma would not be happy with those who broke the Masjid [Harshad].

At this point the apparent inconsistency between his sympathy for the vandals and his devotion to Śrī-Rāma was pointed out to Harshad.³⁰ He was either unwilling or unable to articulate his argument further and it was debatable whether he had fully grasped the dichotomy. Regardless, Harshad had not reached the point of conceptually dehumanising the Muslim community. This was an achievement, considering some of the views of adults in his family.

The elders viewed Muslims as perpetrators of social evils from pick-pocketing to jeopardising national security. Suspicions of Pakistani attempts to destabilise India using a disruptive Muslim presence were a recurring theme. Harshad's father suggested that Indian Muslims, financed by Pakistan, deliberately goaded Hindus into aggression so as to present India in a bad light to the world media. Whatever the justification for such theories, they are widespread.³¹ While aware of political grievances, the women complained using a more 'religious' vocabulary. Muslims were accused of cow slaughter, disruption of temple services and rape of Hindu women. Whereas the father feared 'the overthrow of India', the grandmother spoke of the 'overthrow of Hinduism'.

As with Harshad himself, there were encouraging sentiments amidst the rancour. All the elders respected the religious dedication shown by Muslims and emphasised that their hostility was towards *Indian* Muslims, and not Islam.

The father respected the closely knit nature of Muslims societies, which not only stood united in the face of opposition, but also shared prosperity in good times. Islam was recognised as a noble religion capable of bringing out the best in man. ‘Indian Muslims’ he opined ‘are not considered as Muslims by the proper Muslims. They cannot maintain the standards of true Islamic culture and so they choose to live in a non-Muslim country’.

Harshad’s mother, while agreeing with her husband that Muslims contributed nothing to India, was not averse to the possibility of close friendship with individual Muslims. She did not associate Muslims with problems beyond Ayodhyā and felt that communal hostility was unfortunate for all.

When asked whether India would be better off had all Muslims willingly left at partition in 1948, the grandfather spoke of Indian Independence and a cherished friendship disrupted by partition. ‘Life is never that simple’ was his final answer. Grandfather noted the immense courage of Muslims during the Bombay riots. He also warmly recollected an entire Muslim family knelt down to pray amidst a platform of crowded commuters. During these conversations, the researcher found it hard to believe these same voices had earlier spoken so uncharitably about Muslims. Significantly, it was recollections of actual human contact, as opposed to stereotypes in the context of media hype, rhetoric or mass hysteria, that elicited the more encouraging sentiments. This is an obvious point but one whose significance is often ignored.

5.2.2 Nitin

a. Resume of Nitin

<p>Name, gender, d.o.b., age at time of research: Nitin, male, 20/9/79, 14. School record: Very good. Hobbies: Cricket, films, watching cricket and reading about cricket. Ambitions: Lawyer. Does the young person consider himself/herself religious: No. Which political party would youngster vote for if he/she could vote: BJP.</p>	<p>Parental details: Father’s occupation: Accountant. Mother’s occupation: Housework. Which party would the father vote for: BJP. Which party would the mother vote for: BJP.</p>
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Data figure 8. Resume of Nitin

Nitin was a very frenetic boy. On each of the five occasions I visited him he was either playing cricket, dancing out his favourite Hindi film songs or asleep from exhaustion.

As the data will indicate, Nitin was an inconsistent person. Normally genteel, mention Muslims and Nitin became uncharacteristically aggressive.

b. Landscape survey of Nitin

Religious questions

Belief in God

Do you believe in God? **Sometimes. Yes I do but not like in pictures and like mum prays that otherwise God will do something. But I do think there is God.** Do you think God can do anything? **Yes.** Do you think God knows everything? **Yes.** Do you think God is everywhere? **I hope not but I don't understand.** Do you think God is next to us now? **He is watching us but not actually here.**

Belief in the soul

Do you believe in the soul? **Don't know.** Do you think people carry on being something after they die or is that the end? **Don't know.** Do you believe in heaven and hell? **No.** Do you believe in reincarnation? **Don't know.**

Encouragement to view multiculturalism as a good thing

Have you been taught in school to respect Muslims? **In school they will teach us these things. That Taj Mahal is made by Muslims and how much Indian culture is because of Muslim.** Yes but have they told you to care about Muslims and treat them properly? **They do keep saying that we should not fight each other because we are all brothers and Indians.** Do you agree with them? **To me it sounds like they just don't want trouble in the school so they tell us these things. Because I know one teacher is B.J.P. but he tells us how good is Muslims for India.** Do people outside of school tell you to respect other religion? **Nobody.** Do people who are not teachers, like your parents or others, tell you to respect others? **Yes, my parents say don't say bad things about Muslims when you go to Bombay otherwise they will beat you. When I saw the film 'Bombay' I was afraid that Muslims would hurt us all. I don't like the look of them.** Do you think it is good that India has people of all religions? **Yes.** Do Muslims make India a better place? **No.**

Taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

Has anyone taught you that being a good Hindu means respecting even Muslims? **Yes, in school they say that.** What did they say? **Same thing.** Have religious people taught you that Muslims are God's children too? **Yes, Muslims keep saying that. But they don't treat us like we are God's children so they are full of lies.** Has a Hindu person, not in school, taught you that Muslims and Hindus are both the same to God? **No, but Muslims keep saying that to stop us from doing anything to them.**

Optimism for the future of Multiculturalism

Do you think there will be peace in India between Hindus and Muslims? **(Aggressive ramblings)** . . . **No.** Do you worry about it? **Muslims will take over India.** Do you pray for peace? **I don't pray like sister or mum and dad.** If you did pray would you ask for peace in India? **Yes, of course.** Would you ask for peace for the Muslims? **If they behave of course there is peace. They cause the trouble.** But do you think trouble will happen again? (asked twice). **Shrugged shoulders both times.**

c. Nitin and parents on Ayodhyā

These responses are reported, along with those of sister Pushpa, under §5.2.3.c.

5.2.3 Pushpa (elder sister of Nitin)

a. Resume of Pushpa

<p>Name, gender, d.o.b., age at time of research: Pushpa, female, 5/2/78, 16.</p> <p>School record: Very good.</p> <p>Hobbies: Cooking, watching Indian cricket, films, film songs and fashion.</p> <p>Ambitions: Clothes designer.</p> <p>Does the young person consider himself/herself religious: Yes, tries to be.</p> <p>Which political party would youngster vote for if he/she could vote: None.</p>	<p>Parental details:</p> <p>Father's occupation: Accountant.</p> <p>Mother's occupation: Housework.</p> <p>Which party would the father vote for: BJP.</p> <p>Which party would the mother vote for: BJP.</p>
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Data figure 9. Resume of Pushpa

There was a dignity to Pushpa that was almost intimidating. She was beautiful, bright and at ease with her excellence. Unlike her brother Nitin, she did not allow her contempt for Muslims to unsettle her in the slightest. The important things in her life were looking after Nitin and finding a husband who would do her justice. She was more like a mother to Nitin than a sister.

b. Landscape survey of Pushpa

Religious questions

Belief in God

Do you believe in God? **Yes.** Do you think God can do anything? **Yes.** Do you think God knows everything? **Yes.** Do you think God is everywhere? **Yes.**

Belief in the soul

Do you believe in the soul? **Yes.** Do you think people carry on being something after they die or is that the end? **Yes, they carry on.** Do you believe in heaven and hell? **In heaven, but not hell (ramblings about hell).** Do you believe in reincarnation? **Yes.**

Encouragement to view multiculturalism as a good thing

Have you been taught in school to respect Muslims? **Yes.** What did they tell you? **After the trouble in Bombay they kept on saying that India is a land for all religion and that we must not let those thoughts be in school. Which thought? Like the riots and everything.** Do people outside of school tell you to respect other religions? **No.** Do your family or leaders at the temple or katha tell you to respect Muslims? **In katha they don't say it like 'don't respect Muslims' but they will tell you that we must defend Hinduism so we know who they mean. Who do they mean? They don't say Muslims but we can understand. Anyway afterwards when there is prasad and everyone talks, if somebody older talks about Muslims it is not pleasant talk. Everybody knows they (Muslims) are trouble makers.** Do you think it is good that India has people of all religions? **Well there can be all religion but it should be Hindusthan.**

Taught the liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

Has anyone taught you that being a good Hindu means respecting even Muslims? **No.** Have religious people taught you that Muslims are God's children too? **No.** Have they taught you that they are just as important as you to God? **No.** Do you think that as a Hindu you should respect Muslims? **No.**

Optimism for the fate of Multiculturalism

Do you think there will be peace in India between Hindu and Muslims? **Not unless it is Hindusthan and we can have peace.** Do you worry about it? **No.** How can we worry in our own land? Do you pray for peace? **Yes.**

c. Nitin, Pushpa and parents on Ayodhyā

Enquiry	Nitin	Pushpa	Father	Mother
Perceived cause of Hindu-Muslim riots	Hindus couldn't let Muslims do as they liked in India, Hindus fight back.	Muslims always making trouble, Hindus fed up.	Pakistan wanting to destroy peace in India.	Masjid issue, Muslim jealousy towards Hindus in India, attempts to ruin India, Hindu frustration.
Other problems associated with Muslim presence	They hate Hindus.	Alcohol trade, street violence, rape.	No.	All of society's problems.
Muslim friends	Never, hatred for Muslims too strong.	No.	Yes, why not?	Impossible.
Anything to learn from Muslims	How to hate people, nothing good to learn from them.	Nothing except how to defend our religion.	Dedication and courage.	Modesty of their women, courage.

Data figure 10. Nitin, Pushpa, and parents on Ayodhyā

In contrast to Harshad's lethargic indifference, Nitin's views were remarkably animated. Nitin despised Muslims. Muslims had 'pushed Indians around for too long' and it was time for 'Hindus to stick up for themselves'. As far as he was concerned, Muslims were a callous people who were leading India to total disaster. Nitin was proud that he had no Muslim friends. Imagining himself at Ayodhyā, he said:

I would have felt happy that the Muslims had been taught a lesson . . . I would have joined in and if Rāma had been there He would have helped destroy the Masjid as well. Hanumān destroyed Lanka so war isn't always wrong [Nitin].

Unlike Harshad, Nitin had integrated his religion and politics into a coherently malicious vision. He felt that what had happened at Ayodhyā was right, and God most definitely endorsed the event. Nitin's sister Pushpa took an almost equally hostile stance:

India is our country and nothing will ever change that. I don't care what happens . . . India will always be Hindustan (land of the Hindus) [Pushpa].

Like her younger brother she regarded Muslims as intolerable trouble makers. The only thing to learn from such a 'selfish people' was how to defend against the all the odds.

However, Pushpa did differ from her brother in one respect. She displayed an aristocratic determination to remain aloof from the plebeian cycle of hatred and retaliation, i.e. Pakistani cruelty towards Hindus in Pakistan should not be paralleled by Hindu cruelty towards Muslims in India. Nevertheless, she was sure that in case of a holy war, Hindus could count on God's support.

Pushpa and Nitin's mother could see little good in the Muslim community, except for the modesty of their women. However, father expressed a far more sensitive attitude. He suggested that about 90 percent of the Muslim community are uneducated slum dwellers, and that in India petty crime, the illicit liquor trade, gambling and prostitution are monopolised by these 'under-classes', be they Hindu, Muslim or otherwise. It was poverty, not Islam, that drove these unfortunates to crime. Unlike Harshad's parents, he viewed Muslims as victims rather than offenders. Even his views regarding the stereotype of Indian Muslims as allied to Pakistan were compassionate:

You see the common man is not concerned about politics or national allegiance. He feels a little bit desperate. It doesn't really matter to him what you want to call him . . . anyhow he is poor and he wants to improve his lot. If he can't have that then at least he wants to feel good about himself. Be proud of who he is. You mark this point. Actually in India he is nothing . . . maybe even a failure. We call them 'Mias' not even Muslims. You mark this point . . . But in Pakistan, not the real Pakistan but the great Islamic state they (Muslim leaders) tell him about there he is Muslim - somebody better than the next man. It is natural. These people are the ones manipulated by Pakistan to feel separate or different from their Hindu brothers and sisters. You mark this point. If you are different you are better and they want to feel better. I don't think the common man has any hatred for Hindus. He doesn't care about all this. He just wants to get on with his life. What good will it do him to hurt Bharat (a nostalgic reference to India)? He also has to live here!³² It is the politicians who raise these ill feelings and most of us don't care to stop their fears . . . I don't know why. There are so many Hindus why can't we take care properly of a few Muslims? We should do the necessary to stop their fear but instead we support those who make it worse [Nitin's father].

There was disappointment in his conversation. Muslims turning to India's enemy for a sense of self-respect represented a failure on India's part to achieve a successful integration. Nitin's father also had little time for the 'Hindurashtra' propaganda and fervour that was sweeping across Gujarat. A deeply religious man, he resented that Hindu pride had been reduced to a hatred for Muslims. He regretted that no one seemed concerned that the Hindu tradition was under internal threat from an ever increasing materialistic ethos. No one went to the temple, prayed regularly or read the sacred texts. 'Hate Muslims', he lamented, 'and you are a good Hindu'.

Despite his sympathy, he had lost hope that integration could be achieved. Though Muslims were not to blame, their presence was disruptive to the 'spirit of India'. Muslims were a frustrated people in a country growing increasingly insensitive to their plight. Such circumstances were bound to force them into crime and other undesirable activities. Moreover, though Father emphasised that Indian Muslims must be treated fairly, he still felt (with regret) that it might have been best for everyone if all Muslims had willingly left India at the time of partition. Then, instead of unfairly blaming Muslims all the time, Hindus might have begun to tackle their own decline.

5.2.4 Radha

a. Resume of Radha

Name, gender, d.o.b., age at time of research: Radha, female, 9 /3 /77, 17.	Parental details: Father's occupation: Accountant.
School record: Very good.	Mother's occupation: Housework.
Hobbies: Hindi films.	Which party would the father vote for: No comment.
Ambitions: Architect.	Which party would the mother vote for: BJP.
Does the young person consider himself/herself religious: Yes.	
Which political party would youngster vote for if he/she could vote: BJP.	

Data figure 11. Resume of Radha

Radha was a young lady capable of serious theological reflection. She was a religious girl who dutifully accompanied her mother to the temple and religious discourses. She was the only one in the study who read the *Bhagavadgītā* daily, though in a simplified vernacular. She had decided to become an architect since 'chances are more for women to come up these days in the professional line'.

b. Landscape survey of Radha

Religious questions

Belief in God

Do you believe in God? **Yes.** Do you think God can do anything? **Yes.** Do you think God knows everything? **Yes.** Do you think God is everywhere? **Yes.**

Belief in the soul

Do you believe in the soul? **Yes.** Do you think people carry on being something after they die or is that the end? **Lives on (ramblings).** Do you believe in heaven and hell? **Yes, both (pause).** Do you believe in reincarnation? **Of course.**

Encouragement to view multiculturalism as a good thing

Have you been taught in school to respect Muslims? **Sometimes, but not proper lessons.** What do you mean? **Not a lesson respect Muslims in (with) a test. But if there is a fight or something then teachers will talk like that.** Talk like what? **Well one boy put up a B.J.P. poster in the**

classroom and the teacher made so much trouble about it. What do you mean? Teacher wanted to know who put up the poster. Did the boy admit? No, because he knows that the school will punish him. What did the other children say? They agree with the boy but they don't want it (the poster) because it can bring fighting maybe in school. Were there any Muslims in the class when he put up the poster? There are Muslims in the class but they kept quite. Do you think he should have put up the poster? Yes. The poster is saying India should be a united country but because it is B.J.P. it is not allowed. Is any political poster allowed? I don't know but always there are slogans in the playground anyway. Posters? No paint and writing. Do you think it is good that India has people of all religions? Yes, all the people are worshipping God. Is it good there are Muslims in India? Yes. There are good people also in Muslim and bad people in Hindu. All is good and bad.

Liberal implications of Vedāntic concepts

Has anyone taught you that being a good Hindu means respecting even Muslims? Yes. What did they teach you? God is in all religions. Who taught you? In song 'ek desa' (lit. One country). Have religious people taught you that Muslims are God's children too? I don't know. What do you mean you don't know? Well maybe, but I get bored and can't always listen. Have your parents taught you to have good feelings to Muslims? No. Have they encouraged you to have bad feelings? No response.

Optimism for the future of Multiculturalism

Do you think there will be peace in India between Hindu and Muslims? Who knows. Do you worry about it? I worry about people in the riots who suffer. My friend is Muslim so she is still worried because she is afraid it will all happen again. But I do not worry. Do you pray for peace? Now there is peace. Yes. but then during riots did you pray? Yes, then.

c. Radha and family on Ayodhyā

Enquiry	Radha	Father	Mother
Perceived cause of Hindu-Muslim riots	Masjid, not really justifiable but quite understandable.	Politicians after votes, maybe Pakistan.	Masjid (justified) and rape.
Other problems associated with Muslim presence	Not sure, maybe a lot of prostitution and alcohol trade.	Who knows.	Gambling, hatred of Hindus.
Muslim friends	Once but now difficult after Ayodhyā.	No, but possible.	No, but possible.
Anything to learn from Muslims.	Don't know.	Dedication and courage.	Loyalty to each other, modesty of their women.

Data figure 12. Radha and family on Ayodhyā

Like the family before, we have here a young Hindu nurtured by a mother who derides Muslims and a father who keeps an open mind. Unlike Nitin or Pushpa, Radha held no grudge against Muslims and regretted their suffering. She also regretted that recent tensions in Bombay made it difficult to maintain friendships with a Muslim classmate - contact was limited as a result of maternal pressure. Of all the young Hindus, Radha was the one most indifferent to the recent communal troubles. She felt that there was always some crisis in India, and now it happened to be the Muslim problem. She did not attach much importance to this, and was confident it would soon pass.

Like the other adult males, Radha's father saw the present communal tensions in the context of the partition. He recalled the mood of Independence and of a Hindu

majority committed to the ideal of liberal multiculturalism. Those Muslims who chose to stay in India had made their loyalties clear and had been treated with affection and respect. Special quotas were assigned and every effort was made to make Muslims feel at ease:

Look in the history books and you will find many Muslims risen to positions of power. Even today the captain of the Indian cricket is a Muslim.³³ Can you find such opportunity for Hindus in Pakistan? In India all Muslims were treated with good will - there was not always this hatred. But in Pakistan our people were never welcomed. No, and it has always been like that there [Radha's father].

Father felt that Indian Muslims were ungrateful and opportunist. Instead of appreciation, Hindu assistance to the Muslim minority had fostered an attitude of Muslim exclusivism and elitism. Radha's father felt Muslims regarded themselves as better than their Hindu compatriots:

We wanted them to mix but they were never so interested after partition. Any how now recently it has got worse. We respect their prayers but why must they disturb everyone with the loudspeakers? and why must they say the prayers in Arabic? If they told out 'Bhagavan tum mahan' God you are great who would disagree? Is it a sin to speak in the local language? But they deliberately say in a foreign language. We are different you see - that they want to establish. And that too after all the understanding we have shown them [Radha's father].

Feelings of being betrayed or abused dominated his opinion of the Muslim community. Hindus had supported multiculturalism, but Muslims had exploited this goodwill for their own communal advancement.

It is acknowledged that the above are the views of only four young Hindus and three families. Nevertheless, the data is consistent with the findings of the 1994 landscape survey that indicates a less than ideal Hindu attitude towards the Muslim presence. What remains to be seen is whether the young Hindus' understanding of their religious tradition has any bearing upon the character of their illiberal sentiments.

In the following section, an attempt was made to understand the conception of God held by the youngsters, and how this conception was related to moral and political outlooks regarding pluralism.

§ 6 The Case-Studies Part Two: Use of Metaphor to Probe Theological Understanding

The second part of the case-studies sought to determine the relationship between the religious beliefs of the young Hindus and their attitudes regarding the multicultural situation. Were religious beliefs congruent with liberal ideas that can be found in traditional Hindu theology (Chapter 3)? How did religious beliefs influence attitudes

towards multiculturalism? These questions were explored through the young Hindus' understanding of, and extent of agreement with, the following analogy:

Ideal human mother:child :: God:human beings.

6.1 The legitimacy of the mother metaphor

Before presenting the empirical work, theological documentation is given that traces the development of the maternal (and to some extent paternal) metaphor as a description for the relationship between God and humankind.

6.1.1 To represent the Godhead³⁴

In the Vedas, while God is often depicted as masculine or neuter, there are references to creation being produced by a couple. Of the progenitors, heaven is male and the earth or the perpetual dawn of creation, female:

From Him was born the Shining One. Hiranyagarbha.
And from that took birth again the Cosmic Person.
As soon as born. He stretched out all over the earth.
And beyond it. and both behind and before.³⁵

The two. Heaven and Earth . . . nurture varied creatures . . . Like parents nursing their children clasping them to their bosom. O Heaven and Earth protect us from peril and suffering.³⁶

. . . I am the son of the Earth. and she my true mother.
And Parjanya my supreme father . . .³⁷

Many were those days which were before the rising of the sun. in which thou. O Dawn. wert seen as if moving about thy lover and not coming again.³⁸

. . . putting off the darkness like a black woven robe. as a young maiden garbed in light. this bride of the luminous lord of beatitude unveils the splendours of her bosom. reveals her shining limbs and makes the Sun ascend upon the upclimbing tier of the worlds.³⁹

The male and female divinities have different moral characteristics. For example, the *Puruṣa Sūkta* (describing a male Divinity) emphasises the majestic grandeur of the Supreme Being. Reference to moral qualities is absent. The *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta* (also describing male Divinity) is more forthcoming, yet the moral characterisation is stern and austere. The Supreme Being is 'sustainer of the earth'⁴⁰, 'whose shadow is immortality as also death'⁴¹, 'who by his grandeur has assumed sovereignty'⁴², 'who is the master of the human and animal worlds'⁴³, and to whom mankind prays: 'May he not injure us whose laws are abiding and true . . . May we be the master of manifold treasures'⁴⁴.

Compare the above with the *Prthvi Sūkta*. Here mother earth is 'endowed with varied healing powers'⁴⁵, 'sustaining mother of all'⁴⁶, 'golden-breasted'⁴⁷, 'wide-bosomed and all giving'⁴⁸ and shedding 'luminous grace'⁴⁹, 'of many streams'⁵⁰ that 'pour out the

life-giving milk for us even as a mother does for her children'⁵¹, one 'whose aroma speaks through the charm of women, and invariably invigorates men'⁵², a 'purifying mother'⁵³, delicate and of 'subtle heart'⁵⁴. Even in these early verses, this maternal aspect is associated with an attitude of universal reconciliation. The enemy is not sought to be crushed. Instead the plea is 'let no enemy ever bear hatred for us'⁵⁵. These are inklings of a universal spirit of good will, or at least a sense of live and let live:

The Earth that bears alike the snake and the scorpion⁵⁶.

It is in the Earth that the opposite phenomena
Like night and day get inscrutably associated;
May she, fed by the life-giving waters,
Graciously help each one in its proper play.⁵⁷

O Goddess, Mother of all, maker of many races
That live across your vast stretches, O Earth,
Grant all our prayers, May the lord of all,

The Right-incarnate, furnish you all that you may need.⁵⁸

The Sūktas praising the masculine divinity emphasise strength, sovereignty and justice. The Sūkta speaking of the feminine divinity emphasises compassion and 'subtlety of heart'. Vedic seers respected both aspects. Though they understood the various divinities as aspects of the One⁵⁹, they fell short of fusing both masculine and feminine aspects into one perfect moral character. In the Upaniṣads there are indications that the seers appreciated that the male character without the feminine complement was incomplete:

In the beginning this (world) was only the self, in the shape of a person. Looking around he saw nothing else than the self . . .⁶⁰

He, verily, had no delight. Therefore he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in close embrace . . .⁶¹

The singular male Divinity is dissatisfied. That such a male Divinity feels compelled to assume the form of 'a man and woman in close embrace' indicates that the fullness of the Divine character requires companionship with the feminine aspect.⁶²

The next stage of moral evolution can be modelled as the recognition of not only the need for the association of masculine and feminine traits but also the conception of their fusion into one moral personality in which the masculine and feminine virtues can be distinguished but not separated. The Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition of Rāmānujācārya has realised just such a conception. Though the Supreme Being is a male, His character is

not uni-dimensionally masculine, and certainly not 'macho'. Lipner's distinction between 'maleness' and 'masculinity' is apposite:

Is not the supernal form's theological appeal weakened . . . since the heavenly form is described as male!

. . . But there is a mitigating consideration where this form's apparent maleness is concerned, a consideration which in the first instance devolves round the distinction between 'maleness' and 'masculinity'. If we subject Rāmānuja's description to scrutiny we shall see that the supernal form, in being deliberately and sensitively made to conform to the Hindu aesthetic ideal of man, tends towards androgyny. In other words it tends to harmonise male and female characteristics. On the one hand, it is described as 'having muscular, rounded and long arms' and as being 'broad chested'; on the other, it is said to have 'large eyes, spotless as the petals of a lotus', to be 'lovely browed' 'with cheeks radiant and tender' and 'delicate as the smile of a flower'. . . . Thus, through its androgynous character, the supernal form becomes a transparent symbol of the *imago dei* that the man is, rather than a tribute to male chauvinism.⁶³

Hindu iconography is an aesthetic vision and a focus for meditation and guidance. This indicates that Lipner's observations on aesthetic androgyny can be extrapolated to the moral composition of the Divine character. The tradition of Viśiṣṭādvaita believes that God is androgynous regarding His moral character. The masculine quality of justice is fused with feminine compassion that springs from love. The tradition represents this fusion by insisting that the Goddess Śrī⁶⁴ is forever associated with God. Where there is Nārāyaṇa the Supreme Lord there is Śrī, the embodiment of unconditional love (hence Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī-Rāma, Śrī-Viṣṇu). This unconditional love characteristic of Śrī is not contrary to the essential moral character of God. Goddess Śrī does not correct or revolutionise the Divine character, rather she brings out what is best within Her Lord. The description of Goddess Śrī as '*bhagavanāyāyaṇa-abhimatānarūpa*'⁶⁵, or having a form appropriate to God (Nārāyaṇa), emphasises that all the feminine virtues are already dormant in God:

abhimata - most agreeable or dear since the form conforms to His wish (*icchā parigrihitam*);

anurūpa - by showing off all His divine qualities . . .⁶⁶

. . . Śrī and Nārāyaṇa form an ideal and inseparable couple . . . He is identified as Śrīyāhpati (Lord of Śrī) and she is Viṣṇupatni. They are fitting partners in all respects. Recall the sentence "*rāghavorhati vāḍehi tam ceyam asitekṣanam*" - Sīta deserves (befits) Rāma in all respects and He also (deserves) this dark-eyed damsel . . . Both befit each other in every respect. . . . (This applies to) beauty of form . . . and . . . desirable natural qualities like love, affection, accessibility and the like.⁶⁷

Of all the 'feminine' qualities, Rāmānujācārya and his spiritual descendants (Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas) have placed great emphasis upon the virtue of *vātsalya*. As Carman's perspicacity reveals, *vātsalya* goes beyond a calculated forgiveness to a state of unconditional love which subordinates the sterner aspects of the Divine character:

... there is something even more important here than the ignoring of the sin of the creature: there is the forgetting of the sinless perfection of the Creator and Judge.⁶⁸

God is a god of justice, but this retributive aspect is subordinated by a sense of care and intense attachment towards (even) the sinner. The metaphor of a cow attending to her errant calf conveys this vividly:

“Will God speak ill of the defect of His devotee? [No. He] is like the cow that likes [to lick {and hence heal}] the wounded part of the calf.⁶⁹

Though God has been acquainted with his *śaraṅāgatas* (those who have taken refuge with Him) for a long time, for some reason He wanders about (seeking to do some favour for His devotees) like a cow that has just delivered a calf, bellowing because her teats are irritated by the fullness of her udders and perplexed as to what she should do [because her calf is absent]. This state of God is known even in the case of Rāvaṇa.⁷⁰

Parāśarabhaṭṭar tells us that God relates to human beings as a mother to her child, i.e. mother:child :: God:universe. The mother is not simply any mother, but the perfect mother. Hence the metaphor evokes the sentiments of unconditional love, forgiveness, welcome, courtesy, comfort and the need of a mother to have a child to love.⁷¹

The Purāṇas complement this characterisation through a narrative of androgynous child-birth. The Supreme Being lies in celestial slumber upon His serpent couch. From the navel of Nārāyaṇa, literally ‘He within whom the universe rests’, springs a lotus from whose stem is born the first being Brahma. Brahma then orchestrates all other beings into existence. The stem is never cut, and should the universes go inextricably astray Nārāyaṇa retrieves the souls and universes through the floral umbilical chord before imposing a deluge. With each out-going breath the worlds are released (*śṛṣṭi*) and with each in-going breath the worlds are absorbed (*pralaya*). And so on and on.

The principle of the Supreme as both the efficient and material cause is not compromised (Chapter 3 §3.1-2). Emphasising the cyclic nature of the world process, as opposed to the terminal implications of the sacrificial act (§3.1), prioritises the patience of redemptive grace. Even the most incorrigible universe is not destroyed but returned to the womb for a rejuvenating rest followed by a relatively fresh start.⁷²

6.1.2 To probe understanding of the maternal aspect of God

The preceding has emphasised the maternal aspect of the morally androgynous Supreme Being. However, moral androgyny is a complex and difficult concept. Working up to it with the young Hindus may require the following intermediate steps, which themselves parallel the evolution of the concept of moral androgyny:

(i) Like the Vedic seers, the young Hindus may find it easier to relate to the maternal virtues in the context of a feminine personality. Hence it may be best to approach the androgynous ideal indirectly through an explicitly feminine character.

(ii) This feminine character must be one with which the young Hindus are familiar.

(iii) A further complication relates to the normative status of behaviour that is guided by the ideal feminine virtues of motherhood. For example, it could be argued that the Supreme Being may be capable of unconditional love, but it is unreasonable to expect a finite soul to adopt such a perspective. A finite feminine individual, exhibiting even when under duress the motherly qualities, would set an ideal human example.

(iv) Any metaphor can be strained to yield heretical or inappropriate connotations. A community of usage checks such abuse and the risk is further reduced by using together metaphorical and formal modes of discourse. Formal components provide centripetal forces that restrict the imagination while still permitting the dilation of our viewpoint in the required directions.

The use of a particular narrative involving Sītā, an incarnation of Goddess Śrī and wife of Śrī-Rāma, incorporates the above requirements to provide a probe into the young Hindus' understanding of the maternal aspects of the Divine character. The grounds for using this probe are:

(i) Sītā is routinely associated in Hindu society with the ideal of perfect womanhood. She is set as an example of the perfect daughter, the perfect wife and the perfect mother. In each aspect she is delicate, kind and forgiving - the epitome of the *saubhāgya* virtues. Mention Sītā and the *saubhāgya* qualities come to mind; mention her aside Rāma and her feminine demeanour immediately illuminates the compassionate side of Her Lord.

(ii) The moral psychology and conduct of Sītā is described in the classical Sanskrit work, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. In north India, more or less the same content is relayed in the *Rāmcaritmānas* of Tulsidās Gosvāmi. *Rāmcaritmānas* is an immensely popular text. FS Growse says it is 'the best and most trustworthy guide to the popular living faith'⁷³. The Gītā Press Gorakhpur alone has issued over five and a half million copies, with two hundred thousand printed in 1983.⁷⁴ In modern times, its influence has been boosted through multi-media with around eighty million viewers for

popular televised episodes⁷⁵. Children's bed time cassettes are also available. Young Hindus are familiar with Sītā.

(iii) Sītā is a manifestation of the Lord's creation or *prakṛti*. Though perfectly divine, she is nonetheless a finite soul. As such, she and her actions stand as a realistic exemplar for all humans to emulate. While in the past, this has generally been in the context of ideal wife-hood, it is legitimate to emphasise Her exemplary excellence in other contexts of forgiveness, patience, etc.

(iv) The narrative episode used to highlight the maternal qualities of the Divinity contains not only the affective picture of mother Sītā but also a clear and precise narrative that insists upon the normative status of the gentler virtues. Assessing the response of young Hindus to Sītā's counsel would provide an indication of their acceptance of the maternal and egalitarian character of God. Hence the Sītā narrative, through a combination of metaphor and formal language, was used to stimulate thinking and subsequently probe into the following relationships:

Ideal mother : child	Ideal mother : child :: God : world	Liberal corollary
Children come from Mother who is material and efficient cause.	Universe comes from God who is material and efficient cause.	Regard all humans as siblings.
Mother views each of her children as equally and immensely important.	Sītā teaches that (i) God views each part of the universe as equally and immensely important.	Look upon all humans with equal and immense sympathy.
Mother reassures each child of her unconditional love. Motherhood is perhaps the only relationship of unconditional love to which the secular experience has access.	(ii) God reassures the universe of His unconditional love.	Try and love fellow man unconditionally and avoid misanthropy at all costs.

Figure 16. Human motherhood as a suitable analogue for God-human relationship

6.2 Methodology

6.2.1 Motherhood

6.2.1.a. Understanding of human motherhood

Part two of the empirical research seeks to investigate if and how the case-study young Hindus were relating to the model of God as Mother.

The first stage was to assess what the young Hindus' understood by the ideal of human motherhood. Did their understanding of human motherhood approximate to the idealised mother base as used in the metaphor? Or was the ideal mother a concept so

alien to the experience of young Hindus as to be of no co-relative value regarding God-talk?

Loosely structured interviews were conducted asking the young Hindus if they associated with their mother the following characteristics:

- a. Do you think of your mother as that person from whom you came?
- b. Do you think of your mother as loving you even if you are bad?
- c. Do you think of your mother as loving all her children equally?
- d. Do you think your mother would be unhappy if you did not get along with your brother/ sister?
- e. Does your mother influence how you get on with your brother/ sister?

Young Hindus were also asked about the nature of their inter-sibling relationship and if they considered this relationship to be an incontestable one.

6.2.1.b. Acceptance of ideal motherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship

The second stage explored whether young Hindus considered ideal human motherhood an appropriate metaphor to model God:human relations. Young Hindus were narrated a modified version of the familiar story of Hanumān's visit to Sītā while she was being held captive in Rāvana's garden.⁷⁶ An open ended discussion followed on their understanding of the story. The story is relayed in §6.3.1.b. Young Hindus were asked which of the characteristics of ideal human motherhood they associated with God. The following questions were asked:

- a. Do you think all beings come from God?
- b. Do you think God loves even bad people?
- c. Do you think God loves all people equally?
- d. Do you think God is unhappy when people fight one another?
- e. Do you think (that if all people come from God) all human beings are brothers and sisters?
- f. Do you think all human beings are related to each other?

6.2.2 Fatherhood

6.2.2.a Understanding of human fatherhood

A direct line of questioning was conducted to determine views associated with human fatherhood.

6.2.2.b Acceptance of fatherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship

A direct line of questioning was adopted to see if young Hindus associated salient features of fatherhood with the Deity.

6.3 The Data

6.3.1 Motherhood

6.3.1.a Understanding of human motherhood

Mother as efficient and material cause

All the young Hindus knew that they had physically come from their mother (i.e. recognised mother as the material cause). However, the questioning into mother as the efficient cause resulted in confusion or embarrassment. These conversations are not reported.

Mother as impartial

All the young Hindus related to the traditional portrayal of the mother as equally disposed towards all her children. Despite resentment over temporary favouritism towards the other sibling (as with Harshad and Radha), all the young Hindus appreciated that they were all equally precious to their mother.

Motherhood and unconditional love

All the young Hindus understood that regardless of whether they were well behaved or not, mother loved them unconditionally. This love was generally in the context of the child as a passive recipient of maternal affections. A notable progression from this was expressed by Pushpa, who felt that love was a reciprocal process. When asked about a mother's unconditional love, she insisted that love cannot exist without reciprocation:

Maybe I might be bad, and then mum might still love me. But if you were bad, might she not love you? **Maybe she might not love me.** Your mother might stop loving you? **Well, not stop. But if I was always bad she might not be able to love me.** How do you mean? **(Silence).** What might you do, I mean what sort of thing might make your mother stop loving you? **No, she would always love me but I might not let her love me. Look. If I went away, or left her, how could she love me. Then, my mother might not be able to love me.** But if you came back, would she love you again? **Oh yes, She would always wait and wait for me. A mother is always a mother [Pushpa].**

Pushpa envisaged a situation where the child 'cold-shouldered' the mother, effectively making it impossible for the mother to continue to love the child. Pushpa emphasised that though it was meaningless to speak of 'love' in such a situation of estrangement, the mother would always wait patiently to resume relations.

Influence of the mother on inter-sibling relationship

The young Hindus were then asked about their inter-sibling relationship and the influence of mother upon that relationship. In particular, was mother upset when siblings did not get on with each other, and what import did mother's feelings have upon the issue? Here there were a range of responses.

Harshad was very aware his mother wanted him to be close to his brother. Harshad thought this was unfortunate, since he considered his four year old brother a nuisance. Tolerating him was an act of grace towards his mother.

In contrast, neither Nitin nor his sister Pushpa felt that their mother was concerned about how well the siblings got on. Interestingly, both Nitin and Pushpa had reformulated their sister-brother relationship into one of mother-son. Pushpa's maternal grandfather was often poor in health and required mother to take care of him at least 2 days every fortnight. During those periods of absence Pushpa assumed the role of mother. Appropriately, she thought it beneath herself to become involved in scraps with her brother and it seemed that unless they were physically fighting, their mother was unconcerned.

Radha's circumstances had given her a different perspective on her mother's concerns. Both her elder sisters were married and like most Indian wives, lived with their husband's family. Radha repeatedly emphasised that while her mother did not expect all three sisters to get along, she did consider it essential that they kept in touch with the parents and with each other:

How do you get on with your sisters? **I don't really.** You don't talk with them or do things with them? **Well, not really.** Why? **One of them lives in America and the other is an air hostess, so I don't really see much of them.** Did you see more of them when you were younger? **No, not really.** What is it like when you are all together, with your sisters? **Its O. K..** What do you feel when you see them? **I'm happy to see my sisters. Mum and Dad always say that Family should be together, and that's nice. Its very important for mum that at least at Diwali or Navaratri we can all be together. But even then we don't do much together. But its good that we should be together. That's the main thing, that we can be together sometimes.** Would you help if your sisters were in trouble? **Yes, of course they would help me. All of us would help each other. It doesn't matter if you get along with your sisters or not, you should always help each other in life [Radha].**

Many Hindu parents worry that 'pardesi'⁷⁷ marriages and job opportunities will find family ties disrupted. Radha was proud that despite physical dispersion her sisters were not giving her mother such worries.

All the sibling relationships exhibited a sense of duty to keep the family together. However, neither Harshad nor Radha seemed warmly inclined towards their siblings and the Nitin-Pushpa relationship was not a sibling relationship in the usual sense. Nevertheless, despite the lack of emotional interaction, all the young Hindus felt a sense of belonging to each other because of their maternal bond.

In summary:

Criteria	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
Mother as origin	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Mother's love for her children is unconditional	Yes.	Yes.	Potentially yes.	Yes.
All children equally valuable to mother	Yes.	Mother is closer to sister.	Yes.	Yes.
Mother is sad if siblings do not get along with each other well	Yes.	Not unless fighting.	No, might just ignore the situation.	Yes. very much so, but in terms of keeping in touch.
Quality of inter-sibling relationship	Brother (4) bit of a nuisance.	Sister (17) is more like a mother.	Treated brother like mother does.	Family unity but not personal affections.
Inter-sibling relationship seen as incontestable	Yes. duty.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. must keep in touch.

Data figure 13. Familiarity with the attributes of ideal motherhood

Concerning human motherhood, the young Hindus accept the idea of a being from whom we originate, and who loves unconditionally each of its offspring. Moreover, it is generally recognised that this love did put pressures on siblings to interact well with each other. Inter-sibling relationships were not based on pleasure or individual happiness, but on either a sensitivity towards maternal concerns or a sense of duty. The next enquiry was whether young Hindus accepted the analogue of ideal human motherhood as a legitimate representation of God's relationship with humankind.

6.3.1.b Acceptance of ideal motherhood as an analogue for God-human relationships

Did the young Hindus under study associate God with origins and unconditional love towards all humans? Correspondingly, did they view all humankind as ideally existing in a sibling relationship? Sentiments on these issues were teased out during a discussion on a passage adapted from the *Rāmāyaṇa* VI.116.38-43:

Hanumān has been looking all over Lanka for Sītā. Finally, he finds her imprisoned in Rāvana's garden. She is being tortured by Rāvana's witches. When Sītā hears from Hanumān that Rāma is well and will come to save her she asks the bearer of the good news what blessing he would like. Hanumān says he would like permission to give the ogresses a sound thrashing. Sītā refuses. She tells the bewildered Hanumān that nobody in this world is perfect, and God loves everyone equally. God

loves even ogresses, just as a mother loves the worst of her children. So, Hanumān should not be aggressive to them. She finally tells Hanumān that he should have the same charitable attitude towards even Rāvana.⁷⁸

Harshad, Pushpa and Nitin

Harshad was reluctant to entertain the idea of unconditional love. He did not dismiss Sītā's appeal for universal brotherhood but found the idea too demanding:

In this story, Sītā tells Hanumān he should love even the witches. Do you think Sītā is right to tell Hanumān this? **But she didn't tell Hanumān to love them. But he should not be cruel to them.** But she said that God loves them. **Who, the witches?** Yes. Sītā said God loves the witches like a mother loves all her children. **(Silence. Interest).** So if God loves everyone, so should we? **No. God loves everyone. But we don't have to.** Yes we do **(Look of total disagreement).** **Why should we love them?** Well, God wants us to love everyone like they were our brother. **But he is my brother (points to his brother). Not everybody is my brother. Nobody should get hurt, so we shouldn't fight.** Nothing more than that? No? No **[Harshad].**

Pushpa saw no profound ethical implication within the story, and saw in it only praise of Sītā's unswerving love for her husband:

What do you think is the main meaning of the story? **We should be patient like Sītā. Like Sītā? She is waiting for Rāma, isn't she.** Yes. **And while she is waiting, even Hanumān's help is not appreciated. Only her husband must save her, and she will wait until he comes for her.** What about Sītā's attitude towards the witches? **She tells Hanumān not to punish them. It doesn't matter to Sītā what the witches do to her. It doesn't matter, so she doesn't have any hatred to them. She is suffering because she is away from her husband and that is all she cares about [Pushpa].**

When it was pointed out that Sītā's emotions extended beyond indifference to goodwill to the ogresses, Pushpa became confused. Though the scripture might suggest such magnanimity, she (like Harshad) found herself unable to adopt the idea. Her brother, as usual, was more vociferous. If Sītā spoke of Śrī-Rāma as mother to all, and hence all loving, then she was misguided on both counts. Indeed, Nitin felt his judgement would not be lost on God Himself:

What do you think Sītā meant when she told Hanumān that God loves everyone just like a mother loves all her children? **I don't understand the story. What don't you understand? The witches and Rāvana are bad. Then God should punish them.** Imagine the witches are bad children and Rāma is their mother? **But Rāma is not their mother. Isn't God like everyone's mother? No.** But in this story, Sītā says God does love everyone, like a mother loves her children? **That's wrong. If people are cruel to you then God might not help you because He loves them too - God might think that because He loves them what they are doing is O. K [Nitin].**

Radha

Unlike the other young Hindus of the case-study, Radha's reflections on Sītā's advice were sophisticated and ultimately encouraging. She did not dispute that God's love knew no bounds. Nevertheless, experience had taught her that God had a strange way of showing His affection. God may love all equally but that might count for little in this life. Moreover, though God does love this world, He is under no obligation to maintain this position. He could, without any association of blame, turn his back on humankind. For Radha God was the Supreme autocrat and it was improper of humans to expect anything from Him:

Just because God made the world it doesn't mean he loves all of it or even any of it. I don't think God has to love the world. Do you think God could forget (i.e. pardon/ overlook) about how bad the world is? Yes, I don't think God thinks about how bad the world is. Maybe praying is like reminding God. Does God love all people equally. like maybe a mother loves all her children? Yes, it is like that. But you don't know who God likes, but He does like everyone, even bad people, but you can't know what God will do if he likes you and you can't say that He should love you [Radha].

Interestingly, although God was seen as the efficient cause of the universe, it was the purely human situation that motivated Radha's ethical theory. She found it ridiculous that one should follow a good ethics for the sake of God's sentiments:

Do you think God is unhappy when we humans fight each other. maybe like your mother might be sad if your sisters lost touch with each other. No, I don't think we can know what God thinks. But we should care for each other for our own sake. Who knows what God wants or doesn't. But we are brothers and sisters on this earth and that's why I think we should get along. God did make us all. And because we all come from him we are like sisters and brothers, but God's feelings, that's not why we should get on [Radha].

Radha felt that the unfathomable transcendence of God made Him indifferent to life on earth. However, despite this 'un-motherly' aloofness, Radha did relate Divine ancestry to a sense of human siblinghood. She was committed to a belief that all human beings were part of a continuum, and that this continuum had its foundations in a creator God. This became clear when she spoke of human nature as having physical and 'spiritual' components. The physical came from the parents, 'just as it had been explained in science years ago', but the important part (the soul) of a person came directly from God:

Mothers have to love you, but God doesn't have to love you just because he made you. What do you mean made you? (nervous pause) God gives the soul and without that the body has no strength. Is the soul with God before God gives it to a person? Yes. Is it actually a part of Him. like maybe inside Him? Yes. Does God do this for all people. take a bit of Him and put it inside them? Yes. Then God is inside everyone? Yes. So should we love everyone like our brothers and sisters because we all come from God? Yes, we should do. So is it like your sisters. you all come from your parents so you have to be close to each other? It is like my sisters. We don't really get along but we take care for each other and when we were younger we used to share our things.

So we should be like that with everyone. Maybe we don't have very much in common, but we must learn to get on with each other [Radha].

There is a parallel between her theological reflections and her characterisation of relationships across humankind. Because all souls originate from God, humankind should live, as siblings, without acrimony:

Do you think that if we did not all come from God we should still love each other? Well, it would be harder to see why. What do you mean? I don't really know why I would think so. Come on, there must be a reason why us all coming from God makes us special to each other? Yes. Well yes, we all started from the same place didn't we? But you could say that if there was no God and only evolution. No. Its not the same because (intermediate ramblings). That (evolution) would not mean we are destined to care for each other. What do you mean destined? Well, meant to love each other. If we came from God then things are meant to go well. Evolution wouldn't prove that would it? [Radha].

Radha is comfortable with the Viśiṣṭādvaitic vision of the universe as emerging from God and is capable of seeing its associated ethical ramifications: because we all come from God we are like brothers and sisters. Consistently, she:

- a. expressed a genuine sense of compassion towards the Muslim plight
- b. did not find loyalty towards her Hindu religion an inspiration for acrimony towards Muslims
- c. respected the ideal of pluralism and
- d. felt it to be a realistic objective.

On all these counts, when compared to either the other case-study young Hindus or the general survey (especially §3.2.3, §3.2.5), she is exceptional. At the root of her hopes is a belief that mankind's divine origins offer the potentiality for a coherent and prosperous human history. It may be of great relevance that Radha was also the most knowledgeable (theologically) of the young Hindus.

The summary of the findings relating to Motherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship is given below:

Criteria	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
God as immanent in all humans	God is only in good people, but all people are in God.	No, God is separate from man.	Not sure.	God in all people, good and bad.
God as origin	God gives strength to mother.	No.	Yes.	God gives the soul, rest as per science.
God's love for humans is unconditional	Yes (but insisted humans not obliged to follow His precedent).	No.	No (but later changed answer to 'yes'. Again, humans not obliged to follow His precedent).	Yes.
All humans equally valuable to God	Yes.	No.	No.	Yes.
God is sad if humans do not get along with each other well	No.	No.	No.	No.
All humans seen as siblings	No.	No.	No.	Yes.
Inter-human bonds seen as incontestable	No.	No.	No.	Yes.

Data figure 14. Motherhood as an analogue for the God-human relationship

It is disconcerting to see that only Harshad and Radha were committed to the idea of God as a caring and egalitarian mother. Only Radha saw a parallel between the theologically established unity of humankind and the sibling relationship across all peoples. Nitin and Pushpa rejected the idea of a universal mother, and both Harshad and Pushpa seemed antagonistic to the implications of Divine motherhood for inter-human ethics.

6.3.2 Fatherhood

Though the metaphor of God as mother holds a prominent place in the Vedāntic tradition, other metaphors are used to characterise the nature of God. Rāmānujācārya himself has referred to God not only as mother but also as father, guide and friend.⁷⁹ A complete investigation would involve scrutinising all these analogues for the God-human relationship. This Thesis restricted further work to the fatherhood metaphor. Indications of the development of this metaphor can be found in Chapter 3 §3 and note 48, and the present chapter, §6.1.1. One may also consider references to the celestial carpenter Viśvakarman who creates the universe and then acts as its instructor⁸⁰, or blacksmith Brahmaṇaspati who forged the universe into shape⁸¹.

However, limitations of time meant that the investigations concerning fatherhood were not conducted in as much depth as those on motherhood, and no story was used to stimulate the thinking of the young Hindus.

6.3.2.a Understanding of human fatherhood

As with motherhood, the first stage of examining the analogue of God as father was to see if youngsters related their real life parent with the traditional stereotypes.

The uncaring mother is a figure too diabolical to find a place in folklore, not so the stern, unforgiving and judgmental father. In some ways the young Hindus' conception of fatherhood was contrary to this stereotype. Concerning the principles of equality and unconditioned love, all the young Hindus felt that their human father was an even better approximation to that ideal than their mother. Both Nitin and Pushpa thought that father was more approachable than mother and Pushpa's sentiments highlighted that paternal stereotypes can be misleading:

If you felt you had a problem who would you talk it over with, mother or father? **Mother.** And if you had done something wrong? **If I was wrong, I wouldn't mention it to anyone. But if I talked about it to anyone it would be my father.** Your father? **Yes, I think so. Why? Mummy would never forgive me. She would always remind me of what I had done wrong and I would feel bad about it forever. Papa's not like that.** How would your dad treat you? **He'd probably think how to solve the problem first and then not want to talk about it again. He wouldn't make me feel as if he is really unhappy with me or (silence) Or what, what wouldn't your father make you feel (after 3 or 4 prompts)? Well he wouldn't make me feel bad about myself, make me feel less like his daughter.** And your mother might? **Yes, sometimes she does. Sometimes she makes me feel very ashamed to be with her [Pushpa].**

However, in some respects the young Hindus' views concerning their father were in accord with the stereotype. In all cases, father was head of the household, calm and collected as opposed to mother who was a 'worrier' rather than 'effective doer'.

Despite their dominance and greater competency, the fathers were less capable than mothers of establishing a sense of identity with their children. Radha spoke of father's innate inability to fulfil the functions of gestation and childbirth. Since only mothers can fulfil these functions, they have a unique right over their offspring:

Whose feelings are you more effected by, your mother's or your father's? **My mother's really.** Why do your mother's feelings matter to you more? **I suppose because its mothers who give you birth. Without your mother's care, even in the womb, before you're born she looks after you and so you belong more to your mum than your dad.** Belong more, what do you mean by that? **I think that mothers do more for you, so you have to give more back. You belong to them and you don't belong to anyone else like that until you get married [Radha].**

Harshad, Nitin and Pushpa shared a similar tendency to relegate the importance of fathers. Infant care in Hindu societies is *generally* the responsibility of mother, helped by female members of the extended family.⁸² Consequently, the mother tends to feature

more prominently than the father in the early life of the children, and this experience may leave a lasting impression. None of the fathers expressed any resentment regarding their lesser status in this respect. The findings are summarised below:

Criteria	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
Father as origin	No.	No.	Yes, but inferior status to mother.	Yes but inferior status to mother.
Father's love for his children is unconditional	Yes.	Yes, perhaps even more reliable than mother's love.	Yes.	Yes.
All children equally valuable to the father	Yes.	Yes.	No comment.	Yes.
Father is sad if siblings do not get along with each other well	No.	No comment.	Yes, more so than mother.	No comment.
Was father an influence on sibling relationships	No.	Yes.	Yes.	No.
Father as the controller	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Who had a greater influence on the child - father or mother	little comment but hints of mother's greater importance.	Mother.	little comment but hints of mother's greater importance.	Mother.

Data figure 15. Summary of the understanding of fatherhood

6.3.2.b Acceptance of fatherhood as an analogue for God-human relationships

Whereas the youngsters under study regarded mother as approximating to the ideal of motherhood (§6.3.1.a) they did not regard their 'real life fathers' as corresponding to the masculine, powerful or dominating stereotypical father figure. This meant that data relating to the use of fatherhood as an analogue for God had to be resolved into two components: (i) is the real life father a good analogue for God and (ii) is the stereotypical father figure a good analogue for God.

Concerning (i) neither Harshad or Nitin could see anything which the real life father had in common with God. This was due more to their respective father's deviation from the powerful, dominant male type than with a welcoming maternal base to their images of God. It is father, not God, who is un-macho and this is at the root of the disanalogy.

For Radha, in as much as father was 'in control', he was analogous to God:

When you think of God, do you imagine a man or a woman? **Well, I do think God is a man but he's not like an ordinary man.** In what ways is he different? **Looks back with total disdain as if to say 'what type of a question is that?'** O. K. I'm sorry. What I mean is, are there any things you associate with a man, let us say your father, that you think God might be like? **That's not the same**

question. Yes, I know but answer it anyway. **Well, God makes decisions, and whatever he says goes. That's the same with Dad [Radha].**

Pushpa shared the above sentiments. For her, the role of controller was a function common to both father and God. It is also noteworthy that she regarded her father as more concerned with good a inter-sibling relationship than was mother. When it was pointed out that God too cared about the inter-sibling relationships of His children, Pushpa's response was ingenious but disheartening. She felt that if the burden of responsibility to love and forgive lay anywhere, it lay with God and not man:

You seem to feel that your father is more concerned than your mother that you get along closely with your brother. **Yes, that's right. Mum doesn't really care, but papa does.** Then do you think that God is like your father, caring how His children - I mean us humans on earth - get along? **Papa makes all the decisions and God also controls this world.** Yes, but like your father cares about you and your brother getting on, do you think God cares about humans getting along? **Are you asking me about the Sītā story again?** Well, if you want. **Good, because I thought more about that story. I think Sītā says that it is up to God to punish people and not us.** Who punishes you when you are bad, mum or dad? **It is up to Dad to (punish) Nitin and not me or mum. But also I think that God does love everyone and maybe loves them always.** Like your father always loves you? **Yes, But that only makes it worse. People who behave badly even after people love them and give them every chance, those are the worst people and only God could be good enough to love them. We can't be so good to love them. [Pushpa].**

Again, Pushpa is inclining towards the disconcerting tendency for young believers not to feel obliged to streamline their views in accordance with the view from a liberal God (see Harshad §5.2.1.c and §6.3.1.b; Nitin §5.2.3.c and §6.3.1.b).

Concerning (ii), though the stereotype of father as an uncompromising judge was thought inapplicable to human fathers, Harshad, Nitin and Pushpa still felt that certain aspects of the father stereotype *are* applicable to *God* - God is a masculine, authoritative and unyielding judge. Even Radha's more mature theological position related submissively to God as the final authority.

6.3.3 God - loving mother or indignant father?

Here is a summary of the gender based qualities associated with the character of God:

Qualities associated with God	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
Stereotypical maternal qualities associated with God	Co-creator (God gives strength to mother). Unconditional love (but humans not obliged to follow His precedent).	Creator.	Life giver, <i>capable</i> of unconditional love, patience and trust, but does not necessarily express this love.	Life giver (provides the soul). Does love unconditionally, but no guaranty of how this love will be expressed. God is not obliged to love unconditionally.
Stereotypical paternal qualities associated with God	Judge.	Judge and Punisher.	Controller, Punisher, doer.	Final authority, power.

Data figure 16. Summary of stereotypical maternal and paternal attributes associated with God

It would be significant if further data indicated that many young Hindus associate God with the stereotypically masculine qualities of judgement, authority and power more readily than the maternal qualities of unconditional love. A theistic paradigm in which believers view God's love as *conditional* raises the possibility of those conditions failing to be met, either individually or collectively. Consequently, believers could view either these individuals or communities as 'God-forsaken'. Those believers who feel *they* satisfy the conditions may then feel superior to, and exhibit hostility towards, pagans, heretics, heathens and blasphemers who do not. The perception of the moral character of God might play a decisive role in legitimising a culture of prejudice or communal hatred.

6.4 Traditional stereotypes and the modern psychology of parent-child relationships

Care must be taken before making any general conclusions from the above preliminary exploration into typical maternal and paternal attributes associated with God. This is so not only because the sample size was small, but also because the parent-child relationship (apart from being age specific) is gender specific and changing with the times. Hence any reflections can be only tentative and seen as indicative of areas for future study. Future investigations will have to be sensitive to the following points.

6.4.1 Traditional stereotypes

To give a greater feel for the stereotypes associated with parenting in Hindu culture, some traditional 'high-profile' parent-child relationships are given below:

		Mother	
Largely underrepresented		Sita-Lava and Kuṣa: mother gives unconditional love. Kausalyā-Rāma: perfect mother, perfect son. Parvati-Ganesh and Kartikeya: mother is all. Kuntī-Pāṇḍavas: faithful, loving and long suffering mother and respectful sons. Kuntī-Karna: son bereft of mother's love and ill-fated. Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya and mother: even sanyāsi gives respect to his mother. Jijabai-Sivaji: mother inspirational figure for son.	
Daughter	Daughter	Father	Son
Dakṣa-Satī: Dreadful consequences of disrespecting husband. Animal world born from the union of Dakṣa and Satī. Śukrācārya-Devayāni: daughter as source of loss of knowledge. Kuśanābha and daughters: daughters subservient to will of the father.		Daśaratha-Rāma: noble but weak father, dutiful and obedient son. Śaṁtanu-Bhiṣma: selfish father and dutiful son. Dhṛtarāṣṭra-Duryodhana: weak father blinded by paternal affection for egoistic son. Hiranyakaśip-Prahlad: evil father, saintly son.	

Figure 17. Traditional stereotypes with salient features

Though the above collection is selective, it is suggested that the following patterns would emerge from the folklore taken as a whole:

The mother-son relationship

The mother-son relationship is idealised. There is little recognition that mothers, being only human, have their faults and limitations. Instead, mothers are portrayed as sources of unconditional love, inspiration and good fortune. Even when the mother abandons her child (Kuntī), the focus is not on the mother's neglect but on the stigma, loneliness and bad luck associated with this denial (Karna). Moreover, Karna respects his real mother, and adores his adopted mother. When this researcher asked a Hindu woman to cite instances of 'bad' mothers her reply was immediate and forthright 'Come on, it is impossible. There are no bad mothers. How can you ask such a question.' Such deification would support the validity of the analogue 'like mother, like God'.

Testimony to the traditional stature of the idealised mother-son relationship comes from a famous piece of folklore. Here is the version common to Gujarat:

Pārvatī (wife of Siva) determined to assess the wisdom of her two sons and reward the victor with her special blessings. She said, 'Circumambulate the universe thrice, and the first to return will receive my special blessings'. The competition would appear to be unfair. How would the over-weight Ganesh, with a mouse for his vehicle, even keep in sight the fit and peacock borne Kartikeya? How surprising, then, that it was Ganesh, blessed and content, who was to wait for the return of his athletic brother. How so? By plodding round his mother thrice he had fulfilled the requirement! The amorous and globe-trotting Kartikeya is denied his mother's blessing whereas Ganesh becomes the hero because he accepts his mother as his all-in-all. The moral is clear: what use are all the wonders of the world if one loses the blessings of a mother?

The mother-daughter relationship

The daughter is under-represented in the folklore associated with parenting. (Wife role models abound⁸³, but there is little focus on the father-daughter relationship and even less on the mother-daughter relationship).

The father-son relationship

The tradition does not idealise the father-son relationship. If criticism of the mother is an anathema, not so with the father. Fathers are rarely objects of unreserved veneration and imperfections can be acknowledged. Fathers range from being virtuous but weak

(Daśaratha), selfish (Śāmtanu), through to evil (Hiranyakaśipu). This ambivalence is further illustrated by the fact that the Divinity, when female, is routinely referred to as mother; but when male is more commonly referred to as 'Lord', not father. The tradition does not presume or expect fathers to be paragons of perfection.

The father daughter-relationship

The father-daughter relationship is often portrayed in an unfortunate way, e.g. the daughters of Kuśanābha are entirely subordinate to their father's will; Satī gives birth to the animal world as a result of her father's overwhelming desire, and there are dreadful consequences when Satī's attachment to her father overcomes her obedience to her husband; and Devayāni's romantic adventure leads to a loss of family secrets.

Both the unfortunate representations of the father-daughter relationship, and the under-representation of the mother-daughter relationship, can be explained (though not excused) by the fact that the literature has been written predominantly from a male perspective.

6.4.2 Scholarly observations

Modern scholarship from the psychology of child-parent relations has highlighted the following pertinent points regarding the above traditional stereotypes.

Mother-son relationship - the modern reality?

Ashish Nandy brings the discourse on the mother-son relation up to date by considering a famous anti-hero in Hindu folklore - Karna. Karna is a complex character full of contradictions, or at least tensions. For the present discussion, what is important is that he was abandoned by his mother (Kuntī), and though loyal to the villain of the *Māhabhārata* (Duryodhana), nevertheless lived a generally moral life.

Nandy juxtaposes the character and world of Karna as found in the traditional epic aside the interpretation found in Shyam Benegal's film *Kalyug*. Benegal presents Karna to his contemporary (predominantly male) public as a hero. This Karna - like the Karna of the epic - does not find his mother to be an embodiment of unconditional love. On the contrary she has abandoned him. Consequently Karna is no Ganesh-like mother's boy, but a self made man. His moral judgements are his own and cannot be dictated either by Divinity or the (generally) overpowering mother.

The distinctly modern twists in the drama are illuminating:

... there is no Kṛṣṇa to guide the forces of good against those of evil.⁸⁴

A particularly lonely search for a personal moral framework and the absence of any theory of transcendence are, therefore, the distinguishing features of Benegal's movie.⁸⁵

... the grandeur and power of womanhood that is projected in the Sanskrit epic is conspicuously missing in *Kalyug*. There is no celebration of femininity or of feminine power and magicality in the film.⁸⁶

The locus of activism and power in *Kalyug* has to be in its male characters and partly in the modern Kuntī, the most traditional of the women depicted in the film. The latter, one suspects, is a compromise with the most endurable archetype of popular movies, the Indian mother.⁸⁷

All this may serve as a window into the world of the young Hindu male, i.e. for Karna read modern Hindu young man. Indeed, Nandy regards the film as:

... the latest in a series of attempts by Indian middle-class culture to reinterpret the core epics of an epic civilisation to make them compatible with the psychological needs of the middle classes and update the traditional mythic consciousness of the society for that purpose.⁸⁸

This thoughtful and in many ways realistic film was a flop. Indians generally prefer their films to be fantasies, and perhaps the disorientation, uncertainties, and above all estrangement from his mother's love, felt by Karna were all too close to fact. What is certain is that the figure of Karna, both in the epic and the film, makes one realise that the traditional and idealistic mother-son relationship is not a universal experience.

Mother-daughter relationship - preparation for becoming a wife

The way a daughter relates to her mother may differ radically from the way a son does. This is because of the differing roles and expectations incumbent upon men and young women in Hindu society. Whereas the son is a 'life-long' associate, the daughter will be, eventually, handed to another family. It is therefore prudent for mother not to 'invest emotionally' too much in the daughter:

The daughter has to marry and leave home anyway. Thus she cannot be counted upon to play a significant role, whereas it is the son who maintains the continuity of the mother's existence. She cannot alienate his sympathies.⁸⁹

Veena Das notes that it is the mother's duty to ensure that the daughter is properly socialised and does not compromise the honour or *izzat* of the family:

It is true that sons are seen as future heirs, and parents look upon them for support in their old age. In contrast, girls are seen as belonging to a different family altogether and their socialisation stresses their future roles as wives. However, daughters never cease to be the repositories of their family honour, and though parents cannot depend upon them for fulfilment of material needs, they do look upon them as symbols of the honour of their families. 'The prestige (*izzat*) of a family is in the hands of its daughters' is a common refrain which a girl may expect to hear many times a day from her parents.⁹⁰

The consequence of this may be that, at a relatively early age, young women no longer find mother to be an embodiment of unconditional love. Instead, the mother may be felt to be a critical or disciplinarian figure. Veena Das cites a sensitive episode which, though fictional and extreme, is not altogether deceptive:

Those sweet days of childhood appeared before me. . . . My Mamu would pull my long tresses lovingly and I would giggle. Those days of love and affection passed so quickly. I became big. Neither was my childhood left, nor the openness of childhood. Every time I came across Mamu now, I was taunted. After bathing in the well . . . Mamu would give me looks of sarcasm. Granny would remind me again and again, 'Cover yourself properly, girl.' If I looked happy, they'd say, 'Don't sit dreaming, do some work.'⁹¹

Mother is the person primarily responsible for ensuring that the girl matures into a future wife who will bring honour to her parents' house. Correspondingly, the daughter may see the mother more as a role model for the ideal wife, as opposed to a representation of unconditional maternal love. Pushpa's interpretation of the Sītā-Hanumān episode would support such a hypothesis:

What do think is the main meaning of the story? **We should be patient like Sītā. Like Sītā? She is waiting for Rāma, isn't she. Yes? And while she is waiting, even Hanumān's help is not appreciated. Only her husband must save her, and she will wait until he comes for her.** What about Sītā's attitude towards the witches? **She tells Hanumān not to punish them. It doesn't matter to Sītā what the witches do to her. It doesn't matter, so she doesn't have any hatred to them. She is suffering because she is away from her husband and that is all she cares about [Pushpa].**

Pushpa related to Sītā as the perfect wife, as opposed to universally loving mother. Perhaps consequently, she is amenable to strenuous devotion to the husband, yet not so enthusiastic about any normative status being attached to unconditional maternal love.

General observations on mother-child relationship

There is a feature of modern urban life that may influence both a son's or daughter's experience of mother's unconditional love. Traditionally, mother brought up her child in an extended family situation. She was helped by grandmother, sisters-in-law and close long time family friends. Modernity and city life have changed much of this. Mothers are often in full time employment⁹² and without helpers. This puts strains on their time, energy and patience. Consequently, mother may be less attentive and receptive to her children than she might wish, and certainly less so than idealised models of motherhood may encourage.⁹³

A note of caution concerning role models

Recall that §6.1.2 of the case-studies presented Sītā as a role model for human beings to follow. Past generations probably did accept such a role model as normative or binding. However, recent scholarship supports the case-study indications that modern young people are less bound by the traditional idealised 'types' and are inclined to think more independently:

Durganand Sinha: The young very rarely found their identification models among the great personalities of the past. This is indicative of the absence of a link with the past and with traditional values.⁹⁴

Interviewer: Sītā says God does love everyone, like a mother loves her children? **That (i.e. Sītā's example) is wrong [Nitin].**

Interviewer: In this story, Sītā tells Hanumān he should love even the witches . . . Sītā said God loves the witches like a mother loves all her children. So if God loves everyone, so should we? **No. God loves everyone. But we don't have to [Harshad].**

In conclusion, it must be acknowledged that while it may be theoretically appropriate to suggest God as mother as an appropriate analogue for the God of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, great care must be taken in assuming that (i) these traditional stereotypes are congruent with the youngsters' experience of the actual mother-child relationship and (ii) youngsters still accept the idealised role models as normative. Modern scholarship also illuminates the father-child relationship.

Father- son relationships

B.K. Ramanujan has suggested that, typically, the father-son relationship is formal, abstract, and with many problems that have their roots in adolescence. The methodology of his work is to focus on young men requiring psychotherapeutic treatment. Their problems may indicate a more prevalent, though less extreme, malaise in the greater population. Typical observations are of the perception of father as an oppressive character, e.g. 'It was almost as if his (i.e. son's) very existence did not matter except for the sake of his father's well being'⁹⁵ and 'His father image was that of a stern, authoritarian individual . . .'⁹⁶

Ramanujan also refers to the work of D.B. Lynn, who has noted the following characteristics of young men brought up without a constant and reassuring father presence:

. . . where the father is absent the boy (a) is more immature . . . (c) is insecure in his identification with his father, and so strives more strongly towards masculine identification; (d) lacks a masculine model in the home (the father) and hence his masculine behaviour is largely bravado.⁹⁷

This seems pertinent concerning the attitude of Nitin, the most aggressive and anti-Muslim of all the case-study young Hindus. Nitin's father was a successful practising accountant. According to the father, his growing practice and the need to make further contacts required him to socialise after his long office hours. As a result, he was hardly at home, even on Sundays. It is therefore possible that Nitin's extreme bravado may be a manifestation of the Lynn scenario. Moreover, recall that Nitin was an avid viewer of Hindi movies, wherein aggression from the 'hero' is routine. A combination of his

home situation and aggressive movie role models may have caused an aggression which, unable to express itself towards the father, is externalised through a hatred of Muslims. Nitin may be an example of a tendency within Hindu society to misplace its aggression and look for scapegoats (this is taken up later in Chapter 5 §4.2).

Father-daughter relationships

I have found much of the psychological literature on this relationship to be based on Freudian psychology, disagreeable, disturbing and beyond my present comprehension. However, Sudhir Kakar⁹⁸ may be saying something too significant to ignore, and a pivotal section is quoted below:

(Adolescence) . . . is perhaps the most painful period of a girl's life, in which many renunciations are expected of her and where her training as an imminent daughter-in-law who must bring credit to her natal family is painfully stepped up. Psychoanalysis regularly brings up the powerful wish from this period for an intimacy with the father in which the daughter is simultaneously indulged as a little girl and treated as a young woman whose emerging womanhood is both appreciatively recognised and appropriately reacted to. In part, this is a universal fantasy among women, arising from the fact that a father often tends to withdraw from his daughter at the onset of [adolescence], feeling that he should no longer exhibit physical closeness . . . The daughter, however, learning to be at home in a woman's body and as yet insecure in her womanly role, may interpret the father's withdrawal as a proof of her feminine unattractiveness. The wished for father-daughter intimacy becomes a major fantasy in India because of the fact that in the Indian family the father's withdrawal from his daughter is quite precipitate once she attains [adolescence]. The daughter is completely given over to the woman's world which chooses precisely this period of inner turmoil to become increasingly harsh.⁹⁹

This indicates daughters may have two enduring memories of fatherhood. In one, father guarantees daughter security and care, in another he rejects her before she is ready to let him go. In later life, women may focus on this authoritarian aspect of fatherhood, which leaves them feeling helpless, abandoned and resentful.

On an even more speculative note, when the metaphor of God as father is recalled, it could be that young women select and adapt memories of fatherhood according to the circumstances. In defining the relationship of God to members of the believer's community, God may be a protecting and caring father; when it comes to defining the relationship between God and those *outside* of the believer's community, recollections of the father as cold or capable of abandoning his children, may be felt more appropriate.

§7 The Case-studies Part Three: Hindu and Indian Identity

The last part of the case-study research tried to place the views of the young Hindus in the general context of what it meant for them to be Hindu and Indian. Here there was no focus on particular aspects of religion or politics, and the enquiry was open ended.

7.1 The methodology

a. Being an Indian and being a Hindu

The theme of Indian and Hindu identity was introduced casually after a viewing of the popular music video 'Made in India' by Alisha Chinai. This intriguing production contains images from India's romantic Hindu past up to the cosmopolitan present. The young Hindus were told the video was meant only to stimulate their thinking and not to restrict its scope. They were then asked to think over what the images meant to them. They were also given small notebooks to note down any further thoughts on Indian and Hindu identity. The note books were returned after two months.

b. Values ranking

In parts one and two of the case-study, a study was made of moral attitudes relating to specific aspects of the Hindu-Muslim situation. Part three tried to get a feel for the general moral outlook of the case-study young Hindus through a very slightly modified version of the Rokeach Values Survey.

The Young Hindus were asked to rank the values in the below two sets. They were to give a value of 1 for the most important value, 2 for the next most important and so on. They were also told they could rank two values equally if they so wished. It was pointed out that generally the first set of values relates to social values and the second to personal values.

Rank these, putting the most important first.

Social values:

A comfortable life	
World peace	
Making money	
The happiness of the family	
Individual freedom	
Having a good time	
Being Happy/ Inner peace	
Peace in India	
Being Religious	
Reaching heaven	
Self-respect	
Respect from society	
Friendship	
Being mature	
First Three	
Last Three	

Personal values:

Ambition	
Broadmindedness	
Cheerfulness	
Cleanliness	
Bravery	
Forgiving nature	
Honesty	
Independent nature	
Fairness	
Logical thinking	
Cleverness	
Soft heartedness	
Respectful nature	
Responsible nature	
Putting yourself first	
First Three	
Last Three	

7.2 Data and discussion

a. Being an Indian, being a Hindu and general moral outlook

Here are the responses regarding Hindu and Indian identity, juxtaposed with the attitudes towards the Hindu-Muslim situation (§5), and concept of the Divinity (§6):

Criteria	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
Attitude towards Hindu-Muslim situation (§5)	Inconsistent.	Hostile.	Unfriendly, aloof.	Promising.
Qualities associated with God (§6)	Unconditional love (but humans not obliged to follow precedent). God as judge.	Masculine imagery dominates; creator, judge and punisher.	Masculine imagery dominates; controller, punisher, doer. God as life giver, <i>capable</i> of unconditional love patience and trust, but does not necessarily express this love.	God does love unconditionally, but is not obliged to do so. Transcendent and immanent, God in man. Final authority, power.
What it means to them to be a Hindu	Saying prayers, Ganesh, Siva and Parvati, Rāma, stories from grandmother about gods, diet, godlike. Swami Nārāyaṇa, all religions the same, parents as the first God.	Defending one's religion, fighting for India, God has no form. fasting, celebrating holidays, mother and grandparents, diet, Gītā, waking up early, respect for elders.	Marriage, proud to be a Hindu, many gods and religions but all one so respect all, traditional way of life, our food is different. Murari Babu, Kṛṣṇa.	Fasting, praying, proud to be a Hindu, Hindu religion makes India one country, pilgrimages and temples, Kṛṣṇa, Sītā-Rāma, all religions the same, should be a good wife.
What it means to them to be an Indian	Where you are born, Hindi films, Supporting Indian Cricket team, Himalayas, Indian clothes, Muslims Indian but not equally so.	Not western culture, traditional culture, food, being a Hindu, Hindustan and Rāma-rājya, fight evil, land of one's birth, world thinks as poor country but isn't, invaded, by Muslims and British who made India poor, life more comfortable in the west.	Traditional culture, defend India against enemies, Hindustan, Hindi films, Indian music, arranged marriage, a religious country, industry and economic growth, Narasimha Rao.	Land of one's birth, Hindustan, loyalty to Hindu values, different religions but one nation, different from western culture, India becoming westernised and that was bad, India is forgetting traditional Hindu culture, should not marry outside of caste, didn't want to leave India.

Data figure 17. Pluralism, religion and national identity

The young Hindus' concept of national identity seems to include an awareness of the world context. India is thought to possess a unique culture of which they were proud and felt responsible to preserve. For the young women, unique aspects of Indian culture, e.g. arranged marriage and caste, were at the forefront of being Indian. The findings suggest a very close relationship between Hindu and national identity. All our young Hindus made some reference to Hinduism when talking about their Indian identity with Radha, Nitin and Pushpa referring to India as 'Hindusthan' or land of the Hindus.

Unfortunately, the association between religion and national identity is not always ideal. The religious identity of some young Hindus seems to be in the context of a relationship with a paternal, transcendent and judgmental God, as opposed to the maternal God of Viśiṣṭādvaitic type Hinduism. This raises the fear of a masculine concept of God buttressing the use of an Indian and Hindu identity as justification for an illiberal attitude towards Muslims.

b. Values outlook of the young Hindus

Except for their sometimes unwholesome attitudes towards multiculturalism, the researcher found all four young Hindus to be pleasant. The results of a brief values survey suggest that they are generally moral beings:

Social values	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
A comfortable life	1	10	9	11
World peace	10	9	5	3
Making money	4	8	8	12
Happiness of family	5	4	1	1
Individual freedom	9	11	10	9
Having a good time	3	7	10	10
Happiness/ inner peace	-----	6	5	7
Peace in India	2	1	2	2
Being Religious	8	12	3	3
Reaching heaven	11	13	13	13
Self-respect	7	2	5	8
Respect from society	5	3	4	6
Friendship	6	5	7	4
Being mature	13		5	5
First Three	Comfortable life Peace in India Having a good time.	Peace in India Self-respect Respect from society.	Happiness of family Peace in India Being religious.	Happiness of family Peace in India Being religious.
Last Three	Being mature Reaching heaven World peace.	Freedom Being religious Reaching heaven.	Making money Comfortable life Individual freedom/ Having a good time.	Comfortable life Making money Reaching heaven.

Data figure 18.i. The social values of the young Hindus

Personal values	Harshad	Nitin	Pushpa	Radha
Ambition	1	8	7	12
Broadmindedness	-----	9	6	11
Cheerfulness	-----	7	5	7
Cleanliness	5	6	1	6
Bravery	-----	10	5	4
Forgiving nature	-----	-----	2	5
Honesty	2	1	4	4
Independent nature			10	13
Fairness	7	5	8	8
Logical thinking			9	9
Cleverness	4	2	9	2
Soft heartedness	3		2	1
Respectful nature	3	4	3	3
Responsible nature	6	3	3	4
Putting yourself first			11	10
First 3	Ambition Honesty Soft heartedness.	Honesty Cleverness Responsible nature.	Cleanliness Forgiving nature Respectful nature.	Soft heartedness Cleverness Respectful nature.
Last 3	Cleanliness Responsible nature Fairness.	Ambition Broadmindedness Bravery.	Logical thinking/ Cleverness Independent nature Putting yourself first.	Ambition Broadmindedness Independent nature.

Data figure 18.ii. The personal values of the young Hindus

Provided the moral situation did not involve Muslims, decent civic and personal values were expressed. All the young Hindus value peace in India, self-respect and civic values such as honesty, responsibility and a kind heart, and regard religion in some way or other as important. The problem appears to be that some young Hindus feel (for reasons explored in Chapter 5) that being a decent person and proud Hindu Indian is incompatible with a liberal attitude towards the Muslim community.

§ 8 Towards a Tentative Theory

In the history of Hindu thought the mother-child relationship is very significant. Moreover, as far back as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the earth has been closely and explicitly related to the female gender:

'This (earth) is like a cow; she yields all desires for humans. The cow is a mother; this earth is like a mother - she supports human beings'.¹⁰⁰

Political thinkers have often tried to associate the emotional appeal of this relationship with the *nationalistic* spirit.

Our history . . . is the sacred biography of the mother. Our philosophies are the revelations of the Mother's mind . . . Our religion is the organised expression of the soul of the mother. The outsider knows her as India.¹⁰¹

Nationalism is an *avatār* (incarnation of divinity) and cannot be slain. Nationalism is a divinely appointed *shakti* of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the universal Energy from which it came.¹⁰²

Nandy has meditated on the psychology of the above Mother/Godess-Nation nexus and finds the observations of Koenigsberg apposite:

Koenigsberg argues ... that faith in the absolute reality of the nation is constituted of three interrelated core fantasies: the fantasy of the nation as a suffering mother, the fantasy of the nation as omnipotent mother, and that of the nation as a projection of infantile narcissism. The wish to save the nation is the 'projective equivalent of the wish to restore the omnipotence of the mother'...¹⁰³

Such a psychology of 'fantasies' is exhibited in Bankim Chandra Chattatterjee's (1838-1894) hymn *Bande Mataram*.¹⁰⁴ At points, the 'mother' of the hymn is equivalent to both the nation and the Mother goddess of the idealised mother-son relationship:

Mother, lend thine ear.
Rich with thy hurrying streams.
Bright with thy orchard gleams.
Dark of hue, O candid-fair
In thy soul, with jewelled hair
And thy glorious smile divine,
Loveliest of all earthly lands.
Showereth wealth from well-stored hands!
Mother, mother mine!
Mother sweet, I bow to thee
Mother great and free!

However, the hymn does not regard the mother-Goddess exclusively as an embodiment of unconditional love (as in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition). Chatterjee borrows from a broader theological tradition which often portrays the mother-Goddess as a *once* 'suffering mother', who is *now* a dreadful, indignant omnipotent force of retaliation and revival:

To thee I call, Mother and Lord !
Thou who savest, arise and save !
... who ever her foeman drave
Back from plain and sea
And shook herself free ...
Thine the strength that nerves the arm ...

It could be that like the author of *Bande-Mataram* contemporary young Hindus as Pushpa and Nitin require a reading of the traditional views of Divinity capable of inspiring a vigorous Hindu revival. It may be largely circumstantial and incidental that the contemporary rallying call uses the mythology of Rāma as opposed to Kālī. Chatterjee brought to prominence the fearsome side of the mother-Goddess who reserved the gentler maternal aspect for 'her children', i.e. the Hindu nationalists; similarly, the recent 'Rāma-rājya' campaign focuses on a distorted representation of the God-warrior-king motif and glosses-over the gentler and maternal aspects of Śrī-

Rāma and Goddess Sīta. The shared and underlying project in both Chatterjee's time and the present is the use of religion to legitimise and sanctify aggressive politics.

Jaffrelot has commented on the involvement of young Hindus in a recent example of the use of religion to serve an illiberal agenda - the demolition of the Babri Masjid.¹⁰⁵ These 'kar sevaks' (title given to those who demolished the Babri Masjid)¹⁰⁶ may represent a phenomenon of acute malcontent, of which the milder symptoms might be the illiberal views expressed by some of the case-study young Hindus.

The kar sevaks were urban youths, often from the upper castes. While often recruited by local godmen and professing a devotion to Rāma, 'these young men (were) not interested in doctrinal rigour or discipline' and their destructive enterprises were animated by 'non-theological' motives¹⁰⁷. A sense of adventure and purpose seemed to have been hitherto lacking for many kar sevaks. Kar seva was an instant opportunity to gain self-respect through a sense of moral worth and purpose. It is possible that the case-study youngsters too were looking for just such an instant lift through stigmatising Indian Muslims. They too may have been looking to 'be somebody', and in their need for a crusade they have unfortunately supported a misguided cause.

Less speculative is Jaffrelot's other suggestion that the typical kar sevak's perception of morality was deeply influenced by the Hindi movies.¹⁰⁸ In these, the over-muscled 'hero' is inevitably an 'idealised, virile and Rambo like moral figure'¹⁰⁹. In taking so readily to the vengeful 'God' of Ayodhyā, kar sevaks are expressing a big screen fantasy where violence leads to justice. Anuradha Kapur has put the blame on particular productions in which the 'God' Rāma has all the characteristics of the Bollywood heroes:

The transformation of the Ram image from that of a serene, omnipresent, eternally forgiving God to that of an angry, punishing one . . . is truly remarkable. Where does this new Ram . . . come from?

He appears to come from television epics . . .¹¹⁰

One can take little consolation that the hero in such productions perpetrates his violence on villains who are mono-tone in their unadulterated evil. The overriding message remains that 'the ends justifies the means'. Nitin is one case-study young Hindu who comes close to this regrettable rationale.

One can add to Jaffrelot's observations that the elder generation, with a far more mature understanding of how good triumphs, find the level of violence in contemporary Hindi movies gratuitous and offensive. In contrast, the role model of the

magnificent post-Independence movie 'Mother India' is not an angry, indignant male (extrapolate angry indignant Hindu) but a patient and enduring mother. Her commitment to justice finds her in defence of feminine virtue even at the cost of her kin. She is resilient, strong and triumphant - but she is not violent. Her God is not a warrior but the persevering mother earth.

The preceding discussions intimate that an aggressive attitude stems from many factors. Much truth lies in van der Veer's observation that violence is a 'total social phenomenon':

... in modern society, this total fact is discursively cut up in different pieces. The economic and political pieces constitute the real elements, while the religious is relegated to the unreal.¹¹¹

van der Veer warns against both the compartmentalisation and marginalisation of religion from the totality of the human experience. An aggressive temper has its roots in not one but many aspects of the human experience. A collective religious mythology and contemporary re-interpretations play as important a part in contributing towards aggressive attitudes as the angst of adolescence, parenting and gender issues and the entertainment industry.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that the voice of the case study young Hindus may be one of missed opportunity. Young Hindus seem attracted to, or at least identify with, a religion that has rich resources for the nurture of a liberal attitude. Moreover, they appreciate that religion and politics must have a tight association. However, this appreciation is nourished on little more than sporadic rhetoric.

Trenchant is the lack of thinking concerning what it might mean for India to be a Hindu-rāṣṭra worthy of the name. Most of the thinking of the young Hindus studied lies amidst a confused mass of ideology, opportunism and outright vagary. Does the glory of Hinduism require slandering or persecuting Muslims? Is this the way to ensure that a thousand saffron lotuses perpetually bloom? Obviously not, yet this may not be clear to many youngsters.

The future holds both problems and opportunities. The gloom of communal resentment and disillusionment towards the plural situation, particularly regarding Muslims, cannot be ignored. Schools are trying hard to counteract this trend (§3.2.2) but are failing to make an impression. By contrast, the rhetoric of aggressive and divisive 'religious' ideology is acquiring popularity. In Hindu India religion remains physically, emotionally and intellectually pervasive. The case-studies indicate a possibility that

illiberal ideology in religious garb might be acquiring authenticity and support amongst some of the younger generation:

... if Rāma had been there He would have helped destroy the Masjid as well. Hanumān destroyed Lanka so war is not always wrong [Nitin].

Those as Nitin try to rook Muslims of their humanity. Regard a Muslim as a human fellow child of God and scapegoating affronts the Hindu conscience; view Muslims as the impersonal and immoral enemy and they can be denigrated with gusto. No incommensurability here. Sadly, such tactics are very easy, very common. God is opportunistically brought in to sanctify all this - hence the unfortunate coalition of aggressive religion with politics. Each one corrupts the other and neither is a good influence on multicultural ethics.

Similarly, there is the tendency for some young Hindus to dissociate their moral and political outlook from liberal theological precedents:

Interviewer: Isn't God like everyone's mother? No. But in this story. Sītā says God does love everyone, like a mother loves her children? **That's wrong** [Nitin].

'Rāma would have stopped them breaking the Masjid' (but) 'The people who broke the Masjid did nothing wrong': 'Just because he (Rāma) loves them (Muslims) doesn't mean we have to': 'God loves everyone. But we don't have to' [Harshad].

'I think that God does love everyone and maybe loves them always': 'God could be good enough to love them. We can't be so good to love them' [Pushpa].

These responses indicate that even when young Hindus are presented liberal political messages in religious terms, they may not *immediately* find these messages persuasive or binding. A sustained and co-ordinated effort is required to familiarise young Hindus with a liberal and maternal profile of their God, *and then to encourage them to approximate to this profile*. This may not be a hopeless task for amidst the most illiberal rhetoric are more noble sentiments.

While Pushpa spoke of the necessity for a Hindu State, she also occasionally empathised with tolerance and respect for other faiths. These more egalitarian sentiments are not out of place with those of Hindu theologians as Rāmānujācārya:

There are many God's in our house but they are all one. God takes many forms, and sometimes these forms come down to earth so we can know a bit more about what God is like, otherwise God would be just like a force or something. What about other religions, is God in them also? (unhesitatingly) Yes, of course. You can't say you own God and say that He can't be what He likes. But all the religions are all God really. Even the God of Muslims or Christians or Sikhs? Yes, of course, there is only one God [Pushpa].¹¹²

Most encouraging is Radha. Theology provides her with hope for a coherent future for pluralism. She believes people must make life work, and thanks to God this is not a hopeless task. Yet even she speaks of negative influences, and has not met any

influences helping her relate her theological knowledge to a liberal political outlook. She is good despite influences acting upon her and not because of them.

Young Hindus need help to evolve from a misguided and parochial conception of *sva-dharma*, to a mature *sva-dharma* which is congruent with the universal orientation of *sanātana-dharma* (Chapter 3 §5.3). Only then can their attachments to their Hindu tradition be co-ordinated into a form that will serve liberalisation well. Such a progression would find them not only better citizens but also better Hindus. As insights from psychology have shown (§6.4.2; §8), this process will have to take into consideration many aspects of adolescent life.

Summing up, the ‘tentative theory’ (TT)₁ is that:

- a. Some young Hindus have a poor attitude towards multiculturalism.
- b. They appear to be relating to an illiberal and indignant warrior deity and not to an egalitarian maternal God.
- c. This indignant conception of the deity may be exerting a dominant influence upon their political outlook.
- d. If so, then this influence is detrimental to the smooth functioning of a multicultural State.
- e. A number of factors, e.g. the angst of adolescence, parenting and gender issues, and the entertainment industry, are also contributing towards aggressive attitudes.
- f. Young Hindus stand at a cross-roads, where religion may serve as a force for either liberal multicultural unity or social dis-integration.

Chapter 5 will consider if young Hindus are responding rationally to the challenge of multiculturalism and explores the causes for the present regrettable state of affairs. While the investigation will remain critical, the general intention is to see if amidst and behind the confusion, bitterness and resentment felt by Hindu youngsters there lie more moral sentiments.

We must turn our attention to the circumstances in which people act and by which they are formed, and we must change the question from: ‘How should we live, whatever the circumstances’ to ‘under what circumstances is it possible to live as we should’.

Thomas Nagel

5 ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN SITUATION

At Independence, India adopted the contemporary Western view that common sense dictates that religion be confined entirely to the personal domain and kept out of public life - to put it at its kindest. What in fact the majority of people in the west have done is to confine it to the rubbish bin. 'Modern' Indians inevitably follow our example, and anyone who does not believe in keeping religion out of all forms of public life is regarded as 'communal' - that is to say, totally biased in favour of his own religious community . . . The greatest Indian leader of the century, Mahatma Gandhi, was a deeply religious man, but he campaigned tirelessly against the excesses of his own religion, Hinduism . . . at the same time, he knew the dangers of ridiculing rather than reforming religion. He believed that, in India at least, politics needs religion. In his autobiography he said, 'I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means'.

Mark Tully

Recapitulation

Chapter 1 outlined the principles of political liberalism. Chapter 2 concluded with a classification of three religious styles, each with a distinctive relationship with the liberal outlook: the cultic, fundamentalist and liberal. Chapter 3 indicated that the Vedāntic tradition can be formulated in strong consensus with political liberalism. However, Chapter 4 indicated the *empirical* consensus across the attitudes of young Hindus and a liberal outlook may be weak. In some cases, religion may be a bad influence. The present chapter tries to find reasons for this lack of consensus across religious affiliations and a liberal outlook. The final chapter (6) will apply these reflections to the English context.

§ 1 Preliminary Analysis

The relationship between Hindus and Muslims has long been and remains complex.¹ Since both Hindus and Muslims have serious complaints, both groups must think about why these complaints arose, and how to make mutual progress. The following summary of recent history, and the chapter as a whole, should be viewed as a Hindu-focused contribution to this greater agenda.²

1.1 Six phases of the Hindu-Muslim context

Data interpretation must respect context. Contexts are possessive and provocative. People belong to contexts, which arouse ideas, hopes and values. Contexts generate a world and a way and de-contextualised data will be merely an aggregation of facts. The context of this research is summarised.

The situation can be resolved into six distinguishable but inseparable historical phases.

There would have been significant overlap across phases:

Phase		Prominent Hindus/ and or Prime Ministers
I (1870-1920).	Anti-colonial.	Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda.
II (1920-1947).	Pre-Independence.	Savarkar-Hedgewar-Golwalkar. Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Aurobindo.
III (1947-1964).	Nehru's secularism.	Jawaharlal Nehru (Congress: 1947-64).
IV (1964-1980).	Ominous coalitions (RSS ³ -VHP-JS).	Lal Bahdur Shastri (Congress: 1964-66). Indira Gandhi (Congress: 1966-77). Moraji Desai (Janata: 1977-79). Charan Singh (Janata (S): 1979-80).
V (1980-1990).	Communalisation of mainstream politics.	Indira Gandhi (Congress: 1980-84). Rajiv Gandhi (Congress: 1984-89).
VI (1990-1996).	Ayodhyā and after.	V. P. Singh (National Front: 1989-90). Chandrashekar (Janata Dal: 1990-91). P. V. Narasimha Rao (Congress: 1990-1996).

Figure 18. Important phases of the recent Hindu-Muslim context

1.1.1 Anti-colonial phase

During the anti-colonial phase (1870-1920) important Hindu ideologues saw missionary activities as the primary threat to Hinduism. They responded with a policy of 'apology and emulation'.⁴ For example, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) defended Hinduism against charges of atavism by presenting Purāṇic mythology and ritualistic Hinduism as degraded remnants of a Vedic golden age which was pure, logical and believed in a formless monotheism. Hinduism was to return to its former 'Vedic' clarity, de-mystify itself, and so command respect in an enlightened scientific world. This apologetic was paralleled by emulation. For the Hindu to defeat his masters, he must emulate their overpowering qualities. Hindus should become masculine, disciplined and tough.⁵

The latter part of this phase saw a shift in who was seen as the main adversary of Hinduism. Now the Muslims, not the Europeans, became seen as the enemy. A significant event in arousing this suspicion was the concern of Indian Muslims for the Turkish Sultan. This 'Khalifat' movement⁶ was seen as evidence that Muslim loyalties lay with foreign Islamic forces rather than with India. Responses to such suspicions were not uniform, as seen in the 'Pre-Independence' (1920-1947) phase. As Bose has observed:

A very motley crowd of nationalists holding a variety of attitudes to other religious communities went to prison . . . during the first half of the twentieth century. It is hard, if not impossible, to draw up a balance-sheet of bigotry and broadmindedness.⁷

1.1.2 Pre-Independence

1.1.2.1 The hindutva response

The early agenda for 'Hindu nationalism' was set by Vinayak Savarkar's (1883-1966) controversial work *Hindutva: who is a Hindu?*⁸ Savarkar wanted the assimilation of all Indians into a politically, culturally and geographically defined national heritage - identified exclusively with the Hindu experience. Those who identified with this heritage were 'Hindus', and hence 'Hindu-Jains', 'Hindu-Christians', 'Hindu-Muslims', etc. Savarkar saw Muslims, long settled on Indian soil yet defiantly aloof, as the main threat to the realisation of a hindutva India. Savarkar's themes were extended by Madhav Golwalkar in *We, or our Nationhood Defined*⁹ - a book prejudiced against Muslims. *Hindutva* and *We, or our Nationhood Defined* became the defining tracts of the emerging RSS.

1.1.2.2 The Gandhian response

At the same time, leaders as Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) were envisaging national ideals on more plural lines than either Dayananda Saraswati or Savarkar. Gandhiji made no attempt to reduce Hinduism to its austere essentials (as did Dayananda Saraswati) nor did he associate Hinduism with assimilation (as did Savarkar). Instead Gandhiji's catholic vision was sustained by the following commitments:

[1] I believe in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the purāṇas and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures, and therefore in the avtārs and rebirth.

[2] I believe in *varaṇāśrama dharma* (the caste system) . . . but not in its present popular and crude sense.

[3] I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular.

[4] I do not disbelieve in idol worship.¹⁰

Gandhiji also believed in universal human goodness. This caused him look to other religious traditions for guidance and sustained his belief that non-violence could be the bedrock of inter-cultural harmony. Regrettably, Independence apart, Gandhiji's impact was limited, as is witnessed by developments in the third or 'Nehru's secularism phase' (1947-1964). It was then that many of India's contemporary problems began to ferment.

1.1.3 Nehru's secularism

Independence was marked by partition along religious lines, Gandhiji's martyrdom and Nehru's aggressive secularism. Nehru thought that only through secularism could India be a modern and unified nation.¹¹ The Indian Constitution obliged citizens to adopt a 'scientific attitude' and India's religious traditions were sidelined. Even Gandhian political principles, including the awareness of 'the dangers of ridiculing rather than reforming religion' were forgotten.

Elements of both Muslim and Hindu communities found Nehru's secularism unsatisfactory. Nehru, ever sensitive to *minority* discontent, exempted Muslims from some aspects of the Civil Code.¹² Hindu nationalist elements in Nehru's Congress Party, feeling Hindu complaints were generally snubbed, defected to the Jan Sangh, later to become the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP).¹³ This entire phase was dogged with uncertainty, the threat of national disintegration¹⁴ and communal rioting.¹⁵ This takes us to the fourth phase of 'ominous coalitions' (1964-1980).

1.1.4 Ominous coalitions

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (Universal Hindu Assembly or VHP) sought a unity, or at least a co-ordination, of Hinduism's factions.¹⁶ This conglomerate backed political causes,¹⁷ and there was now a symbiotic VHP-RSS-Jan Sangh coalition. The Jan Sangh gained credibility and votes, and the VHP/RSS gained a higher media profile.

Towards the end of this phase (1975-1977), Indira Gandhi imposed a state of emergency. Many members of the VHP-RSS-Jan Sangh coalition were incarcerated - an indication of the coalition's influence.¹⁸

Equally significantly, at the next general elections the people replaced Indira Gandhi with the Janata coalition headed by the pure Gandhian stalwart Morarji Desai. Morarji had sympathies for Hindu nationalism,¹⁹ and he allowed religion to have a voice in national politics. He soon lost office, allowing his successors (Indira and subsequently Rajiv Gandhi) to cynically manipulate religious sensibilities for their own political advantage.

1.1.5 Communalisation of mainstream politics

In the fifth phase (1980-1990) both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi 'communalised' mainstream politics by appealing to the communal grievances of Muslims and Hindus (and incidentally also Sikhs). The Muslim Aligarh University was given a special

status²⁰ and the Shah Bano affair concluded with the passing of the Muslim Women's bill.²¹ Pro-Hindu moves were also apparent. Indira Gandhi became overtly Hindu in her public aspect.²² Her successor and son Rajiv began his election campaign at Faizabad with the words 'the land of Rāma, this holy land'. He reinstated access to Ayodhyā²³ and approved of the peaceful nature of the foundation-stone laying ceremony for the temple site.²⁴

During this time, some Hindus suspected that the mass conversion of villages from Hinduism's lower strata to Islam was an anti-national activity financed by 'petrodollars'.²⁵ Hindu nationalist movements responded flamboyantly. The VHP's Ekamata Yatra (One Mother Pilgrimage) celebrated national Hindu unity.²⁶ Ayodhyā was again on the political agenda²⁷ and the associated Ram Shila Pujan (sponsoring of bricks for building a temple at Ayodhyā) was initiated.²⁸ RSS affiliation was estimated at one and a half million.²⁹ Perhaps the best indicator of the mood was the all-India success of the televised *Rāmāyana*.³⁰ Many felt this played a significant role in 'creating' a national God and a national identity for Hindus.³¹ The Rāma mascot for this identity was an indignant, muscular Bollywood type hero.³² Hindu nationalism was becoming sure of itself.

1.1.6 Ayodhyā and after

So to the 'Ayodhyā and after' phase (1990-1996³³). Earlier coalitions bear fruit. The VHP announced that construction of a temple at Ayodhyā must begin on 14 February 1992. By August, mobilisations had begun³⁴ with associated riots.³⁵ In September Advani (BJP) began his Rath Yatra, (sacred pilgrimage on a chariot) to Ayodhyā.³⁶ Singh's Congress government arrested Advani and thousands of 'kar sevaks'.³⁷ Nevertheless, tens of thousands reached Ayodhyā, leading to a police offensive that left at least fifteen casualties.³⁸ A cult of martyrdom developed with associated rioting.³⁹ The events culminated on 6 December 1992 with an immense hooligan element disgracefully demolishing the Babri Masjid. The BJP⁴⁰ and RSS dissociated themselves from the vandals, yet evidence suggests their involvement, in spirit if not in brawn.⁴¹ The vandals were encouraged by anti-Muslim chants and speeches.⁴²

1.2 A three way balance

By Spring 1993 (the time this research began) India was in crisis. Unrest between the Hindu and Muslim communities was *the* feature of the social backdrop.⁴³

Communalism⁴⁴ has appeared . . . as perhaps the central problem to be overcome in the development of a self governing, national and democratic polity in India.⁴⁵

Mark Juergensmeyer regards such communalism as the darker turn of religious traditions imposing their influence in the modern nation-state. His definitions of ‘state’ and ‘nation-state’ are helpful:

By the state, I mean the locus of authority and decision making within a geographical region.⁴⁶

[In a nation-state] individuals are linked to a centralised, all embracing democratic political system that is unaffected by any other affiliations, be they ethnic, cultural or religious. That linkage is sealed by an emotional sense of identification with a geographical area and a loyalty to a particular people, an identity that is part of the feeling of nationalism.⁴⁷

In the Indian nation-state, the state, the Hindu community and citizens of each of the other religious communities co-exist in a delicate balance. Imagine the three groups in terms of the equidistant relationship (Preamble):

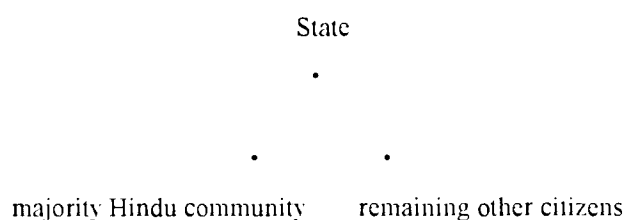


Figure 19. India's delicate triangular relationship

This representation expresses the following:

- (i) The Indian state is secular. More shall be said on Indian secularism in §4. Presently, we note that this policy allows for the presence of various religious traditions, but officially keeps religion out of politics.⁴⁸
- (ii) While the state is non-partisan, the Hindu community constitutes an overwhelming majority compared to all other religious communities taken together. All parties make up the Indian nation-state.
- (iii) The equidistant representation illustrates that in practice, none of the ties across the state, the Hindu community and any other religious communities can be presumed stable. Any may turn against the other. Passions incited by religious fervour pose problems for national stability.

In India, an ‘all embracing democratic political system that is unaffected by religious affiliations’ is problematic. Some Hindus are using religion to legitimate hostile and illiberal attitudes. How can this situation be explained? In particular:

- a) Is a hostile response rational?
- b) What are the social factors that have contributed to the emergence of the undesirable sentiments?
- c) How should those dedicated to the establishment and perpetuation of a plural liberal society respond?

These inquiries can be pursued through three frames of reference: corruption, colonialism and post-Independence secularism.

1.3 Corruption, colonialism and post-Independence secularism

1.3.1 Corruption

The preliminary analysis of the case-study data was influenced by articles from the prestigious *India Today*. Here is a representative compilation:

Article	Date	Themes
Orchestrated Onslaught	Dec. 31, 1992	BJP behind the demolition.
Politics of Upheaval	Dec. 31, 1992	RSS/BJP want unrest, secularism must unite the nation.
Bloody Aftermath	Dec. 31, 1992	BJP inflame the violence, police brutality towards Muslims.
The Soft State	Dec. 31, 1992	BJP as ‘constitutional outlaws’, reason must prevail.
Fight the Menace Politically	Jan. 15, 1993	Equating the RSS/BJP with the fascism.
Nailing the Big Lie	Jan. 31, 1993	It is a myth that Muslims are a pampered minority; Muslim community exploited by its own leadership.
The Rise of the Sadhus	Jan. 31, 1993	‘Mediaeval theocrats’ setting B.J.P. agenda.
Nation Divided	Jan. 15, 1993	Survey of attitudes towards Ayodhyā 1992.
A Saffron Surge	Jan. 15, 1993	Widespread support in villages for hindutva ideology.
Stretched to the Limit	Jan. 31, 1993	Economic prudence prevents hostilities. Increasing distrust in rural areas, elders seek reconciliation.
Now a Hindu Vote Bank	Jan. 31, 1993	Religion and Hindu-Muslim block voting.
The Power of Violence	Jan. 31, 1993	Lumpens used by both sides to generate communal unrest.
One Nation Challenge	Feb. 15, 1993	RSS/BJP and Muslim leaders use communal unrest to further their own careers.
Soldiers of Secularism	Mar. 15, 1993	Ordinary citizens fight back with the courage of their secular conviction.

Figure 20. A media response - *India Today*

These articles could support a hypothesis that young Hindus have been corrupted by Hindu fundamentalists, themselves manipulating and/ or manipulated by perfidious politicians. This implies that once the fundamentalists are discredited or immobilised, and the politicians are either replaced or morally uplifted, all will be well. The following analysis will show obliquely the inadequacy of such an explanation.

1.3.2 Colonialism

Ashis Nandy proposes a nexus between an aggressive Hindu voice and India's colonial past.⁴⁹ This past has been detrimental to the moral character of both the colonisers and the colonised. From the coloniser's viewpoint, colonisation required the suppression of their own feminine virtues⁵⁰ - virtues which would otherwise have interfered with the exploitation of the colonised. Consequently, colonialism impoverished the moral constitution of the colonisers by taking 'away the wholeness of every white man who chose to be a part of the colonial machine'⁵¹. Such self-inflicted depravity required more than economic gains to justify itself. The Raj attained the necessary salve by viewing itself as a harbinger of civilisation:

The Raj saw Indians as crypto-barbarians who needed to further civilize themselves. It saw British rule as an agent of progress and as a mission.⁵²

For their part, the colonised venerated the coloniser. They thought that to better themselves, they must appropriate the values that had made their oppressors triumphant:

In the colonial culture, identification with the aggressor bound the rulers and the ruled in an unbreakable dyadic relationship.

Many Indians in turn saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity. They may not have fully shared the British idea of the martial races . . . but they did resurrect the ideology of the martial races latent in the traditional Indian concept of statecraft and gave the idea a new centrality. Many nineteenth-century Indian movements of social, religious and political reform - and many literary and art movements as well - tried to make Kṣatriyahood the 'true' interface between the rulers and ruled as a new, nearly exclusive indicator of authentic Indianess.⁵³

This mimesis represented a radical shift in consciousness. Traditionally, Hindu psychology had acknowledged three psychological categories of *puruṣatva* (masculine), *nārītva* (feminine) and *klībatva* (hermaphrodite or androgynous). In the 'ideal' Hindu psyche all three sets of characteristics existed in harmony, with the feminine traits predominant. Colonial rule saw *klībatva* and *nārītva* subordinated to *puruṣatva* in mimicry of the coloniser.

Nandy regards the early Hindu nationalists as afflicted with this disproportionate veneration for the masculine characteristics of control and domination. Hence rebellion was corrupted by a rhetoric, ideology and psychological temper more reminiscent of the English martial races than of the Hindu tradition sought to be restored. The Faustian pact was the cost of freedom.⁵⁴ Nandy presents Chattopadhyay's portrayal of

Śrī-Kṛṣṇa as an example of this transformation. This observation is apposite to the case-study findings:

His Kṛṣṇa was not the soft, childlike . . . being - a god who could blend with the everyday life of His humble devotees and who was only occasionally a successful, activist, productive and chastising god operating in the company of the great . . . His Kṛṣṇa was a respectable, righteous, didactic, 'hard' god, protecting the glories of Hinduism as a proper religion and preserving it as an internally consistent moral and cultural system.⁵⁵

Nandy's thought contains truth. The appreciation of the damage colonisation does to the conquerors is heart-rending, and the insight that civilised colonisers need to view themselves as crusaders for a better world order is intriguing. Most significant is the proposed nexus between a sense of vulnerability felt by some early Hindu nationalists and a consequent attempt to prioritise Kṣatriyahood and organise Hinduism into a military spirit. Nandy's thesis that the transition from a feminine to a masculine 'God' is a consequence of the nationalist influence from colonial times is illuminating. However, other dimensions to the problem must be considered.

This orientates the discussion to the third, and more complete hypothesis, that locates the catalyst for hostility within a policy of post-Independence secularism. Without this policy, young Hindus might not have inclined towards aggressive attitudes. Throughout the exploration of this hypothesis, the mode of 'understanding' will be of the social factors responsible for the illiberal attitudes (Chapter 4 §1.2.1.3, §1.3). Pivotal to the discussion will be Malinowski's idea of culture as a response to human needs.

§ 2 A Malinowskian Perspective

2.1 Needs, historical representations and external circumstances

Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) taught that cultural characteristics are an attempt to respond to basic human needs. These needs can be biological, psychological, spiritual or social:⁵⁶

It is clear, I think, that any theory of culture has to start from the organic needs of man, and if it succeeds in relating (to them) the more complex, indirect, but perhaps fully imperative needs of the type which we call spiritual or economic or social, it will supply us with a set of general laws such as we need in sound scientific theory.⁵⁷

Malinowski combined the idea of 'need' with 'social heritage'. A culture was a functional unit which pre-determined the legitimate routes through which needs could be met. Members of a culture, while facing unique and individual problems, accept that

the parameters for the resolution of these problems will be constrained by the cultural system taken as a functional whole:

Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus, partly material, partly human and partly spiritual by which man is able to cope with the concrete specific problems that face him.⁵⁸

Malinowski's understanding of history as myth illustrates this. For Malinowski, history is a device of representation which cultures use to re-present the past according to present needs. No doubt there is an empirically verifiable historical reality, transcendental to the imaginations of people, but this factual dimension is often ineffectual from a cultural viewpoint. Malinowski is speaking of obscure Trobriands, but his conclusions are probably universal:

The historical consideration of myth is interesting, therefore, in that it shows that myth, taken as a whole, cannot be sober dispassionate history, since it is always made *ad hoc* to fulfil a certain sociological function, to glorify a certain group, or to justify an anomalous status. . . .

So much can be asserted as a fact, though it must always remain doubtful how far we can carry out historical reconstruction from the myth.⁵⁹

Though the re-presentations of history can be highly subjective, they are nonetheless related to needs generated by particular external circumstances and problem situations. Re-presentations are on-going solutions to these. In turn, these representations themselves influence social reality.

§3 Historical Representations and Apparent Needs

The Malinowskian insights are now applied in the specific context of the Hindu-Muslim situation. Important external circumstances are⁶⁰:

- (i) Influential re-presentations in the Hindu community concerning the Hindu-Muslim situation (§3.2).⁶¹
- (ii) The hard fact of a State policy of secularism (§4).

3.1 Sequence of enquiries

The hypothesis that post-Independence secularism is largely responsible for the aggressive coalition of religion with politics is examined along the following lines:

- a. What are the influential representations of the Hindu-Muslim situation (§3.2).
- b. What perceived needs do these representations indicate (§3.3).
- c. Do the representations represent a rational response to these needs (§3.4).
- d. How has the policy of the secular State determined the socially legitimate (§4), as well as the neglected (§6), routes to satisfy these needs.

e. Is the way Hindus are responding to their needs characteristic of a trend towards an illiberal fundamentalist outlook (§7).

3.2 Representations

Most of the early stalwarts of the Indian Independence movement used notions of an ancient past as a basis for contemporary national identity, and their synthesis of mythology, geography and nationalism was influential.⁶² The following extracts from prominent periodicals are typical:

We are of the opinion, on the whole, that . . . those who settled themselves in different parts of Hindustan, were men of pure and virtuous character, devoting their lives to spiritual meditation . . . uncorrupted by the dross of this earth.⁶³

Is it not now a well established fact that at all events we were among the first civilisations and that our forefathers were poets and philosophers, logicians and grammarians when those from whom are descended the present great nations of Europe had hardly risen above the hunting or nomad state, or had even acquired a distinctive national name.⁶⁴

These Hindu nationalist sentiments were not necessarily anti-non-Hindu, and were promoted within a generally egalitarian and progressive social milieu. Leading dignitaries urged fellow Hindus to have a broad outlook and accommodate a progressive and cosmopolitan national identity:

I feel that if we have to advance in social matters, we must, so far as practicable, take the community with us by a process of steady and gradual uplift, so that there may be no sudden disturbance or dislocation, the new being adapted to the old, and the old assimilated to the new. That has been the normal path of progress in Hindu society through the long centuries . . . It moves slowly, perhaps more slowly than many would wish, but in the words of Galileo "it does move," more or less according to the lines of adaptation that I have indicated . . . Remarkable indeed have been, in many respects, the relaxations and the removal of restrictions of caste. Dining with non-Hindus, which was an abomination not many years ago, is now connived at, if not openly countenanced. . . . Beneficent are the activities of the Brāhmo-Samāj, but behind them is the slower but larger movement of the general community, all making towards progress.⁶⁵

Now what have been the inward forms or ideas which have been hastening our decline during the past three thousand years? These ideas may be briefly set forth as isolation, submission to outward force or power more than to the voice of the inward conscience, perception of fictitious differences between men and men due to heredity and birth, passive acquiescence in evil or wrong doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being, almost bordering upon fatalism . . . Now all this must be changed. . . . slowly and cautiously if you will, but the tendency must be towards a general recognition of the essential equality between man and man. It will beget sympathy and power. It will strengthen your own hands, by the sense that you have numbers with you, and not against you, or as you foolishly imagine, below you.⁶⁶

This goodwill was extended throughout the post-partition period. India was officially and actively sympathetic towards its minorities. Muslims and other groups vulnerable to discrimination, were given special provisions such as quotas and exemption from certain laws.

However, even before partition an alternative influence insisted that a Hindu nationalist stance should necessarily be anti-Muslim. The anti-Muslim influence represented *all* Indian Muslims as antagonistic towards Hindus and obstinately un-patriotic. The sort of complaints and doubts (which persist to this day) were:

Savarkar (1923): Their holyland is far off in Arabia and Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently . . . their love is divided.⁶⁷

Tandon P (1948): The Musalmans must stop talking about a culture and a civilisation foreign to our country and genius. They should accept Indian culture. One culture and one language will pave the way for real unity.⁶⁸

Sudarshan (1993): What harm will come to the Muslim way if they were to accept Rāma and Krishna as their ancestors and Ghanzi, Gauri and Babar as foreign invaders?⁶⁹

Portrayals such as these have contributed towards today's social environment wherein many aspects of Muslim behaviour are interpreted cynically by many Hindus. Loudspeaker prayers at dawn, in Urdu or Arabic (any language but the vernacular or Hindi) are seen as elitist, if not aggressive taunts. Boycotts of Indian Independence Day celebrations, the Shah Bano affair⁷⁰, insistence on educational autonomy (Aligarh university)⁷¹, demands for sovereignty relating to Jammu and Kashmir⁷², and respect for separatists as Iqbal M (1873-1938)⁷³ and Jinnah MA⁷⁴ (1875-1948), are all represented as symptoms of a perfidious and anti-national people.⁷⁵

Summarising these influential historical representation of the Hindu-Muslim situation:

- a. India is a Hindu country of ancient integrity.
- b. i. Muslims were welcome fellows in the modern polity (but)
 - ii. Muslims exploited and disappointed this goodwill.

3.3 Perceived needs

If historical representations are generated to satisfy present needs, then scrutinising representations should reveal the underlying need. The representations regarding the Hindu-Muslim situation can be resolved into two basic components.

Firstly, there is the 'Golden age' long before Islam cast its shadow upon Indian soil. The qualities attributed to this age expose what Hindus feel wanting in their present circumstances. References to 'men of pure and virtuous character' epitomise not only a high regard for these qualities but also a realisation of contemporary moral and social degeneration. Similarly with nostalgic references to times of philosophical, logical and linguistic acumen.

Secondly, the interaction of Hinduism with Islam is represented as humiliating and dangerous. Islam is represented as having violently subordinated and demoralised Hindu culture and Ayodhyā, where the birth site of a Hindu God⁷⁶ was submerged by a Mosque⁷⁷, is used as an accessible symbol of this legacy.

Such representations indicate a felt need for both the revival of Hindu culture and a restoration of self-respect and social security. Next, consideration is given as to whether an aggressive coalition of religion with politics is the most rational way to meet this need.

3.4 The rationality of the response

Following Malinowski, the rationality of the response depends on whether:

- i. An aggressive attitude satisfies the need for self-respect, and on a broader consideration of whether
- ii. the effect of aggression on the cultural system as a whole is favourable.⁷⁸

Malinowski does not consider an aggressive response to be an efficient way of coping with insecurity because aggression is counter-productive. Recall that culture is a system of legitimate routes whereby basic human needs (referred to below as impulses) can be met. Certain attitudes and emotions are legitimate, while others are stigmatised or at least not encouraged:

Culture in all its innumerable varieties redefines the circumstances under which an impulse may occur, and it may in some cases remold the impulse and transform it into a social value.⁷⁹

Malinowski juxtaposes this aspect of culture aside the all consuming temper of organised aggression. When aggression becomes a social virtue all aspects of culture are subverted to legitimise a policy of hate. The angry polity concentrates on the object of its hate, leaving the rest of culture to stagnate, or worse undergo a militant transformation. This is the essence of totalitarianism:

In its cultural significance it (totalitarianism) is the transformation of nationhood and all its recourses into . . . (an) instrument of violence. . . . Thus, the end of totalitarianism, in so far as it gradually saps all the recourses of culture and destroys its structure, is diametrically opposed and completely incompatible with the constitution of human societies for the normal, peaceful businesses of producing, maintaining, and transmitting wealth, solidarity, reason and conscience, all of which are the real indices and values of civilisation (parenthesis not supplied by Malinowski).⁸⁰

To legitimise an aggressive position, what is required is that a long evolving and well-balanced system of cultural values be:

. . . functionally adapted to the creation of highly artificial, but nevertheless effective, sentiments of superiority, aggressiveness, national egoism, and a morality which fits perfectly well into a universal barackroom drill.⁸¹

The subversion of culture to an aggressive outlook is detrimental to the preservation of cultural integrity. The research data warns of the possibility of Hinduism following such a path of cultural degradation. Some segments of Hindu society are adapting religious myths and symbols to suit their aggressive programmes. Such aggression will worsen the Hindu's unease with present circumstances. It will distort Hinduism, and create a corrosive 'era of fear and paranoia'. On both counts, an aggressive attitude is irrational.

Aggression, while not rational, is not unintelligible. Moral degradation always has causes, and these must be understood to be corrected. The investigation begins with Nehru's secular attitudes and policies.

§ 4 Secularism

4.1 Nehru and self imposed amnesia

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was India's first Prime Minister and his attitudes towards religion and politics were influential. His upbringing and commitments will be considered briefly before turning to the secular Indian Constitution⁸² adopted during his premiership.

Nehru was born into a family of wealthy Kashmiri Brahmins. Early education was under English governesses and tutors. This influence was reinforced by Harrow and Cambridge, followed by Law at the London Inns. After this life of an English gentleman, he returned to his father's private practice.

Nehru was a mundane man. He lacked the Hindu inclination to see Divinity everywhere, and was not interested in developing this vision. His scheme of personal and national *puruṣārtha* did not extend beyond *artha* and *kāma*. Given the poverty of his concerns it is not surprising that he held scientific methodology in un-reservedly profound regard. Reflecting on his life he admitted:

There was a general tendency not to think too much of those fundamental questions which appear to be beyond reach, but rather to concentrate on the problems of life - to understand in the narrower and more immediate sense what should be done and how. . . .

In the solution of these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning, according to the method of science, must be followed.⁸³

Nehru's upbringing ensured that his faith in science cohabited with a regard for the West as an authority on political and moral matters - if India was to command world-wide respect it should commit itself to a western political framework. His speech to the Constituent Assembly in 1946 (Independence was on 15.8.47) is revealing:

We are at the end on an era and possibly very soon we shall embark upon a new age; and my mind goes back to the great past of India, to the 5,000 years of India's history, from the very dawn of that history which might be considered almost the dawn of human history, till today.

. . . I am sure the House will feel the solemnity of this moment and will endeavour to treat this Resolution which it is my proud privilege to place before it in a correspondingly solemn manner.

I think also of the various constituent assemblies that have gone before and of what took place at the making of the great American nation when the fathers of that nation met and fashioned a constitution which has stood the test for so many years, more than a century and a half, and of the great nation that has resulted, which has been built up on the basis of that constitution. My mind goes back to that mighty revolution which took place also over one hundred fifty years ago and the constituent assembly that met in that gracious and lovely city of Paris which has fought so many battles for freedom . . . and took the oath, which is called the Oath of the Tennis Court. . . .

So our mind goes back to these great examples and we seek to learn from their success and to avoid their failures.⁸⁴

It is good that Nehru felt that the values of justice should become established on Indian soil. Sadly however, he took the prototype for his just society exclusively from Western examples, as opposed to also drawing upon traditional Indian precedents. Despite the lip service of his salutary introduction, five millennia of subcontinental experiences were found wanting in light of one hundred and fifty years of American history. Hindu antiquity provided romantic nostalgia and nothing more. This determination to scuttle tradition was most evident regarding India's religious heritage:

We have got to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonial and mystical emotionalism, which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world.⁸⁵

Nehru (correctly) wanted Indians to grow out of a 'narrow religious outlook', 'obsessions with . . . supernatural speculations' and 'mystical emotionalism'. His error lies in taking the worst instances of religious influence to be the totality of the religious life, and then dismissing religion altogether.⁸⁶ This was a momentous decision for one man to take on behalf of a nation.

Nehru's insensitivity was inevitable. He looked at fellow Hindus from an outsider's viewpoint, and without an appreciation of how ingrained religion was in the mass psyche. Consequently he could not recognise that without religious tradition to add emotive substance, secular liberalism would be too 'abstract', 'thin' and ineffectual for those requiring 'a more substantial vision'. Had he been more aware of the importance of religious culture he might not have ignored its potential quite so readily.⁸⁷ Instead, Nehru endorsed the secular Constitution of India that began to dictate the climate.

4.2 A secular Constitution and a disorientated society

The Constitution of India under the section 'Fundamental Duties' states:

51A It shall be the duty of every citizen of India -

- a. to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- b. to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- c. to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- d. to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- e. (i) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectarian diversities; (ii) to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- f. to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- g. to protect and improve the natural environment . . . and to have compassion for living creatures;
- h. to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- i. to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- j. to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity, so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.⁸⁸

For the purposes of the present discussion (e.i) and (h) are particularly significant. In itself, the promotion of ‘harmony . . . transcending religious . . . diversities’ does not belittle the importance of religion; nor *in itself*, does the requirement to ‘develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform’. However, in combination with Nehru’s generally a-religious outlook, the overall result was to undermine the importance of religion in daily life. Social unity and progression were to be founded on an imported secular national and scientific, not traditional and religious, identity.

Accordingly, post-Independence India proceeded with a programme of rapid industrialisation. Once technology exhibited its spectacular success (electricity, the railways, increased rice production, the elimination of tuberculosis, etc.) the censorial authority of science’s henchman - empiricism - increased. Now a faith in science challenged a faith in God. Gellner understands why this so often happens:

The essence of empiricism is that all, but all, theoretical structures are accountable; that none can claim such an awful majesty as to be exempt from the indignity of enquiry and judgement; and that substantive theoretical systems so constructed as to elude and evade this indignity, are out. Out.⁸⁹

Independent Indians found that scientific claims could be tested and, above all, science worked. In contrast, believers without any personal religious experience came to feel that too many of religion’s claims are post-mortem, and that God’s very existence lay ‘beyond the indignity of enquiry and judgement’.⁹⁰ Compared to the solid and immediate grounds for scientific belief, the claims of religion lacked purchase. This shift in confidence was to have wider sociological consequences.

Traditionally, worldly happiness and wealth (*kāma* and *artha*) had been but preliminary ends regulated by a sense of *dharma* and the ultimate quest for salvation (*mokṣa*). The

means for achieving all these ends had involved not only hard work but religious activities. However, once science had won their confidence, Hindus exerted themselves most vigorously in directions that yielded material goods, and only through means that seemed reasonably likely to achieve quickly these ends. Post-mortem goals became of lesser importance and empirical, causal and inductive frames of reference became well established. Little time for praying or religious books. The constitution of Indians, in more ways than one, became increasingly secular.⁹¹

However, the march of secularisation was not without its own difficulties and was not a one-way movement. Nehru's secular policies had neglected Hinduism's age old traditions and industrialised India at breakneck speed. He was committed to 'planning for as rapid a progress, industrial and scientific, as was feasible for us'.⁹² In this zeal, he violated the two cardinal rules of liberal progression:

- a. effect change from within the existing system;
- b. do it slowly and in piecemeal, not revolutionary, fashion.⁹³

Nehru's haste was devastating. A secular policy uprooted Indian culture from its past. Suddenly Hindus had to be liberal, secular and Indian first, and Hindus not merely second but . . . ? Hindu identity no longer knew where it stood.

The secular programme had proven disorientating and failed to satisfy all the wants of the Hindu people. The traditional life was deficient in many material respects, but it was morally and spiritually coherent and reassuring. The new mechanistic outlook offered no such comforts. Consequently, Hindus returned to the old religion, hoping it would provide what science and materialism had not.

Appropriating *both* the influences of a secularism that dismissed meta-physical worlds, and centuries of tradition that had seen here-a-god-there-a-god-everywhere-a-god, an 'existential' religion developed wherein God was not an objective reality but instead a part of one's cultural and psychological legacy. Hindus could not do without God, who now became a therapeutic tonic. It used to be that man served God but now the situation was reversed. God served man by becoming whatever man needed Him to be. What did Hindus need their God to be? - a God who would restore the self-respect they had lost through aping of the West.

Hindu society should have recognised that it had only itself to blame for the impoverished condition. Unfortunately, Hindus chose to escape the psychological

distress of self-castigation. An outside culprit had to be found without apportioning blame back to themselves. Contemporary Muslims, 'descendants' of the Moghuls, were ideal. Like the Britishers, Moghuls invaded India and threatened Hindu culture. Yet Hinduism had survived and above all, Hinduism had never sold its soul to the Moghuls as it had done to the Britishers. The Moghuls were the ideal enemy for a people who had lost their own way. The past was re-presented with contemporary Muslims equated with the marauding Moghuls. Hindus could now exact revenge without self reproach.⁹⁴

Hindus streamlined their God in accordance to the need to sanctify a crusade against the Muslim scapegoat. God was transformed from the traditional maternal Deity to a masculine, warrior 'God' of retribution. Vengeance could be had in God's name without inconvenient requirements of forgiveness or unconditional love to challenge the legitimacy of hate. The ideal enemy and the ideal 'God'.

Thus the dominance of empiricism coupled with the trauma induced by secularisation has fertilised a shift from traditional religion to an impoverished and opportunist religiosity. Hindu pride, religion and psychology are becoming organised around a policy of hatred.

Summing up, Nehru saw the future in secularism, empirical science and industrialisation. Empirical propaganda and the lure of health and wealth strained religious beliefs, which became seen as atavistic. In itself, this might have resulted in a rejection of religion, and not its degradation. However, interesting combinations were at work. Secularism condemned citizens to a state of cultural and theological amnesia and provided no spiritual comforts for an inherently religious people who turned back to the old religions. The to and fro process was complicated and disorientating. By the time empiricism had gained credibility (yet failed to satisfy) the much neglected Hindu religious tradition no longer existed intact. Hindus were lost between an inadequate secular advancement and the crumbling rock of tradition. Somebody had to be blamed for this unsatisfactory condition, and Muslims were made the scapegoat. Tragically, this scapegoating has been sanctified and invigorated through the transformation of a maternal Vedāntic Deity into a warrior 'God'. If this distortion continues, Hinduism will suffocate itself more efficiently than either the Moghuls or the British could ever have managed.

§ 5 Elements of Truth

We now consider whether amidst the mis-directed complaints lie some noble sentiments capable of advancement. The tentative proposition is that the voice of the 'angry Hindu', despite its unacceptably illiberal elements, indicates the circumstances under which it would be possible for a younger generation of Hindus to 'live and think as liberal citizens must'.

5.1 The need for care and connection

The illiberal attitudes of young Hindus indicates the consequences of neglecting the establishment of a mutually caring and open social environment. Recall that Kitwood taught that psychological well being requires 'moral space' that is low in institutional domination and allows high expressivity (Chapter 2 §1.3).⁹⁵ Gilligan went further by explaining the consequences of providing an open and just moral space, without reciprocation - resentment and fear:

When uncertainty about her own worth prevents a woman from claiming equality, self assertion falls prey to the old criticism of selfishness. Then the morality that condones self-destruction in the name of responsible care is not repudiated as inadequate but rather is abandoned in the face of its threat to survival. Moral obligation, rather than expanding to include the self, is rejected completely as the failure of conventional reciprocity leaves the woman unwilling any longer to protect others at what is now seen to be her own expense. In the absence of morality, survival, however 'selfish' or 'immoral', returns as the paramount concern.⁹⁶

Under conditions of insensitivity or exploitation, or even the fear of such circumstances, an ethics of care might be abandoned for the sake of self-preservation. Similarly, the Hindu degeneration towards aggressive 'hyper-masculinity' may be a misguided attempt to satisfy the needs of a people uncertain of a stable and caring Muslim attitude. If these suspicions are to be corrected, a State policy that encourages moral space and reciprocity must be adopted. Only then will young citizens be able to satisfy in a liberal manner their need for self-respect, and an open (Kitwood), caring (Gilligan), and indeed a Just (Rawls) environment.

5.2 The need for a strong communal base

A secular liberal State requires modularity from its citizens (Preamble). Modularity seeks to ensure that citizens feel secure in the compatibility of each with the other and free from the unnerving suspicion that some members might be incongruent with the body politic. This goal of a well-coordinated whole is commendable. Yet the research has indicated that a 'top-down' attempt to enforce a secular modularisation underestimates the sources of human dignity that must be respected to ensure political

stability. Each person is not only obliged to his or her duties as a *citizen* but also remains associated with a particular cultural or religious unit. Allegiances towards this unit may flow more vitally than to the secular nation.

Moreover, not all citizens will be equally effected by the demands of civic modularity. Some will need to sacrifice more than others. For some, the price of modular citizenship may be too high, and they may dissociate themselves emotionally and ultimately politically from membership of such a demanding secular regime. This will cause the very social incoherence that secular modularisation seeks to avert.

Young Hindus need a strong communal basis for self-respect, and one must not underestimate the importance that communal identities can play in politics. An open and liberal society should explore whether the ethos of a secular and modular nation-State is itself adequate or appropriate for the realisation of a happy plural co-existence.

§ 6 A Spiritualised Modularity and a Civilised Religion

6.1 The many in the one

One difficulty with secular modularisation is that it is too impersonal. In secular modularisation, the whole is envisaged as a geo-economic unit, and modularisation into this ‘whole’ may prove disorientating. Even those sympathetic to modularisation may find that the empirical differences between persons make it impossible to sustain hopes of compatibility on secular grounds alone. It may be that the motivation to modularise oneself into a national whole requires a faith in *spiritual* unity. Rāmānujācārya, following *Bhagavadgītā* tradition, indicates how we can so be firm of root yet broad of vision:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa: And others . . . worship Me as one - (Me) who . . . am multiform.⁹⁷

Rāmānujācārya: The Lord Vāsudeva Himself . . . resolves: “May I become one having a body of intelligent and inanimate things in a gross state, differentiated variously into names and forms”. Only He alone then remains with the variegated world consisting of gods, animals, men and inanimate things.⁹⁸

The above idea of human individuality integrated into its greater context is in many respects modular. Like its secular counterpart, this ‘spiritual modularity’ regards each ‘bit’ of humanity as fitting with every other. Yet, and this is the difference, the ‘whole’ with which each person is to be compatible is not impersonally, contractually or pragmatically defined. Instead each person is an integral part of a pluriform Being. Affinity to other parts of humanity is not optional - individuals through to the body politic are part of God. The Indian experience suggests that had Nehru’s secular State

upheld this more spiritual view of modularity, Hindus might have lived less disorientated and more tolerant and liberal lives.

The Indian experience also suggests that the spiritualisation of modularity requires its counterpart in the 'civilisation' of religion. Care must be taken to ensure that religion exerts a socially responsible influence. Ideally, a symbiotic relationship must exist between the liberal State and the religious communities. This is prudent regarding conflict prevention or resolution, and also allows religion to make a wholesome contribution to political life.

The inefficiency of Hinduism in the past to make this contribution lies not in a poverty of resources. The tradition has been denied the opportunity to evolve and advance in the civic direction. This neglect must be corrected and religious beliefs formulated in a manner appropriate to the needs of the hour. Particular attention must be paid to the thinking of two men from different religious backgrounds: Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. Both were acutely aware of the commitments citizens owe to the State *and* their faith.

6.2 Mahatma Gandhi

6.2.1 A spiritualised modularity

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) holds a peculiar significance in the development of modern India.⁹⁹ Gandhiji is revered as the father of the nation and widely loved. Yet in practical terms, after Independence his religious outlook was side-tracked. This is a pity since Gandhiji's influence could have contributed towards correcting the deficiencies of a purely secular State policy.

Gandhiji saw that to be strong, India must embrace all its castes and creeds. This represented a highly delicate position. He appreciated the influence of religion and recognised it would be inefficient to ignore this. Concomitantly, he feared that religion might instigate communal polarisation. To curb this divisive potential he encouraged a liberal Hindu ideology based upon welcome and goodwill to all:

God is not a Power residing in the clouds. God is an unseen Power residing within us and nearer to us than finger nails to the flesh . . . God is in every one of us and, therefore, we have to identify ourselves with every human being without exception . . . In popular language it is called love. It binds us to one another and to God.¹⁰⁰

In Gandhiji's India everyone would be seen as God's child. The political ramifications of imbibing a dedication to a maternal God would have been wholesome (Chapter 3). Moreover, knowledge that the majority Hindu population had married its nationalism

with devotion to a maternal and egalitarian God would have ameliorated Muslim anxieties and discouraged Muslim feelings of insecurity.

Gandhiji encouraged a liberal moral outlook by using theology to legitimise the ontological unity of mankind, i.e.:

God:humanity :: mother:child ⇒ all humans are siblings
⇒ harm one, harm all

By harming others one harms a part of oneself. Consistent with the Vedāntic psychology (Chapter 3 §5.4), the moral situation is defined through care and connection as opposed to rights and retribution. Faced with injustice, one should not ask of the aggressor ‘pay me damages’ but rather ‘how can we both, sinner and sinned against, together elevate’. In the idealistic tradition, Gandhiji believed injustice profited no one. From personal through to the political, there are only losers in an unjust transaction. Bikhu Parekh explains:

For Gandhi humanity was indivisible, and no man could degrade or brutalise another without also degrading or brutalising himself, or inflict psychic and moral damage on others without inflicting it on himself as well. This was so in at least three ways.

a. First, to degrade others was to imply that a human being may be so treated, and thus to lower the expected level of the moral minimum due to every human being from which all alike suffered.

b. Second, to degrade and dehumanise others was to damage their pride, self-respect and potential for good, and thus both to deny oneself and the world the benefits of their possible contributions and to add to the collective moral, psychological and financial cost of repairing the damage they were likely to do to themselves.

c. Third, as a being endowed with a moral sense and a capacity for reflection no man could degrade or maltreat others without hardening himself against their suffering . . . thus both coarsening his moral sensibility and lowering his own and the collective level of humanity.¹⁰¹

Gandhiji realised that moral unity need not mean assimilation. Political welfare is a complex moral situation and the State must remain sensitive to the individual and his or her community. If the State were to view social justice as a ‘top-down’ imposition of rules and regulations there might be an immediate reduction of wrongdoing, but citizens would not be morally elevated. As such, they would be no less likely to err in future. Concomitantly the State, by focusing exclusively on retributive justice, might become insensitive to the causes of the offender’s impropriety.

Gandhiji wanted to elevate everyone to the point of mutual care and connection. Gandhiji’s approach to achieving this was congruent with the *Bhagavadgītā*’s position that, in attempting to realise an orientation of universal goodwill, one cannot neglect one’s communal *sva-dharma*. In terms of the *Bhagavadgītā*’s sequence of moral development:

adharmic person → detached person → *sva-dharmic* activities Δ *sanātana* orientation
(communal activities) congruent with (orientation of universal justice)
 ↑
 Gandhiji emphasised

In political language, the State must realise that citizens inevitably belong to smaller communal associations. Much of the moral, psychological and spiritual welfare of the citizen is welded with a communal identity. The elevation of citizens will be non-disruptive only if it respects and responds to these identities. Gandhiji referred to the State's respecting these communal contexts as *swadeshi* government:

Gandhi used the term *Swadesh* to refer to this unity, *swa* meaning one's own and *desh* to the total cultural and natural environment of which one was an inseparable part.¹⁰²

Gandhiji recognised that there are ever widening circles of '*desh*'. Their origin is the individual and his immediate community, but they must expand to embrace the national unit and ultimately humankind. Yet never should the individual feel he or she has been by the State dragooned anonymously into the greater whole. This is particularly significant when the *desh* is not a 'natural' unit but a trans-communal construction, i.e. the plural political community. A *swa-deshi* government accepts the challenge of ensuring that all citizens feel the political community to be their own. The aim is for the political community to be an integration of, and not an abstraction from, more naturally appropriated communal identities.

Positing communal units in a reciprocal relationship with the State sharpens our understanding of the ethical status of both. Consider a situation where the citizens define morality as obedience to State law. Such citizens will be morally incapacitated should the State machinery become corrupt. The *swa-deshi* ideal can counteract such degeneration by emphasising the continual role of communal identities in the conception of citizenship. These identities are notorious for parochial outlooks, an insularity that makes it inappropriate for any one outlook to dominate political activity. However, tight communal identification can sometimes play a corrective role. Communal identity can provide an oasis of moral inspiration for the elevation of society as a whole.¹⁰³ It is for this reason, as well as the argument from continuity, that Gandhiji's *swa-deshi* government is a desirable progression from conventional nationalism:

Gandhiji's <i>swa-deshi</i> government	Gellner on nationalism
The <i>swadeshi</i> spirit which Gandhiji variously translated as the community, national or patriotic spirit or the spirit of nationality and sharply distinguished from nationalism, basically referred to the way an individual related and responded to his desh. ¹⁰⁴	Nationalism is basically a movement which conceives the natural object of human loyalty to be a fairly large anonymous unit defined by shared language or culture. It is 'anonymous' in the sense that its members do not generally have positive links with each other, and that the subdivisions within the nation are not of importance comparable with the larger unit. ¹⁰⁵

Figure 21. Nationalism and *swa-deshi* politics compared

In government committed to the *swadeshi* spirit, all levels of loyalty are respected. This applies right from fostering the individual's loyalty to himself, his community, all the way through to the State. This State is not a pragmatically defined anonymous construction but a political space shared by inter-related, familiar and caring sub-units. The sub-divisions within the nation are not incidental with regard to the larger unit, but instead absolutely crucial to its welfare.

6.2.2 The chink in the Mahatma's armour

Gandhiji was wise but suffered from one grave weakness - he was too broad-hearted to acknowledge that many believers are opposed to inter-religious unity. He assumed that because he had been obsessed with giving religious ideas liberal formulations, all other believers (Hindus and Muslims alike) would ultimately take to similar meditations. For example, he routinely said:

I believe the *Bible*, the *Koran*, the *Zend-Avestha* to be as divinely inspired as the Vedas. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own.¹⁰⁶

... I believe with my whole soul that the God of *Koran* is also the God of *Gītā* and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God.¹⁰⁷

The point is, while Gandhiji saw all scriptures as teaching all are children God, the different believers might not share this vision. Gandhiji was not sufficiently alert to the fact that religious texts lend themselves to *illiberal* as well as egalitarian interpretations. Instead, he held tolerance to be a self evident truth and generally overlooked that receptivity to other faiths must often be spelt, or even dug, out from more obvious readings. There is too long a history of religious leaders preaching illiberal readings.

Gandhiji's idealism had an unfortunate bearing upon his educational policy. While he appreciated the influence of religious beliefs, he felt such influence was best left with religious associations. He assumed religious persons/ leaders/ associations shared his inclusive ideology and would preach accordingly.¹⁰⁸ Concomitantly, he felt it was

beyond the capacity of State education to participate usefully in the religious education of minors:

I do not believe that the state can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe the religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations.¹⁰⁹

Hence Gandhiji's position on the responsibilities of State regarding religious nurture is complicated if not inconsistent. He did not hesitate to formulate his own political position through Hindu beliefs. Nor did he deny the inspiration he drew from all the major religious traditions. Yet he felt it inappropriate for the State education system to involve religious education in the social evolution of India. The ominous consequences of this policy were understood by the wise, redoubtable and exemplary patriot Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958)¹¹⁰.

6.3 Maulana Azad: need to ensure a 'civilised' religious influence

Azad saw it was dangerous to *presume* that private religious bodies would not oppose political liberalism. Himself a devout Muslim, he had noticed a trend for religious influence to become a polarising as opposed to unifying force.¹¹¹ His counsel applies not only to his fellow Muslims but to all who see religious allegiances as absolving them from civic responsibilities. Here are some pivotal statements from one of his famous (pre-partition) speeches:

1. I am a Musalman and am proud of that fact . . .
2. As a Musalman I have a special interest in Islamic religion and culture and I cannot tolerate any interference with them. But in addition to these sentiments, I have others also which the realities and conditions of my life have forced upon me . . .
3. Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievement.
4. This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible. No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity. We must accept the logic of fact and history and engage ourselves in the fashioning of our future destiny (tabulation imposed on speech).¹¹²

Notice that in 1 and 2, Azad acknowledges the importance of religious membership. Yet 3 and 4 highlight an awareness of the dangers of leaving any community (his own included) to develop on purely communal lines. Communal identities cannot be viewed as absolute and exclusive; no part must view its existence and welfare as independent of the whole. To do so would be to entertain 'un-natural fancies which cannot take root in the soil of reality'. This was not a requirement for the believer to put his State before his God. Instead, Azad was asking that a sincere effort be made to remain loyal to both the State and God; especially if the State treated one liberally and well.

Azad was aware of the perfidious influence communal leaders could exert in alienating minorities from the mainstream. He had seen his country torn apart by an opportunist zealot, and was determined that polarising ideologies would find no place in an independent and plural India. Azad felt prevention was better than cure, and that State organised religious education was a necessity. He insisted in his Presidential speech at the Fourteenth Session of the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1948 that:

If we want to safeguard the intellectual life of our country against this danger (of illiberal religious influences), it becomes all the more necessary for us not to leave the imparting of early religious education to private sources. We should rather take it under our direct care and supervision (parenthesis not supplied by the Maulana).¹¹³

Azad agreed with Gandhiji that the schoolmaster could not ensure the spiritual evolution or post-mortem beatitude of youngsters. These ambitions are best left in the hands of God's representatives. However, Azad knew there was one aspect of religious development for which State involvement was not only possible but essential. This was an examination of the political ramifications of religious belief. This examination must be taken under the 'direct care and supervision' of State educational institutions committed to liberal principles.

Though Azad had been Education Minister his counsel was neglected. This may have inadvertently cleared the way for the corruption of young people, Hindus and Muslims alike. If the Maulana's advice had been heeded, young Indians might have resisted the influence of those religious associations who wish to advance their cause even at the cost of social dis-integration.

6.4 Religious Education: Constitutionally a purely private concern

6.4.1 What was prohibited

Concerning the issue of religious education touched upon above, the Indian Constitution takes a precarious position. Following Gandhiji, it prohibits religious education from being a State concern:

Article 28 (1): no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds.¹¹⁴

Such a position had been adopted primarily to reassure the minorities (Muslims and others) that they need not fear the religious indoctrination of their children by Hindu teachers. In addition, Article 28(1) reflected a belief that it would prove too problematic for the State to manage religious education. This applied not only to the practical difficulties associated with classroom teaching of a number of religions, but to issues of neutrality and aggravation:

We should be considerably disturbing the peaceful atmosphere of an institution if these controversies with regard to the truthful character of any particular religion and the erroneous character of the other were brought into juxtaposition in the school itself.¹¹⁵

Notice that these concerns were based on a particular view of what religion was, and how it would be taught. Essentially, religion was seen as only in the business of making ultimate truth claims. To teach religion would mean entering the controversial domain of ultimate and eschatological truth. However, religions also speak on matters of earthly and mundane significance (Chapter 3 §2.1). These are matters in which an attempt at discussions on truth and falsity, or at least degrees of truth and falsity, *can* be made in a reasonable and rational manner. Religious views on politics would be one such matter. The Constitution offered no opportunity to discuss such matters in the classroom.

6.4.2 What was allowed

The Constitution did offer opportunities for religious instruction *outside* of the State classroom. Believers are free to practice their religion and to perpetuate independent teaching institutions designed to nurture their young people in the desired religious outlook:

Article 28 (2): nothing in Article 28 clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under 'any endowment or trust' which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such (an) institution.¹¹⁶

Article 26: Subject to public order, morality and health every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right:

- a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;
- b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion, etc.¹¹⁷

Private bodies could teach religious education, but the State educational system must play no part in this process. It must not teach religious education nor must it interfere with the private religious bodies that do.

6.4.3 What was ignored: the Radhakrishnan report

Opposition towards this Constitutional position was soon forthcoming. The most thoughtful came in *The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49)*, chaired by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) (President of India 1962-67). The Chairman shared Azad's awareness of both the importance of religion and the dangers of leaving religious education to communal bodies:

We do not accept a purely scientific materialism as the philosophy of the state. That would be to violate our nature, our *swabhava*, our characteristic genius. . . . (that) . . . has run throughout our history like a golden chain.¹¹⁸

If we are not prepared to leave the scientific and literary training of pupils to the home and the community we cannot leave the religious training to these.¹¹⁹

Hence:

The State can and should provide for the teaching of 'Universal Religion'.¹²⁰

A reverent study of the essentials of all religions would be uniquely rewarding as a step towards harmony between religions long divided. This is in consonance with the spirit of our country.¹²¹

The absolute religious neutrality of the State can be preserved if in State institutions, what is good and great in every religion is presented . . .¹²²

In some ways, Radhakrishnan's views on 'Universal religion' are presumptuous and could even be viewed as patronising. It is problematic to simplify Hinduism to any uncontentious universals. Nor should a Hindu, even of Radhakrishnan's immensity of knowledge, assume that all religions can be distilled to some universal essence. Indeed, Radhakrishnan should have restricted his talk of a universal consensus to contexts such as the influence of religion in political and social matters.

However, Radhakrishnan is right in asserting that there are significant liberal elements in all the great religions. The State must draw upon these elements to assist in preparing citizens capable of perpetuating a liberal State. If the State does not draw on these traditional recourses, it risks presenting liberal political principles as ideas in limbo. Radhakrishnan's views contrast radically with Nehru's inclinations to mimic the west:

Possibilities must be grounded in the nature of the actual. Civilisations must live on the lines of their own experience. Like individuals, even nations cannot borrow experience from others. They may furnish us with light, but our own history provides us with the conditions of action. The only revolutions that endure are those that are rooted in the past. . . .

In India we cannot wipe the slate clean . . . True progress is an organic thing like the growth of a tree.¹²³

Regrettably, Nehru and his influence was too strong and Radhakrishnan's traditional and idealistic view was a super nova on the Indian educational scene. Radhakrishnan's report was followed by the *Report of the Secondary Education commission (1952-53)* whose main conclusions ignore, and so demean, Radhakrishnan's recommendations.

As Gosh has summarised:

The commission stressed the following three points:

- (i) The influence of the home as the dominant factor
- (ii) The influence of the school through the conduct and behaviour of the teachers themselves and life in the school community as a whole
- (iii) Influences exercised by the public of the locality and the extent to which public opinion prevails in all matters pertaining to religious and moral codes of conduct.¹²⁴

Despite further commissions and consequent swings in the pendulum, the end result has been only one of minor concessions to the Radhakrishnan report. Nehru's original position, wherein religious education remains in the hands of parochial bodies and

private institutions, is still incumbent today. This has made for at least three unfortunate possibilities.

Firstly, young Hindus grow up ignorant of not only the liberal elements in their tradition but also the liberal connotations inherent within Islam. Young Hindus do not learn that Islam is a humanitarian religion that embraces people of all origins and nationalities.

Secondly, ignorance provides ground for base suspicions. It becomes easy to convince young Hindus that Muslim associations, separated from the mainstream, are fostering anti-Hindu, anti-social and anti-Indian outlooks.¹²⁵ Similarly, Muslims become suspicious of Hindu associations.

Thirdly, a possibility exists that these private bodies are indeed fostering ideals contrary to the realisation of a liberal and integrated Indian polity.¹²⁶

Nehru's secular educational policy has left much at stake. The school is the main place where young Hindus and Muslims mix and can learn of the liberal elements of their own and each other's traditions. School might be the only place where views can be expressed without rumpus. Yet this opportunity for honest and informed inter-religious dialogue of a lofty civic tone is prohibited. When ignorance abounds, there is scope for distorted and illiberal religiosity to flourish. Hence it is ignorance of religion, and not its interference in the political sphere, that is the greater threat to the perpetuation of a civil society.

§ 7 A Rise of Hindu Fundamentalism?

7.1 Three religious styles

The illiberal attitude among young Hindus, and the popularity of the 'Hindurashtra' rhetoric, might be viewed as symptomatic of a rise of Hindu fundamentalism. Is this classification appropriate? Clarification is important in understanding how the current trend towards communal polarisation can be reversed. A quick reminder of the salient features of the three religious styles outlined in Chapter 2 is given below:

Characteristic	Religious style		
	cultic	fundamentalist	liberal
Who or what is the authority?	A charismatic.	Holy books.	Religious texts, that are open to interpretation.
Credibility	Poor.	Good.	Good.
Size	Small.	Large.	Large.
Relationship to History	Maverick types and disinterested in history.	Claim a transcendental textual authority that makes historical experience irrelevant.	Religious texts placed in historical contexts. Willingness to learn from the past.
Attitude towards liberalism	Miscellaneous political positions. Small communities, so no threat to liberal society.	Political power and truth are conflated. Large numbers and opposition to liberal freedoms make for a threat to liberalism.	Has a strong consensus with the liberal outlook and is hence a friend, not foe, of the liberal State.

Figure 22. Cultic, fundamentalist and liberal religious styles

7.2 Young Hindus and fundamentalism

The assessment of whether the views of young Hindus are fundamentalist is made regarding these characteristics of fundamentalism:

- a. The a-historical reading of religious texts
- b. The conflation of theology with agendas of political power
- c. Morality based on a rigid understanding of God's word
- d. Alienation from society.

7.2.1 The a-historical reading of religious texts

It is feature of fundamentalism that the 'truth' is not open to interpretation and historical contextualisation. Fundamentalism maintains that such contextualisation confuses the issues and adulterates the text. It rejects the idea of an evolution of meanings, and ignores developments within the textual tradition which do not accord with (its) 'correct' interpretation. Of course, all traditions do this to some extent. But the all or nothing rigidity of fundamentalist truth means fundamentalists *routinely* dissociate texts from their historical contexts into transcendental vacuums.

The present Rāma mythology¹²⁷ associated with the Ayodhyā issue is an example of the fundamentalist tendency to disrespect important yet inconvenient historical precedents. The characterisation of Śrī-Rāma by Vālmīki in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as Gosvāmi Tulsīdās' in *Rāmācaritmānas* (written during Muslim rule), will be contrasted with the contemporary 'Rāma'.

7.2.1.1 Śrī-Rāma in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Rāmācaritmānas*

Frank Whaling notes that Vālmīki's Śrī-Rāma is both the exemplar and preserver of human *dharma*. The *dharma* upheld by Śrī-Rāma overrides all parochial or communal distinctions, as witnessed by the famous episode relating to the welcoming of the outsider Vibhīṣaṇa. Though Vibhīṣaṇa is from the enemy camp, he is well received:

He (Śrī-Rāma) welcomed Vibhīṣaṇa when that *rākṣasa* came to him from the enemy camp [Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* VI.11]. . . . (this makes) the point that *dharma* transcends race or nation. . . . Vibhīṣaṇa had followed *dharma*. Rāma, by his actions . . . was affirming that there is a transcendental *dharma* to which all beings are subject. This *dharma* applies not merely to the citizens of Ayodhyā but also to . . . *rākṣasas* (parenthesis imposed).¹²⁸

Such an unprejudiced and receptive attitude is congruent with the psychological profile which Vālmīki has attributed to his God. As Whaling has gleaned, Śrī-Rāma is:

. . . "calm [Vāl. I.1.8. *dhṛtimān*] . . . equable [Vāl.I.1.11.*sama*] . . . saintly [Vāl. I.1.14 *sādhu*], always approached by the good like the sea by rivers [Vāl.I.1.15 *sarvadābhigataḥ sadbhiḥ samudra iva sindhubhiḥ*], the same to all [Vāl.I.1.15 *sarvasama*], endowed with all good qualities [Vāl.I.1.16 *sarvagunopeta*] . . . patient like the earth [Vāl.I.1.17 *kṣamayā pṛthivī*] . . . forbearing [Vāl.I.3.3. *Kṣāntī*], benevolent [Vāl.I.3.3. *saumyatā*] . . . calm-souled [Vāl.II.1.15 *praśāntātman*], gentle [Vāl.II.1.15 *mṛdu*] . . . able to forget offences [Vāl. II.1.16] . . . kind in action [Vāl. II.2.21 *sāntvayita*] . . . uncomplaining [Vāl.II.2.21 *anasūyaka*] . . . free from pride [Vāl. II.6.23 *anuddhatātmana*] . . . sharing the sufferings of others [Vāl.II.36.3] . . .¹²⁹

Vālmīki's epic was not composed under foreign rule. In contrast, Gosvāmi Tulsidās, in 1574, began composing the epic *Rāmācaritmānas*¹³⁰ during turbulent and complicated times. Hindu temples had been ransacked, perhaps even the Rāmājanmabhūmi destroyed. The *mlechas*, or those beyond the pale of Hindu society, ruled. One wonders whether in the *Rāmācaritmānas* Rāvana and his kin, as the enemies of Vedic *dharma*, were not intended to serve the purpose of symbolising the more disruptive elements of the Muslim presence.

Yet despite the Muslim domination, Tulsidās remained true to the compassionate tone of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*.¹³¹ True, Tulsidās's work was not a direct translation of the original.¹³² At points new episodes, characters and shifts of emphasis are introduced. Nevertheless, Tulsidās's Śrī-Rāma is never transformed from Vālmīki's God of love into a 'God' of resentment or hate. For example, Śrī-Rāma is sensitive to the 'purpose of the heart'¹³³, fond of children¹³⁴, forgiving¹³⁵, lover of the humble and recognising 'no relationship except that of faith'¹³⁶, patient even when ignored¹³⁷ and forever open hearted¹³⁸. Consistent with this psychological profile¹³⁹, Śrī-Rāma's conquest of

Rāvaṇa does not find Rāvaṇa god-forsaken but instead reconciled with the Divine nature (Chapter 3 §6.2).

The Rāma-rājya associated with this God-king was magnanimous, caring and egalitarian. Not only men and women, but all creatures, knew peace. 'No one felt any enmity towards another'¹⁴⁰, 'no one ever dreamt of sin'¹⁴¹, and 'all recognised the merits of others'¹⁴². This was a perfect ecology with flora blossoming throughout the year and 'birds and beasts of every description forgot their instinctive animosities'.¹⁴³ Citizens were compatible, yet fulfilled in their own potential. So significant was every citizen that the God-king felt himself accountable to even a washer-man.¹⁴⁴ Divine grace 'extinguished every variance'¹⁴⁵. Such a Rāma-rājya is the ideal for a civilised religion and a spiritualised modularity.

Tulsīdās' work follows that of Kabīr (1440-1538), who promoted inter-faith unity. Moreover, though Mogul rule was inevitably oppressive, some rulers were of a relatively broad outlook. One such was Akbar, who engaged in a sincere dialogue with his more cultured Hindu subjects.¹⁴⁶ Banarsi Prasad Saksena has gone as far to suggest:

Tulasi speaks again and again of Ramarajya in which the ruler was just and the people were happy and prosperous, truth-loving and peace-loving. And this was the very ideal pursued by his contemporary sovereign Akbar.¹⁴⁷

All these factors provided the context for a liberal rendering from Tulsīdās' pen of Vālmīki's narrative. In turn, Hindus familiar with this work responded to an alien presence with faith in a God of reconciliation. The post-*Rāmācaritmānas* egalitarian bhakti movement bears testimony to the power of such narratives to bring out the best in people even during less than perfect times.

7.2.1.2 The contemporary Rāma

Contrast this with the Rāma, and associated civic outlook, of Hindus alienated from the Vālmīki-Tulsī tradition. The modern 'Rāma-rājya' movement seeks credibility for its aggressive inclinations from the Rāma narrative. However, this requires a de-contextualisation of the Rāma narrative from liberal precedents such as those set by Vālmīki and Tulsīdās. The modern movement holds the Kṣatriyahood of Rāma to represent exclusively 'the true interface' between God and (un-righteous) man. Lipner has highlighted the most infamous product of this representation:

At its 'not-so-good', religious Hinduism has always had its share of unsophisticated literalists who are unresponsive to the moderating voice of reason. These literalists have sought uncritically, or cynically, to transplant ideas from the past into the present. A good example of this is the evocation in recent times of the *rām-rājya* (Rule of Rāma) idea derived from Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* in connection with the so-called Ram-janma-bhumi/Babri-masjid affair . . . It is ironic that a concept originally meant to express harmonious coexistence between humans and nature under the benign rule of Rāma, and which was in modern times carefully reinterpreted by Gandhi to encourage Hindus and Muslims to live together in amity, has become a leading element in a conception of *hindutva* ('Hinduness') which is intolerant especially of Muslim identity and presence.¹⁴⁸

Contemporary 'transformation of the Ram image from that of a serene, omnipresent, eternally forgiving God to that of an angry, punishing one'¹⁴⁹ claims roots in the Hindu religion but the derivation is selective, tenuous and strained. Inconvenient gentle aspects of the tradition relevant to the issues are suppressed lest they challenge the veracity of hate.¹⁵⁰ In this sense, the aggressive readings resemble the a-historical and de-contextualised character of much 'Hindu-fundamentalist' thought. However, the comparison must be qualified.

7.2.2 The conflation of theology with agendas of political power.

7.2.2.1 Not enough theology

Those most likely to be taken in by a-historical and de-contextualised readings are those ignorant of the Vālmiki-Tulsī tradition and familiar only with the celluloid 'Gods' and poster propaganda. Such people would not know that God's aggression was a last and reluctant choice.¹⁵¹ They would not know that Śrī-Rāma held no malice even towards his enemies or their kin, e.g.: Śrī-Rāma had 'extraordinary affection' for Vāli¹⁵², promised to look after the orphaned lad Angada¹⁵³, granted Vāli a place in heaven¹⁵⁴, related to Rāvaṇa as His own kinsman,¹⁵⁵ and instructed that '(all Rāvaṇa's) womenfolk be comforted'¹⁵⁶. Above all, they would be ignorant of that fact that in any confrontation of good and evil, the ultimate intention is not retribution but reconciliation. Without this theological knowledge, young people are easily manipulated by distorted readings.

Hence the problem with what has been referred to as 'Hindu fundamentalism' is not that it represents an interference of theocracy into the political domain but that the attempt to conflate theology with political power is theologically not Hindu enough. In this sense, 'Hindu fundamentalism' is far more secular than other fundamentalisms. Nandy's observations support this assertion:

As it happened, many of those who helped to redefine Hinduism as a national ideology were themselves either agnostic or non-believers; some of them were not even practising Hindus . . . Actually, the fanaticism associated with *hindutva* at the highest levels of the organisations

swearing by Hindutva is political, not religious. At its core lies a secular ideology of the state and a modern rationality.¹⁵⁷

The reader might have noticed that in . . . the political subculture the *Sangh Parivāṅ* represents, the idiom is often strongly secular and anti-theocratic, even anti-theological.¹⁵⁸

In other words, even the Hindus who would constitute the Hindu *rāshtra* are not expected to be Hindus in the traditional sense. The traditional Hindus are seen as too diverse, feminized, irrational, un-versed in the intricacies of the modern world, and too pantheistic, pagan, gullible and anarchic to run a proper state. So, the emphasis is on the new version of Hindus emerging in metropolitan India, with one foot in western education and values, the other in simplified versions of classical thought now available in commoditifiable form in the urban centres of India.¹⁵⁹

As a consequence, the political culture of India is no longer merely a site of contention between the modern and the traditional, with the state clearly on the side of the former. It has become a site of contention between the modern that attacks or bypasses traditions and the modern that employs traditions instrumentally . . . As we have said, Hindu nationalism has always been an illegitimate child of modern India, not of Hindu traditions. Such a nationalism is bound to feel more at home when the main struggle is between two forms of modernity and when the instrumental use of traditions - the use of religion as an ideology rather than as a faith - is not taboo for a majority of the political class.

Given this configuration of cultural forces, the *Sangh parivāṅ* has taken full advantage of the keywords of political 'modernism' in India, and taken to its logical conclusion the constant emphasis on nationalism, secularism, national security, history and scientific temper.¹⁶⁰

Nandy stresses that the hindutva sense of morality is not based on any thoughtful exegesis of God's word. Instead, the Hindu tradition, which is highly pluriform and contains significant elements of implicitly liberal ideology, is used *instrumentally* to serve a nationalism that seeks to assimilate all communities into the framework of a modern nation state. The modern 'Rāma-rājya' is based on highly selective and strained readings torn out of the context of the pluriform tradition.¹⁶¹ The consequence of its propaganda is not a return to a golden age of Hinduism, but the veering away of the younger generation from important elements of their tradition.

Consider Pushpa's claim that 'This is a Hindu country and nothing will ever change that'. This is not typical of the attitude of citizens in Tulasi's Rāma-rājya who 'forgot their natural animosities' and 'reconciled all differences'. Nitin, the most aggressive of the 'anti-Muslim' young Hindus, had little idea of what a State governed on Hindu principles might look like and even rejected texts which demanded a liberal response (Chapter 4 §6.3.1.b). This is typical of those influenced by the blinkering effect of the theologically vacuous modern propaganda.

7.2.2.2 Morality based on desperation and ignorance

There is a parallel sense in which the illiberal attitudes met during this research should be distinguished from classical fundamentalism. Fundamentalists legitimise their illiberal moral positions on a textual basis. Young Hindus may not be so certain of the

truth of their indignant professions, and may be resorting to them out of desperation rather than theological commitment. Hence their illiberal attitude may stem not from a fundamentalist revival but from the collapse of the minimal reciprocity necessary to sustain an ethics of care (§5.1).

Remember that the general moral values of the young Hindus seem wholesome (Chapter 4 §7.2.b). It is an illiberal attitude towards a particular community that is the regrettable aspect of the moral outlook of some young Hindus, and not a profoundly illiberal disposition animated by commitment to a rigid understanding of God’s word. Indeed, one is inclined to believe that if liberal imperatives could be given a sufficiently saffron garb even those such as Nitin and Pushpa might eventually take to them. It may be that the younger generation have simply not been familiarised sufficiently with the vision of Rāma-rājya as given in the writings of Vālmīki or Tulsīdās.

7.2.3. Alienation of Hindu from Hindu

Is the aggressive Hinduism alienated from the mainstream of society? The majority of Indian society are Hindus. Within such a vast and pluriform tradition it is difficult to say if sympathies towards the new aggressive face of Hinduism can be assumed to be widespread. Consider two divergent viewpoints even within the case-studies:

Radha	Nitin and Pushpa
Interviewer: Do you think it is good that India has people of all religions?	Nitin: Hanumān destroyed Lanka so war isn’t always wrong.
Radha: Yes, all the people are worshipping God.	Pushpa: India is our country and nothing will ever change that. I don’t care what happens. . .
Interviewer: Is it good there are Muslims in India?	India will always be Hindustan (land of the Hindus).
Radha: Yes. There are good people also in Muslim and bad people in Hindu. All is good and bad.	

Figure 23. Divergent viewpoints

Many Hindus respect Radha’s traditional, gentler and more compassionate interpretations of Hindu *dharma*. Others are re-formulating *dharma* in an aggressive and illiberal manner. Young Hindus could take to either version of the contemporary Hinduism. The future of Hinduism is confronted by a dichotomy between a divisive ‘God’ of retribution and an all embracing God of love. Hinduism tends to accommodate diversity, but in this case accommodation of an aggressive and illiberal attitude is not acceptable. Hence the aggressive attempt to rally Hindu society into a

coherent whole may result in the alienation of Hindu from Hindu in an irreconcilable split.

Sections 7.2.1-3 indicate that it is not possible to answer comprehensively or decisively the question: 'is the aggressive Hindu nationalism a kind of Hindu fundamentalism?' However, the following summary can contribute towards future thinking on the matter.

fundamentalist characteristics	non-fundamentalist characteristics
Appears to conflate theology with agendas of political power.	Not much theology on the political agenda.
Places texts in an a-historical vacuum.	Religious rhetoric voiced in desperation and ignorance, not with real theological commitment.
Alienation of 'angry Hindu' from Hindu mainstream?	Morality is based on an ideology of assimilatory nationalism, and not a commitment to God's word.

Figure 24. Fundamentalism or not?

§ 8 A Return to Nandy and Some Parting Thoughts

8.1 Intimate enemies and illegitimate nationalisms?

Recall that in the *Intimate Enemy* Nandy proposed that the Hindu patronage of an aggressive 'God' might be a consequence of the colonial discourse. Hindus responded to the colonial presence with a policy of stigmatisation and emulation. The present Hindu hostility towards Muslims and its concomitant 'hyper-masculinity' is following the precedent set by Hindu nationalists in their response to colonialism. The contemporary militarisation of Hinduism is a response to what is perceived to be a Muslim 'threatening other'¹⁶².

Much of this is credible. It is now humbly suggested that the following points should be incorporated into Nandy's hypothesis for it to contribute more fully towards a programme of social elevation:

1) Nandy explains the aggressive Hindu response to the Muslim community primarily through the psychology of the colonial experience (§1.3.2). Consequently he does not sufficiently reflect on pre and post-colonial identities (both Hindu and Muslim) and events that may have a significant bearing on contemporary attitudes.¹⁶³ Movements such as 'hindutva' may be exaggerating the communal polarities, but it may be equally deceptive to present Hindus and Muslims as living in pre-colonial idyllic harmony¹⁶⁴, with recent tensions the work predominantly of 'electoral politics' and the 'propaganda machine'.¹⁶⁵

2) Speaking of the present, Nandy maintains that:

... (Gandhi's) Hinduism brings to politics a cultural-moral critique of Hindutva *from the point of view of Hinduism as the living faith of a majority of Indians [emphasis imposed]*.¹⁶⁶

However, it is too utopian to suggest that Gandhian Hinduism is the 'faith by which the majority of Hindus live'. Many Hindus *do* share and implement Gandhiji's beliefs, and India would be better if all did. However it is presumptuous to assume Gandhian ideology as typical. This romanticism relates to errors 3,4 and 5 below.

3) Nandy ignores that his and Gandhiji's noble reading of Hinduism is but one of many. It is only Nandy's selective reading of the past that allows him to suggest that hindutva tries to 'militarise the seemingly un-militarisable'¹⁶⁷. Historically, Hindus have repeatedly easily militarised their tradition and been capable of violence.¹⁶⁸ Hence the commendably liberal and feminine readings must never be *assumed* normal.

4) Nandy has a tendency to assume that small, and only small is beautiful. His critique of those who seek to 'steamroller' the Hindu community into a political monolith is routinely associated with a tendency to romanticise the small and diverse traditions of India's sleepy villages:

This new Hinduism - the political ideology of which was to be later given the name Hindutva ... had a number of important features. First, it defensively rejected or devalued the little cultures of India as so many indices of the country's backwardness and as prime candidates for integration within the Hindu/national mainstream. Instead, the new Hindus sought to chalk out a new pan-Indian religion called Hinduism that would be primarily classical, Brahminic, Vedāntic and, therefore, not an embarrassment to the modern or semi-modern Indians in touch with the more 'civilised' parts of the world.¹⁶⁹

However, there is little reason to believe that, relative to their size, the 'little cultures' are not the locus of as much violence and exploitation as the immense aggregates of the modern nation-State. The little cultures *may indeed* be 'indices of the country's backwardness' and deserve to be 'rejected' or 'devalued'. Indeed, many of the members of these cultures are themselves rejecting their parochial affiliations in favour of a more 'pan-Indian Hindu' identity. This is not to say that all 'little cultures' need be discarded or assimilated within the Hindu mainstream. The fact is, one must not generalise; each culture, little or large, must be examined piecemeal.

Notice also that Nandy tends to place the 'little traditions' in opposition to Brahminic or Vedāntic Hinduism. Elsewhere also he says 'Predictably, this emphasis on Sanskritic Hinduism and the attempts to abolish the little cultures of India go hand in hand with attempts to reach out to the westernised middle-class Hindus as the 'natural clientele'

of the Vishva Hindu Parishad'¹⁷⁰. The irony here is that Nandy appears guilty of the same monolith-generalisations of which he is so critical. Exactly to which Sanskrit Hinduism is Nandy referring? The absolute monism of Śaṅkarācārya or the devotional polarity theology of Rāmānujācārya? The Vedic, iconoclastic and austere Arya Samāj or the deity centred and epicurean Vallabha sampradāya? Or perhaps the strict dualism of Madhvācārya? By its very constitution, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (an example of the 'Brahminic' Hinduism to which Nandy objects) seeks to accommodate all these positions.

Instead of routinely referring to Sanskrit Hinduism as if it was a monolith, Nandy might reflect on *particular* exemplars of Sanskrit Hinduism. He would then encounter Sanskrit examples of the unity in diversity that he seeks. Consider for example the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition which is 'classical, Brahminic, Vedāntic'. The followers of this tradition are generally not 'westernised middle-class Hindus' and their branch of pan-Indian Sanskrit Brahminism exists in fruitful harmony with the little, non-Sanskrit tradition of the Tamil Ālvārs.¹⁷¹ There must surely be many similar instances illustrating that little and large need not always exist in either moral, ideological, or social opposition.

5) Nandy clearly and extensively states why he objects to the concept of a modern Hindu Nation State:

... the ideology of nationalism was nativized in a form that could sanction the attempts to convert the Hindus into a conventional, European-style nation.

This new Hinduism - the political ideology of which was to be later given the name Hindutva ... had a number of important features. First, it defensively rejected or devalued the little cultures of India as so many indices of the country's backwardness and as prime candidates for integration within the Hindu/national mainstream.¹⁷²

Second, the redefined version of Hinduism allowed those who saw the new religion more as an ideology than as a faith, to use Hinduism as an instrument of political mobilisation *a la* European-style national ideology.¹⁷³

Third, this Hinduism sought to masculinize the self-definition of the Hindus and, thus, martialise the community.¹⁷⁴

Fourth, Hindu nationalism not only accepted modern science and technology and their Baconian social philosophy, it also developed a totally uncritical attitude towards any western knowledge system that seemed to contribute to the development and sustenance of state power and which promised to homogenise the Indian population. There is no critique of modern science and technology in Hindutva ...¹⁷⁵

Consequently, there is a complete rejection of not only the pre-British Islamic concept of state in India ... even the traditional Hindu experience of running large states in India is seen as entirely irrelevant.¹⁷⁶

Nandy prefers a looser form of government with citizens living in a childlike innocence and resisting organisation on a national scale. This vision is based on the thoughts of

Rabindranath Tagore who came to believe that Nation States, both generally and in the Indian instance, suffocated diversity and potential:

Tagore: . . . when we walk barefooted upon ground strewn with gravel, our feet come gradually to adjust themselves to the caprices of the inhospitable earth; while if the tiniest particle of gravel finds its lodgement inside our shoes we can never forget and forgive its intrusion. And these shoes are the government by the Nation - it is tight, it regulates our steps with a closed-up system, within which our feet have only the slightest liberty to make their own adjustments. Therefore, when you produce statistics to compare the number of gravels which our feet had to encounter in the former days with the paucity in the present regime, they hardly touch the real points . . . [Tagore R (1917) *Nationalism*, reprint Macmillan, Madras, 1985, p 15-6].

Nandy: Does this relate only to colonial India? Will the analysis hold true even for an independent society ruled by its own nation-state? Tagore answers these questions, too. He says, to his non-Indian audience:

Tagore: Not merely the subject races, but you who live under the delusion that you are free, are every day sacrificing your freedom and humanity to this fetish of nationalism [Tagore R (1917) *Nationalism*, reprint Macmillan, Madras, 1985, p 18].

Nandy: . . . Instead, he [Tagore] looks back to what he sees as the real tradition of India, which is to work for 'an adjustment of races [Tagore's term for cultures], to acknowledge the real differences between them, and yet seek some basis of unity [p 59.]' . . . Tagore believes that India 'has never had a real sense of nationalism' and it would do India 'no good to compete with western civilisation in its own field' [Tagore R (1917) reprint Macmillan, p 64].¹⁷⁷

Tagore and Nandy may be right in maintaining that 'small scale' social aggregates are best. However, it is too pessimistic to presume that modern Nation-States are incapable of upholding the feminine values that are central to their views on social organisation. Similarly it may be too pessimistic to assume that, because elements of past and present Hindu nationalism have placed a distorted emphasis on Kṣatriyahood, that all future Hindu nationalists are bound to do likewise. Not all religious nationalisms need involve a devaluation of a feminine moral and religious psychology. Consequently, if Nandy is to do more than attack paper tigers he must ask: could there be a type of religious nationalism which those who value freedom, diversity and the feminine values, could endorse? This enquiry is not only of academic concern, for one cannot wish away that India *is* a massive nation-State. This is the context in which progress must be made. The real issue is how this State can be moralised. Coordinated institutions of the State, especially its educational system, can play a great part.

6) Further, moralisation will require dialogue and co-operation with institutionalised Hinduism, Hindu nationalists, *sants*, *kathakaras*, etc. There is much with these entities of which Nandy disapproves, yet they are extremely influential and their infrastructures and personnel are capable of delivering the liberal message. Hence referring (for example) to august bodies like the Ramakrishna mission as 'modernist Hinduism'¹⁷⁸, or to advocates for hindutva as 'comic-strip-crusaders'¹⁷⁹, or making allusions to 'toady

Hinduism', is not only insensitive but also inefficient and counter-productive. It does not help to alienate or ridicule those whose co-operation is required to ensure moral elevation.

(On a related note, it is inappropriate to place the religious outlook in a confrontational stand with modern or 'Baconian' science.¹⁸⁰ The victories of empiricism and logic have been too astounding to entertain victory in such wars. Instead religion must grapple with what faith does, can and should mean in the context of the scientific world (§4.2). Without this recognition, religion will become seen as an exercise fit only for the eccentric, despondent and elderly).

In conclusion, Nandy's often brilliant illuminations are compromised by a lack of social realism. To adapt Bauman:

'Nandy claims to have a particular knack for descending to the level of everyday life from the abstract heights of Sanskritised Hinduism inhabited by the colonially hyper-masculated nationalists. But it is a strange everyday life into which his depth psychology descends. This is a world where small and only small is beautiful - though as a naive observer one would say - violence and oppression are as, if not more, common in the small scale communities and 'little traditions' as in nation-States and the Sanskritised tradition. Nandy's dismissals are tragic since both the Sanskritised tradition and institutionalised Hinduism does possess recourses with which the first steps could be made towards formulating a liberal version of pan-Indian Hinduism'.

8.2 Sensitivity towards the common voice

Some visitors have described India as a frenetic chaos, others a slow tedium. Both appraisals are true in their own way, for in India things happen *extremely*. As Mark Tully notes, 'there are no full stops in India'. Things just go on and on, and extraordinary permutations emerge. Brilliant scientists consult the stars and atheists pray thrice daily. I do not say this is sensible, but it is a fact about India that nothing is ever forgotten. Bits and pieces are thrown together in the optimism that things will work out. People just carry on collecting opinions without attending to the cognitive spring cleaning. India's approach to liberal pluralism is no exception, making for the confused popular opinions that can be broadly stated as:

- a. Religion is good; fascism is bad
- b. BJP-RSS-VHP are religious (good); BJP-RSS-VHP are fascists (bad)

c. BJP-RSS-VHP are good and bad.

Tragically, many liberal ideologues remain alienated from the 'silent majority of decent folk' they claim to champion. These ideologues, instead of scrutinising the root causes of widespread discontent, concentrate on an apologia to the west and label current trends as 'communalism' or 'fundamentalism'.

However the taxonomy of the Indian species of religious nationalism is not straightforward. Hindu nationalism is many things to many people, unified only by a distrust of Muslims and vague assertions of Hindu pride. Moreover, many of the sympathisers of Hindu nationalism vigorously *oppose* the oppression of minorities, and are ashamed of communal rioting and frenzied vandalism. Perhaps, if only to dissociate Hindu nationalism from more rigid forms of fundamentalism/ communalism/ religious nationalism, it is best to refer the phenomenon as 'religiously orientated political expression' or, specifically, 'Hinduism orientated political expression' or 'HOPE'. This acronym seeks to emphasise the 'courtship' as opposed to fully fledged 'marriage' character of the current relationship between Hinduism and politics. 'Hope-ers' do not claim to have found their agatopia, but do believe they know where to look. They feel that their Hindu religion has an important role to play in determining their politics.

Importantly, the as yet inchoate character of HOPE permits the possibility of selecting and promoting vigorously those aspects of the tradition compatible with a civic outlook. Since HOPE is more an attitude of faith than an allegiance to an existing completed charter, it is as much an opportunity as a problem.

Many secularists are insensitive towards HOPE, and this insensitivity is imposing a heavy cost. Keen to present an apologetic front, secularists are increasingly conducting their campaigns in a social vacuum. As argued earlier (Chapter 2), ethics depend not only on rationality and good will but also on a complex and often religious social world of human emotions. Lose touch with these and one sacrifices hope of influencing the people one needs to influence most.

As such the media's shallow and monotonous attempts to discredit Hindu fundamentalism are not wrong per se, but red herrings that divert attention from the real problem - an insecure Hindu psyche disorientated by a lack of reciprocity and loss of self-respect. If this continues, elements of secular liberalism, HOPE, and the

frustrated aggression of young and old Hindus, will remain in a confused conglomeration.

Care must be taken to separate the good elements of the conglomeration from the bad and ensure that believers do not drift towards illiberal tendencies. This mission is not helped by simply prattling on about India's secular constitution. Most Hindus are not ill disposed towards liberal ideology but seem to be consciously and with sincere regret turning their backs on it. Acknowledging that these good folk are not fascists, we must accept we are dealing with a knot of issues at the heart of which is the understanding of what religious identity can and should mean for members of a plural society. If India is to enjoy a stable pluralism then liberalisation must be nurtured from within its own religious traditions, and not be presented as tablets from the heights of a mount Sinai that secularists have made their own. Considering the trend towards HOPE, it is a civic tragedy that liberal theological formulations have not permeated the religious and political atmosphere. Once again, Mark Tully speaks truth:

Rajiv (Gandhi) could only fall back on appeals to respect the secularism bequeathed to India by his grandfather - a secularism he had breached. He did not realise that underlying the Ayodhyā issue was a growing belief among Indians that Nehru's secularism was hostile to Hinduism - that it was an alien import from India's former rulers. He did not consider that Hinduism's own tradition of tolerance - a tradition that even the new fundamentalists claim as their own - might be a more natural basis for religious harmony in India.

Mark Tully

6 POLITICS, RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At bottom all the movements and uprisings (in India) revolve around a single issue: identity. It is for this reason that neither Indians nor the rest of the world can afford to undervalue the events in India. In one way or another, the majority of the world's population will have to figure out how diverse groups of people are to come together under common political structures.

Ghosh A (1990) The New York Times

Recapitulation

Chapters 1 and 2 considered the principles of a liberal society and the moral character of citizens. Rawls taught that the political principles of a liberal society must be derived from the 'original position' (OP) wherein legislators exist behind a veil of ignorance 'detached from their deep rooted convictions'. Under these conditions, coercive power will not be used to enforce any particular comprehensive conception of the truth, and parochial values will be kept out of legislation.

However, one cannot assume that politics always fare better when divorced from religion. The appropriate question is not 'religion or not' but 'which type of religion is proving influential'? Religion and politics do exist together in the lives of many citizens; their interaction at a social and political level is inevitable. Although Rawls' OP is a fair device of representation, as a pragmatic scheme for social stability it is unrealistic. Amnesiac individuals behind a veil of ignorance do not exist.

Rawls recognises that the realistic problem is how people with deep-rooted commitments can arrive at the same liberal and egalitarian conclusions as the legislators of the OP (Chapter 1 §6). A consensus must be achieved across the comprehensive doctrines that animate the lives of citizens and political liberalism.

Chapter 3 examined the potential theoretical, and Chapter 4 the actual empirical, consensus across liberal principles and Hindu comprehensive doctrines. Chapter 5 speculated upon the social, cultural and educational factors contributing towards the popularity of illiberal ideologies. If religions are offering illiberal utopias, then the State must respond. Unfortunately, the Indian State has responded with a Nehru type secularism that disregards religion or at least expects it to be a completely private concern. Individuals are allowed the strength of their convictions, but only if these do not transgress the limits of secular reason. Should the secular State and God demand in contrary manner, it is to the State that dues, in theory, are to go.

§ 1 Learning from India's Mistakes

1.1 Why shift from the Indian to the English context?

There are personal and general reasons why the researcher concluded his present study with a shift of focus from the Indian to the English context.

1.1.1 A personal agenda

This relates to geographical location, pedagogic debts and long term concerns.

The researcher, though an Indian, has been educated in England. He has great regard for the English educational system and seeks to contribute something back. The application of reflections upon the Indian context to the English educational system is a partial repayment of this debt.

Equally importantly, the shift was motivated by the limited scope for immediately applying the research findings in an Indian context. The researcher would argue that his findings, seen in the context of communal tensions, indicate a need for a State guided religious education to help in nurturing liberalism amongst the younger generation. However, this must be a long term vision since the Indian Constitution prohibits religious education in State educational institutions. In contrast, in England religious education is compulsory. This offers immediate opportunities to apply the insights gained from the research.

Such a programme would then come full circle if educationalists in India could see - in terms of the actual products of a responsibly conducted religious education - the civic value of State guided religious education.

1.1.2 General reasons

How can State education in England ensure the liberalisation of religious communities without affronting the dignity of the believer? Reflecting on India is relevant to this enquiry since the two countries share the following characteristics.

Both have an overwhelming majority of one religious grouping but with influential numbers of other groups. Both are baroque, multicultural nations officially committed to secular State government¹, whilst being heirs to a rich and varied religious heritage. Cairns' enquiry can be applied to the similar challenges faced by both educational contexts:

What explicit guidance should be offered to young people about moral and religious ideas and practices in a country that refuses to nominate any one moral or religious philosophy as that to which it is prepared to be committed.²

What makes India a source of illumination is the pace and extremity of Indian political developments. The rate at which India has tried to gel its racial, cultural and religious traditions into a secular union has put strains on its educational system and young citizens therein. This accelerated synthesis has exposed fault lines perhaps dormant in other scenarios of secularisation in plural societies. Stresses similar to those felt by young Hindus in India may soon be felt by young persons in secular, multicultural contexts world-wide. Studying Indian developments may alert English educationalists to the forthcoming challenges.³

Speaking on contexts similar to the Indian, Juergensmeyer notes that secular nationalism makes affiliatory and affective demands resembling those made upon an individual believer by his faith:

... both (secular nationalism and religion) serve the ethical function of providing an overarching framework of moral order, a framework that commands ultimate loyalty from those who subscribe to it ... nowhere is this common form of loyalty more evident than the ability of nationalism and religion, alone amongst all forms of allegiance, to give moral sanction to martyrdom and violence.⁴

This highlights an educational dilemma met in all secular and multicultural contexts. Educational institutions must nurture a liberal attitude and allegiance to the State. However, the polity is impregnated with religious enclaves. Members within these may confer primary allegiance to their religion, and influence their youngsters accordingly. These influences may be antagonistic to liberal pluralism. Events in India provide a warning to all nations of the dangers of State education failing to attend to this possibility.

Reflecting on these events will suggest a model for a religious education that can help to generate the trust essential for a stable, plural and liberal English society. Hence, the discussion advances from the descriptive and conjectural to the prescriptive. This is initiated by considering two errors into which the Indian attempt at secularism has blundered.

1.2 The Betrayal of one's tradition

1.2.1 Indian error one

Nehru's brown sahib attitude had betrayed India's Hindu tradition and undermined the Hindu roots of Indian culture. Self-betrayal initiated a loss of self-respect, for which an external culprit had to be found. For some young Hindus, hatred of Muslims became such a release valve.

1.2.2 Lesson one - English people must not betray their tradition

Modern English society, as with India, is officially committed to treating minorities fairly.⁵ Regrettably, in both countries, elements of the majority population have responded to the challenge by betraying the indigenous liberal tradition. In the English social context, this betrayal is exemplified by postmodern thinking. To elaborate:

The shortcomings of postmodernism have been indicated (Chapter 1 §4.1). As an extreme form of relativism, it fails to respect cognitive advances regarding the trans-cultural realities of modern times. Coupled with this neglect is a policy of self-imposed cultural amnesia.⁶ Postmodernists conflate their celebration of the West's vanished hegemony with an abandonment of *all* tradition. They recommend that since there is no longer a suffocating high culture, all should perpetually 'recreate' themselves. Postmodernists claim to love uncertainty and flux. As the movement's first prophet taught:

I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta discourse . . . making explicit appeal to some grand narrative . . .⁷
[postmodernism is] incredulity toward metanarratives.⁸

Postmodernism must be criticised for encouraging a condition of self imposed cultural amnesia. Through its scorn for cultural narratives, postmodernism encourages a cultural amnesia that may ultimately be humiliating. Then, young English persons may view immigrants (as some Hindus view Muslims) as an adequate scapegoat for their loss of self-respect, and communal unrest may arise. This hostility may become dangerous if it combines with another facet of the betrayal scenario - the fear of betrayal. When betrayal of tradition and fear of betrayal reinforce each other, impecunious people may find fundamentalism, fascism and other illiberal outlooks glamorous.

Instead, one must respect the traditional roots essential for psychological well being. Good citizenship requires one to determine the liberal aspects of one's tradition which deserve and need to survive. This of course requires a familiarity with the tradition, a familiarity which a postmodern outlook would effectively prohibit.

1.3 The fear of being betrayed

1.3.1 Indian error two

The Indian case-studies illustrated that in times of communal isolation, suspicions and fears for one's social security abound. An educational policy that permits ideological and communal isolation reinforces such concerns.

1.3.2 Lesson two - minorities must be integrated into the mainstream

The failure to engage young Hindus and Muslims in dialogue may have contributed towards an atmosphere of suspicion (Chapter 5 §6.4). This could become, if it is not already, the attitude of many English people towards the immigrants. Consider the gist of two representative complaints voiced against Asians:

(a) I hate Pakis because they never wash and always smell of curry and work all day making money. Then they send that money back to their olds in the mud huts in Hindi land. Or even. . . . off with the whole lot. They get on the bus and can't even speak English. You make me feel sick.

(b) It gets on our nerves when you lot turn this place into a little India. You know I'm not racist but most of your lot are just like parasites. People in this country don't like that. Everything in this country's going down the drain and your lot just make it worse.

Consider (a) first. Some of the insults are back-handed compliments, moving, and correct. Indians in this country do work hard, and 'non-resident Indians' do invest significantly in their country of birth. This money could, perhaps should, be put back into the English economy. On the other hand, not all Asians are Pakistani, most UK Asians are not dirty, were not brought up in a mud hut, and not all their money goes back to their 'olds'. But these are trivial misunderstandings, not damning even if true. Though the insults are unpleasant, they represent not a voice of hatred but of alienation and ignorance. What really hurts is that the people voicing such insults considers my people essentially different.⁹

So to (b). One senses these views are typical of Englishmen who detest fascism but are not keen on either the postmodern or the 'collage-culture' alternative. Briefly, they feel they are losing ground in their own land. Graffiti like the below from young Asians can but aggravate their unease:

we think Englands a damm good land
too damm good to be in the white mans hands
And if they dont like us in their plans
they can . . . off to Pakistan.¹⁰

This citation raises a serious and disconcerting warning. In a society based on reciprocity, scroungers and opportunists will be resented. Even a *suspicion* that immigrant minorities are disrespectful scroungers will have the same result. As Rawls

has taught, justice as fairness cannot tolerate a violation of the principle of 'give and take':

... (citizens are to be viewed) as persons who can engage in social cooperation over a complete life. they can also take responsibility for their ends: that is, they can adjust their ends so that those ends can be pursued by the means they can reasonably expect to acquire in return for what they can reasonably expect to contribute.¹¹

If indigenous citizens think immigrants care only about themselves, they may feel immigrants cannot be trusted. Loss of trust becomes particularly significant considering the plural and egalitarian character of our modern societies. This condition has only recently become normal. In the past, English society was governed by a hierarchical structure. People lived in mutually exclusive communities. The behaviour of 'outsiders' was irrelevant since the various worlds did not overlap. When they did, the distribution of power was so clearly defined that most outcomes were predictable. Everyone literally knew where they stood in the old system, and trust was unnecessary as a general political value.¹²

Now, this has changed. People are free to move about, physically, economically and socially. It is the combination of plurality with mobility that creates the uncertainty which demands a confirmation of trust.

Once social structures become miscible people need reassurances that loyalties previously guaranteed through power or closely knit communal structures can still be taken for granted. People can live without love, endure selfishness and aggression. However, life in a treacherous world is intolerable. Social beings need to feel confident that they will not be betrayed. It is because of this that, despite the many liberal virtues discussed to date, trust will be considered as the concluding necessity that education must guarantee. An examination of English educational policy will suggest a trend that undermines the possibility of trust.

§ 2 Warnings of a Postmodern Trend in English Educational Policy

2.1 Some educational trends

2.1.1 The 1944 Education Act

War had threatened the liberal values. Post-war England was determined that these values, in defence of which so much had been lost, should be instilled into the youth. Unfortunately the church, which had once provided sterling service in this department, was becoming ineffectual. So the responsibility of nurturing moral fortitude was designated to the classroom. The 1944 Education Act legislated this programme.¹³

This Act makes no concessions to cultural plurality. This could not be an oversight, since even by the middle of the seventeenth century there were 20,000 'coloureds' in London alone.¹⁴ One might think that the minorities had integrated themselves so smoothly into English society that no special educational provisions were required to safeguard their welfare. In fact, the reality was that coloureds were too localised in their slums to pose an educational challenge of national proportions.

2.1.2 A widespread and permanent immigrant presence

This changed in the late 1960s when there was a large influx of immigrants from commonwealth countries. The official response was uncompromising:

... a national system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in a society properly equipped to exercise rights and perform duties which are the same as other citizens'. If their parents were brought up in another culture or another tradition, children should be encouraged to respect it, but a national system of education cannot be expected to perpetrate the different values of immigrant groups.¹⁵

This reassuring document placed the very great liberal values above the social calculus. By and large early immigrants *did* conform to 'exercise rights and perform duties which are the same as other citizens'. For them England was a haven from poverty or persecution. These good folk had known hardships and were grateful for better days. They took the good with the bad and routinely adjusted to their new circumstances - what one would expect from well behaved ex-colonials.¹⁶

Time upset this pacific temper. As immigrants began to consider England home their attitudes changed. They judged life not against hardships left behind, but against the values of English liberal justice.¹⁷ Racial prejudice no longer had to be accepted; it could be resisted. Moreover, parents of second generation children became concerned for the preservation of their tradition.¹⁸ By the early seventies, immigrants were looking for greater respect for their traditional ways.¹⁹ The boundaries between 'ethnic' and 'English', 'immigrant' and 'indigenous', were no longer rigid.²⁰

2.1.3 Two concepts of citizenship

Pedagogues recognised these developments as legitimate symptoms of immigrants striving to be full English citizens. Stewart's classic resolution of citizenship into two distinct components²¹ respects the immigrants' right to influence English culture. Firstly, *State* citizenship. Here citizens possess rights ensuring autonomy, with rigorous checks on exploitation and abuse overseen by a political administration. This idea of citizenship focuses on:

... the establishment of civil equality, entailing shared rights and shared obligations; the institutionalisation of political rights; the legal rationalisation and ideological accentuation of the distinction between citizens and foreigners; the articulation of the doctrine of national sovereignty and the link between citizenship and nation; the substitution of immediate direct relations between the citizens and the state for the mediated indirect relations characteristic of the ancient regime ...²²

By these criteria, immigrants were of an equal status to the indigenous citizens. However, Stewart emphasises that there is more to citizenship than formal membership and basic rights. The idea of *democratic* citizenship expresses the communal aspect of political membership. Mutual understanding, adaptation and communal identities and obligations, are as important as legal rights. All human beings are seen as of equal worth, and the emphasis is on the evolution of a joint community:

Within the state-centred conception of citizenship, it is assumed that preferences, interests and identities are given *exogenously in advance of public discourse and deliberation*, whether by explicit state-specification or implicit state prioritisation among the many competing possibilities contained within civil society. The conception of democratic citizenship does not make or require such an assumption. It 'appreciates, rather, that preferences, interests, and identities *are as much outcomes as antecedents of public deliberation*'; indeed, they (are) discursively constituted in and through it [Fraser (1992)] (italics imposed by Stewart).²³

In democratic citizenship, influx of alien cultures presents a possibility for enriching political space through dialogue and mutual efforts. The Department of Educational Services (DES) reports from 1971 and 1977 echo these sentiments in an educational context:

... [the education service should] help promote the acceptance of immigrants as equal members of our society ... permitting the expression of different attitudes, beliefs and customs, language and culture ... which may eventually enrich the mainstream of our cultural and social tradition.²⁴

Our society is a multicultural, multi-racial one and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that now make up our society. We also live in a complex, interdependent world, and many of our problems in Britain require international solutions. The curriculum should tend to reflect our need to know about and understand other countries.²⁵

Henceforth, educational policy became sensitive towards the ethnic presence.²⁶ In religious education, this was marked by phenomenology.²⁷ This movement, though well intentioned, did little to achieve mutual understanding. Its often superficial treatment of cultural phenomenon ignored the theological and political significance of cultural artefacts, imagery, rituals, etc. Very presumptuously, the possibility that immigrants might have brought not only silks and spices but radically different and at times illiberal outlooks on life was treated as incidental.

2.2 The Swann Report

Without a concerted attempt to integrate these immigrants into the mainstream a danger might arise that liberal pluralism would be inadvertently orchestrating its own

demise by tolerating illiberal elements within immigrant traditions. Lord Swann knew this. His authoritative Report of 1985 advised:

... unless major efforts are made to reconcile the concerns and aspirations of both the majority and minority communities along more genuinely pluralist lines, there is a real risk of the fragmentation of our society along ethnic lines which would seriously threaten the stability and cohesion of society as a whole.²⁸

We consider that a multiracial society such as ours would in fact function most effectively and harmoniously on the basis of pluralism which enables, expects and encourages members of all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate fully in shaping the society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures, whilst also allowing, and where necessary assisting, the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their ethnic identity within this common framework.²⁹

And further:

All in all, central government appears to have lacked a coherent strategy for fostering the development of multicultural education and thus to have been unable to play a leading role in co-ordinating or encouraging progress in this field.³⁰

The Swann report was a reasonable and balanced document. It recognised that foreign cultures had much to offer England. For these offerings to be integrated into English life two things were required. Firstly, the immigrants would have to feel sufficiently welcome to share their traditional ways. Secondly, the indigenous people would have to be familiarised with these new and exotic lifestyles. Both processes would require State endorsement.³¹ Concomitantly, Swann emphasised the need for diversity to remain within a 'framework of common values' and 'coherent strategy'. So while rejecting rigid assimilationist models, Swann prudently retained their quintessential truth. Minorities may enrich liberal society, but they cannot be allowed to jeopardise the conditions necessary for its stability.

In recent times, some pedagogues have ignored this cautionary element of the Swann report. They have hijacked the report and corrupted its counsel with a postmodernist twist. They ignore the sobriety implied by 'common values' and 'coherent strategy', and instead concentrate on the sponsorship of diversity.³² An example from religious education will illustrate this point.

2.3 Spirituality and extreme subjectivism

Spirituality is a notoriously malleable concept, with definitions ranging from esoteric to incomprehensible. Nevertheless, all models of spirituality share an awareness of the shortcomings of exclusively materialistic objectives. Models of spirituality consistently refer to 'other worldliness', 'mysticism' and 'universal oneness'. Recent literature also indicates the spiritual quest is ubiquitous.³³ Importantly, spirituality 'the process' as

opposed to any ontological reality, has intrigued educationalists, who consequently distinguish quest from content. Professor Sutherland champions this free-lance spirituality and proceedings from the Westhill College conference are influential:

Whatever the religious or theological definitions of spirit or spirituality, in educational terms, spiritual development points to an open ended quest which seeks those human qualities which are personally apprehended through experiences of beauty, truth and goodness. Such experiences can be described in theological terms such as inspiration and revelation but are open to all human beings regardless of their religious persuasion.³⁴

Sutherland has stripped spirituality of philosophical rigor, cultural context and political import, leaving one to make what one will of this term. Like the architect who only uses Plato's ideal forms for his own purposes, Sutherland's spiritualist is allowed to free himself of any concerns for objective reality, and put the onus on subjective efficacy:

The purpose of spiritual development is wisdom, that capacity to judge the relative value of a variety of activities against a clearly thought out set of beliefs which have been tested in experience. That is why the literature of spirituality abounds in sayings and stories rather than in logical arguments. Understanding such stories depends on the degree of spiritual maturity acquired by the hearer, on discernment rather than on factual knowledge or intellectual calibre. This quality depends very much on a perceptiveness which is linked both to self awareness and a secure sense of personal identity, which does not need the constant approval of others but can think through and sustain an independent position.³⁵

Wisdom is a commendable aim, but it cannot be attained by encouraging individuals to teleport themselves away not only from traditional religion but also the great civic responsibilities of logical thought, intellectual discipline and the desire to attain the approval of one's fellow citizens. Yet an 'AWOL' from these responsibilities is what Sutherland appears to allow young persons. With the emphasis on 'sustaining an independent position', one can at best anticipate a common denominator in 'experiences of beauty, truth and goodness'. But Sutherland leaves these terms vague. Perhaps the intention is that if nothing definite is said, there is little with which to disagree definitely or definitively. In any case, within a political context, Sutherland's model for spiritual development permits relativism of the most capricious nature.

Sutherland has tried to provide a flexible paradigm for spiritual development to which people of all faiths, or none, can relate. However, his programme may be distracting attention from the difficult and urgent responsibility of integrating minority traditions into the liberal mainstream. His model of spirituality as an essentially subjective enterprise 'not requiring public approval', *could* be misconstrued as a licence to avoid the responsibility of social integration.³⁶ The second error of the Indian situation has indicated the disastrous consequences of not insisting on such commitment.

§ 3 The Dominance of Reason

3.1 Recapitulation

The analysis of the Indian situation stressed that a lack of religious education was contributing towards unwholesome attitudes amongst young Indians and effectively prohibiting the possibility of consensus across liberal and religious outlooks.

In §1, two dimensions to the problem of betrayal were emphasised. The first dimension was the psychological undesirability of self betrayal. Consider this the x axis.

The second dimension was the fear that others will betray us. Paranoia will be worst when communal isolation is profound. By distorting the Swann report into an indiscriminate celebration of diversity, some educationalists are (perhaps inadvertently) encouraging communal isolation and failing to work towards consensus on central civic issues. Such failure will reinforce the fear of betrayal amongst the majority community. Consider the fear of betrayal as the y axis.

It is indeed essential for social stability that we neither betray ourselves nor fear being betrayed. However, social security requires still more. It demands that all citizens acknowledge limits upon how large self and communal loyalties loom. These limits are set by the third dimension - justice, i.e. 'do not betray the rights and trust of fellow citizens'. Consider this the z axis.

These three dimensions to betrayal are not logically connected. If they do co-exist it is fortuitous. If any single dimension should be in conflict with the remaining two, social instability becomes ominous. Preventing instability requires examining whether private or communal values agree with the principles of justice.

These principles are the outcome of the operation of reason in the political domain. Attention now turns to this connection between reason and the culture of political liberalism. This slight detour will lay the foundations for a system of religious education that seeks credibility and purpose. The discussion will consider (i) Gellner on the judicial role that reason plays in today's world (§3.2), (ii) existing attitudes towards the teaching of religion (§4.1) and (iii) the Upaniṣads and Rāmānujācārya on the pre-requisites for religious enquiry (§4.3.2).

3.2 Gellner on reason

Gellner characterises the salient features of the reasonable mind. With the reasonable mind, problems are referred to the court of logic, and empirical evidence is decisive.

This does not mean that mental activities not based on logic or empirical data are insignificant, useless or wrong; but it does mean that all pronouncements, religious or otherwise, will be judged against secular standards. Gellner teaches:

What does matter is that an increasingly touchy and insistent sensitivity to the existence of such a boundary (between what is testable and what is not) discourages systematic conceptual boundary-hopping, or the habit of living astride this border: it becomes increasingly difficult for a notion to be empirical when successful, but something else when it is not; to have one status in the mouth of a priest and another in the mouth of a peasant, one significance on a week day and another on sabbath day (parenthesis not provided by Gellner).³⁷

Gellner emphasises that the non-reasonable mind's outlook is highly parochial. It accepts that across the river the local magic may not work, pigs might fly, and god knows what else might happen. The reasonable mind is uncomfortable with accepting such an eccentric or irregular state of affairs. It seeks a world governed by rules that operate universally. The reasonable mind wants trans-cultural knowledge. The foundation of such knowledge is the data base of universal and uncontrollable sense experience:

What is central to empiricism is the claim that an independent data base, 'experience', sits in judgement over our cognitive claims, but that (it) is *not* under *their* control. . . . The empiricist requirement of breaking up what is actually experienced, and turning it into the final court of appeal of theories, does achieve the undermining of the dominance of collective illusion, and replaces it by a cumulative, trans-cultural science.³⁸

This 'experience only' clause gives the empiricist theory a very powerful cutting edge. The denial of other sources of knowledge implies distrust of any background ideas and pictures which dominate or influence the interpretation of observation. It firmly precludes their entrenchment in the reserved, fundamental beliefs of the culture. *It places cultures on trial.*³⁹

When it comes to politics, the reasonable man relies on the universal stock of sense data and the application of an impartial logic to resolve political disputes. 'Orderly and regular conduct is exacted from concepts, as it is from people.'⁴⁰ This bureaucratic attitude insists that issues that cannot be resolved through reason and observable facts should be kept aside neatly in private worlds. This strategy recognises that a good life must be one that is freely chosen, but also sees the need to impose limits on these freedoms, so making it possible for subjective freedoms and ambitions to be equally accessible to all. Religious or other ideologies that threaten this egalitarian attitude cannot be tolerated in the public sphere. Religious education must respect this.⁴¹

§ 4 Religious Education in the Age of Reason⁴²

4.1 Expulsion, secular religious education and subjective religion

Respect for the dominance of reason and the policy of compartmentalisation has, to date, made for three positions towards the teaching of religion.

Position 1 emphasises that many religious doctrines cannot legitimise themselves through logic or empirical data. Moreover, religion is seen as a threat to a liberal political outlook. Both these factors are seen as permitting an expulsion of religion from the sphere of State education.

Position 2 is mindful of religion's inability to substantiate (empirically) metaphysical claims. A 'secular' religious education is advocated as an alternative to expulsion. For example, the latter work of Edwin Cox suggests religious education should focus on the development of basic human sensibilities.⁴³ This process would be independent of metaphysics and hence is legitimate in a secular world.

Position 3 emphasises that one must not assume that traditional religion, metaphysics and all, is obsolete.⁴⁴ However, with no particular religion able through reason to establish its ideological supremacy, it advocates a subjective approach. Sutherland's model for spiritual development, where spirituality excuses itself from the court of reason, is the extreme form of such a position. The individual is judge and jury of his or her own spirituality. In the context of English religious education, the third position is the culmination of the following transitions that roughly parallel an increasingly prominent educational response to plurality:

Christ-centric-----> theo-centric -----> spirituo/ individuo-centric relativism
assimilationist -----> multicultural -----> postmodern.

The common flaw in all three positions is that they fail to undertake an examination of the extent of overlapping consensus across various religious traditions and the reasonable demands of political liberalism. Both (1) the 'expulsion' and (2) the 'secular' religious education positions overlook the *political* significance of religious influence. Consequently, religious influence is left beyond the reach of monitoring and correction by the liberal State. Additionally, without the possibility for inter-religious dialogue, young persons from different communities exist in ignorance of the ideological premises of the others, a condition in which suspicions may abound (Chapter 5 §6.4).

Position (3), based on religious relativism, does allow for the intercourse of diverse religious doctrines in classroom teaching, but faces a different problem. Through its implicit assumption that all religions or spiritualities are equally valid, it fails to acknowledge the asymmetric importance that believers attach to their faith. As such, religious relativism leads to a representation of religious beliefs that believers

themselves may not recognise. Moreover the 'all ideologies equal' attitude is not alert, nor can it respond, to the need to correct any illiberal use of theology.

However, there is an alternative fourth position for religious education to adopt, the formulation of which is the concluding objective of this Thesis. This model strives to retain traditional authenticity while respecting the reasonable demands of political liberalism. Its founding principles are introduced in the following sections:

- a. Religious education must work within the shared ambitions and limits of the human condition (§4.2).
- b. It must relate metaphysical ideas to the mundane political situation (§4.3).
- c. It must engage the religious community in excavating a traditional liberal charter in overlapping consensus with political liberalism (§4.4-5).

4.2 Religious education and a reasonable model of the human condition

Religious education must restrict its scope to material that can be justified at the court of reason and work within a reasonable model of human nature. Rawls teaches that any reasonable human is the custodian of two moral powers. The first moral power confirms a commitment to justice. The second moral power respects that people need freedom to pursue a particular form of the good life. These forms may find a person looking beyond (though preferably not in contravention of) justice.

The second moral power often finds its expression through religion. Despite their differences, all religions promise a unified world, either on earth, or in some post-mortem reality.⁴⁵ In this world, there will be no conflict between ideology, power and our basic needs since, as Plato might say, the good is God's will and God's will is good. There will be a moral order to the universe and evil and injustice will be absent.

Whereas the upper limit of the religious vision may be too utopian to gain acceptance, it does represent a noble ambition. So, whereas many may dispute the *descriptive* status of metaphysical claims, metaphysical enquiries are defensible provided they encourage people to think thus: do hope that there is a moral order to the universe and work towards its realisation.

4.3 Contextualising metaphysical concerns

4.3.1 General principles

A policy statement must be made on the role of metaphysical enquiry in religious education. Essentially, metaphysical enquiry must be related to social and political

issues. Metaphysical ideas that support the principles of justice and a sense of human unity must be excavated from within each tradition. These ideas must be codified such that their liberal moral, psychological and political connotations are clear and compelling. Conversely, metaphysics of the type that makes much of ethnic or social divisions must be discredited. As Rabbi Hugo Gryn realised:

... the world is divided into harmonizers and polarizers: this essential difference of outlook transcends all conventional divisions of politics, religion and class.⁴⁶

Metaphysical formulations that encourage young citizens to look beyond polarising and divisive distinctions towards the realisation of a liberal society must be promoted. The challenge is to relate metaphysics to a better social life in this world.

4.3.2 Further encouragement from ancient Hinduism

With respect to this programme, religious educators may suspect that some religions, such as Hinduism, are preoccupied with abstract metaphysics and not concerned with improving conditions in this life. They may extrapolate that Hinduism can provide no reliable base for earthly morals. Suspecting this, they may not look hard enough for indigenous sources of persuasion towards a liberal moral outlook.

Chapter 3 indicates that such persuasion *is* available. It should further encourage religious educators to note that in ancient Hindu culture, *abstract* metaphysical concerns did not play as great a part as commonly assumed. Rather, Hindus have long had concerns similar to those of the present mundane and secular civilisation. As Lipner reminds:

... as the weight of Hindu tradition teaches, without *artha* and *kāma* and their basis in the life of the householder, society falters and the religious enterprise as a whole grinds to a halt.

Thus *pravṛtti*, or engagement with the world, has an important role in the traditional Hindu religious vision. The roots of the Hindu accent on *pravṛtti* can be traced to the early Vedic religion ... Typical of this attitude is the following prayer:

O Agni! May our sacrifice yield abundant sheep, cows and horses. May it be fit for valiant men and be forever indestructible! Great hero, may it renew us and bring us many offspring. Firmly established, may it grant great wealth and be of wide assembly (*R̥g Veda* 4.2.5).⁴⁷

The above observations are true even of the later Upaniṣadic period, too often portrayed as an exclusively gnostic and philosophical era. Consider for example that learned women as Maitreyī and Gārgī were, at least throughout adolescence, ignorant of many metaphysical matters. Many male scholars were equally unenlightened. Śvetaketu Āruṇeya, after studying the Vedas for twelve years, had not even heard of fundamental metaphysical ideas concerning the essential self.⁴⁸ The case of Naciketas is also instructive.

The selfish ambitions of father Vājaśravasa found him sacrificing his obliging son, Naciketas, to Yama god of death. Yama, impressed by the lad's altruism, offered him three boons. Naciketas asked that father not be irritated on seeing him return to the mortal world.⁴⁹ Yama agreed. Next, Naciketas asked to know the ritual procedures that are accessories to attaining salvation. This was a routine procedural enquiry, not one into the metaphysical nature of the self. Yama obliged. But the third wish was exceptional:

Naciketas: There is this doubt in regard to a man who has departed, some (holding) that he is and some that he is not. I would be instructed by thee in this knowledge. Of the boons, this is the third boon.

Yama: Even the gods of old had doubt on this point. It is not, indeed, easy to understand; so subtle is this truth. Choose another boon, O Naciketas. Do not press me. Release me from this.⁵⁰

Yama tried to fob off Naciketas with promises of women, vehicles, property and wealth. But the lad was firm. Only after Naciketas' abstinence from evil, tranquillity, concentration and composition of mind were confirmed did Yama bless him with metaphysical knowledge. Even when Yama finally speaks of the *antaryāmin* and *ātman*⁵¹, the parable of the chariot⁵², and metaphysical hierarchies⁵³, he is aware that these are matters beyond the common understanding and interest. It is Naciketas' father, using religion for tangible returns, who is representative - *mundane* ambitions and enquiries are the norm. This is true for the masses now as then. Therefore the scriptures, whose love for humankind excels that of 'thousands of fathers and mothers'⁵⁴, enjoin many activities designed to better life *in this world*.⁵⁵

This understanding of the role of religion in daily life is supported by Rāmānujācārya. Commenting on the first aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra* - '*athāto Brahma jijñāsā* (Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman)'⁵⁶, he proposes that the early stages of religious enquiry concern the acquisition of worldly rewards. Mundane goals - the pursuit of wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (*kama*) - provide an indispensable springboard (Chapter III §5.6). Only when these goals are felt to be wanting can the mind turn in earnest to metaphysical enquiries. The leap towards metaphysics cannot be rushed. Disillusionment with mundane pleasures is a lesson which only worldly life can teach; it cannot be taught through books or lectures.

Hence, any religious education skipping straight into transcendental metaphysics will result only in a bookish and irrelevant knowledge. This is not to say that it is useless

teaching metaphysical ideas to children. However, when these ideas *are* taught, they must be explicitly related to tangible and mundane needs and challenges.

In Rāmānujācārya's time, the preliminary use of the scriptures rested in addressing needs through the performance of rituals. Today, technology and science have superseded ritual as a means to satisfy many of these needs. Nevertheless, there remain many mundane needs and challenges, in particular the need for stability and peace in a rational and plural world, on which scripture can still offer useful counsel.

Conversely, religious education must refuse to teach, except to discredit, politically threatening metaphysical/ religious outlooks. As Rawls has warned:

Now the good involved in the exercise of the moral powers . . . belongs to the political good of a well ordered society and not that of a comprehensive religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine. Repeatedly we must insist on this distinction . . . Rather, it means that the ideas used must be political ideas: they must be tailored to meet the restrictions imposed by the political conception of justice and fit into the space it allows.⁵⁷

. . . in affirming a political conception of justice we may eventually have to assert at least certain aspects of our own . . . doctrine. . . . This will happen whenever someone insists, for example, that certain questions are so fundamental that to ensure their being rightly settled justifies civil strife. . . . At this point we may have no alternative but to deny this . . . and hence to maintain the kind of thing we had hoped to avoid.⁵⁸

Throughout this critical exercise, the lower limit of our humanity, as reasonably established by justice, must be our corrective guide. Only if its counsel is abided can the 'upper limit' enquiry into metaphysical or spiritual development become a legitimate educational exercise.

4.4 Codification of a traditional liberal charter⁵⁹

A pragmatic model for religious education must be based upon the necessity to establish an overlapping consensus across liberal political values and the comprehensive doctrines that animate the lives of reasonable citizens. Rawls has taught how to establish consensus:

a. Justice as fairness is best presented in two stages. In the first stage it is worked out as a free standing political (but of course moral) conception for the basic structure of society. Only with this done . . . do we take up, in the second stage, the problem whether justice as fairness is sufficiently stable.⁶⁰

b. The values of public reason not only include the appropriate use of the fundamental concepts of judgement, inference, and evidence, but also the virtues of reasonableness and fair-mindedness as shown in abiding by the criteria and procedures of common sense knowledge and accepting the methods and conclusions of science when not controversial . . .

Together these values express to the liberal political ideal that since political power is the coercive power of free and equal citizens as a corporate body, this power should be exercised . . . only in ways that all citizens can reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of their common human reason.⁶¹

c. . . . we look for a consensus of reasonable (as opposed to unreasonable or irrational) comprehensive doctrines. The crucial fact is not the fact of pluralism as such, but of reasonable pluralism.⁶²

d. In such a consensus, the reasonable doctrines endorse the political conception, each from its own point of view.⁶³

e. Social unity is based on a consensus on the political conception, and stability is possible when the doctrines making up the consensus are affirmed by the society's politically active citizens and the requirements of justice are not too much in conflict with citizens' essential interests as formed and encouraged by their social arrangements.⁶⁴

Rawls' overlapping consensus respects the role of religion in life. Religious membership determines the routes through which social and political problems are tackled. Since these culturally authentic routes cannot be guaranteed to be liberal, the situation must be examined piecemeal. If necessary, educationalists must have the courage to tell a culture that some of its ways are unacceptable in a liberal society. Optimally, correction must be formulated in traditional terms. Then, when each faith community 'endorses the political conception from its own viewpoint', political liberalism will be adopted heartily. Rawls teaches:

. . . there are two separate tasks: one is to work out a political conception that seems sound, or reasonable, at least to us; the other is to find ways to bring others who reject it also to share it; or failing that, to act in accordance with it . . . As long as the means of persuasion . . . can be found, the conception is viewed as stable.⁶⁵

'Persuasion' can be achieved by formulating theological and metaphysical ideas so that they support, or at least are not antagonistic to, political liberalism. The pragmatics of this essential process are considered next.

4.5 The IATaLIC model

A purely secular State education may lack the influence to nurture a liberal attitude. Equally inadequately, those community religious leaders with influence may have their agendas restricted by concerns more parochial than those of justice. It requires the State religious educator, sympathetic towards the agendas of both political liberalism and religious membership, to work with suitable indigenous scholars. These scholars, once committed to political liberalism, can and will excavate indigenous counterparts to liberal values. They will codify these values into a traditional liberal charter, and then evangelise it throughout the community at large. Lipner indicates where the scholars can look for the required summons:

a. Sacred texts such as the *Bhagavadgītā*⁶⁶, *Rāmāyaṇa*⁶⁷ and *Mahābhārata*⁶⁸

b. The professions of religious leaders, god-men and *kathakars*⁶⁹

c. The media's serialisation of religious epics⁷⁰

d. The voice of experience⁷¹ (The case-studies have confirmed that liberal sentiments can be found scattered amongst even the most bigoted rhetoric).

Liberalisation will not cause psychological disruption if it respects these sources of influence. Young persons will not view liberal principles as external and abstract; hence the liberalisation of young citizens will not require them to betray their tradition. Liberalism will gain the support of each tradition, 'each from its own viewpoint'. Each community will integrate into the liberal framework without any loss of prestige, and mutual trust will develop:

For our sense of our own value, as well as our self confidence, depends on the respect and mutuality shown us by others. By publicly affirming the basic liberties citizens in a well ordered society express their mutual respect for one another as reasonable and trustworthy, as well as their recognition of the worth all citizens attach to their way of life.⁷²

Once each tradition is, and is seen to be, thoroughly liberalised, those outside of that tradition will not fear it producing subversive elements. Knowing that every community is engaged in the excavation and evangelization of liberal imperatives creates peace of mind that reassures all citizens not to fear betrayal.

Since this model requires the co-ordination of religious educators with indigenous personnel it will be referred to as the **Interface Approach Towards a Liberal Indigenous Charter (IATaLIC)**. The IATaLIC model will seek to achieve:

- a. An overlapping consensus across liberalism and the religious doctrines (Rawls).
- b. Credibility for religious education in an age of reason (Gellner).
- c. A codification of an indigenous liberal charter (Chapter 3).
- d. Evangelization of (c) by indigenous personnel.
- e. A sympathetic educational climate that makes (a-d) possible (Cairns' pragmatism).⁷³

Unless the IATaLIC model is robustly adopted, communal isolation, betrayal of tradition, fear of betrayal and the betrayal of liberal values are all likely. An IATaLIC religious education obeys Rawls and tries to generate citizens who support the liberal State and protect it from its enemies⁷⁴:

Observe here that we try to answer the question of children's education entirely within the political conception. Society's concern with their education lies in their role as future citizens, and so in such essential things as their acquiring the capacity to understand the public culture and to participate in its institutions, in their being economically independent and self-supporting members of society over a complete life, and in their developing the political virtues, all this from within a political point of view.⁷⁵

An IATaLIC religious education is part of a larger educational programme that helps citizens to balance a commitment to justice (prerequisite for social stability) with the

freedom to pursue a good and religious life. Highlighting the need for such a balance has been a motif throughout this Thesis:

	Two Moral Powers	Vedāntic Counterpart	Appropriate Model for Religious Education
Objectivity emphasised	Principles of justice.	Puruṣa viewpoint.	RE that is defensible in an age of reason and political liberalism.
Subjectivity emphasised	Freedom to choose one's version of good life.	Antaryāmi viewpoint.	RE that remains authentic to religious belief.
Inter-subjectivity that balances both the objective and subjective	Allow others to hold their versions of the good life as dearly as one does one's own.	Approximation to the view from Brahman and consequent <i>saulabhya</i> moral psychology.	Encourage those aspects of belief that promote justice and liberal harmony.

Figure 25. The balance

Should such an education prove problematic to some who find liberalism intolerable, then it becomes all the more urgent that the IATaLIC model be adopted with a vigilance and vigour sufficient to revolutionise these parochial outlooks for the good of all. As Rawls has taught us, what is wholesome is a State of reasonable pluralism, not pluralism as such. This reasonable pluralism is what religious education must work towards. Such a dictate for religious education can be informally expressed.

§ 5 The Fertile Basin

As humans, we sometimes live in night and day dreams. These dreams are often private, and understood only by us or a few other like minded people. Each finds pleasure and purpose in ways others might not.

Unfortunately, the private world has one shortcoming. Some essential things in life - food, clothing, building materials - require respect be given to a physical world 'out-there'. Long ago, our ancestors realised this, and to better manage the external world, the 'Hard-nosed-ones' took their clubs (read empiricism) and ploughs (read logical analysis), and bit by bit made the landscape flat, predictable and amenable to objective analysis.⁷⁶ Their efforts meant that mankind gained a hitherto unparalleled mastery of the natural world and consequent material prosperity.

However, the Romantic amongst our ancestors pointed out this flat landscape, though productive in a material sense, was in other ways barren and boring. They emphasised that the private world is too precious to neglect. So some parks and playing fields were set aside, wherein the landscape was left free and untempered by the clubs and

ploughs. In these freelands people could dream of various utopias. (Of course, the success of the Hard-nosed-ones meant that people had more time than ever before to spend in parks night and day dreaming).

The Hard-nosed-ones feared problems should people forget to restrain themselves according to location, and they were determined not to allow the flatland and freeland cultures to mingle indiscriminately. So they dug a ditch around the playing fields. Over the years, many continued the work and the ditch turned into a great basin.

Now, as the chasm became deeper something interesting occurred. Waterfalls, flowing down the precipices of both the freeland world and the flatland-world, nourished the basin with minerals. From the freelands were deposited dreams and visions; from the flatland, the understanding that provided these dreams respect a world not dictated by the imaginations of men they can transform the earth.

Since the basin was thus so fertilised, many settled there. These people came to be known as liberals, because they were open to both the hard-nosed and the romantic traditions. They hoped for a *social* world as orderly and predictable as the clubs and ploughs had made the *natural* world, i.e. one governed by a universal sense of civic decency. At the same time, they knew that subjective freedoms were essential for psychological, moral and spiritual growth⁷⁷:

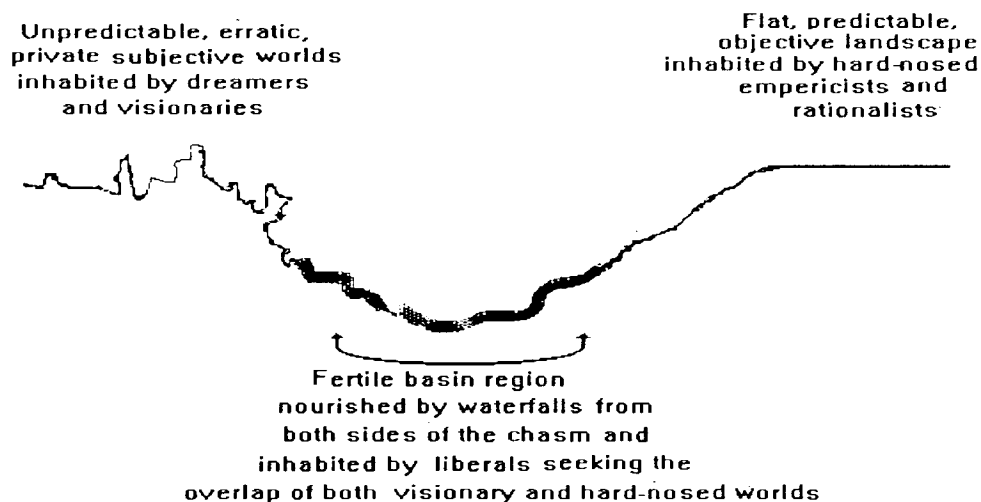


Figure 26. The fertile basin

In the latter part of this century, the very great John Rawls anticipated that the growing basin community would require a particular understanding of political truth to avoid in-fighting.⁷⁸ He realised that the hard-nosed world and the visionary world could be distinguished but not separated, and it is not always clear what belongs where

- the boundaries between the objective and the subjective would not always be clear. With one person's objectivity being regarded by another as subjective, managing diversity would require compromise and dialogue, adjustments and mutual understanding.

Relations across Secularists and the Religious provide a particularly significant case in point. Secularists (more inclined towards the Hard-nosed tradition) must not belligerently present political liberalism as an objective, free-standing social truth. Instead, secularists must present political liberalism as a social contract seeking an overlapping consensus across reasonable political principles and religious belief. For their part, the religious must ask: 'Is it so important to establish the public status of our truth that we can be cruel, insensitive and intolerant? Does our God want this? Those religious who *do* wish an intolerant kingdom of God on earth should explore their possibilities outside of the plural basin. Those who remain will enjoy the economic and pacific advantages, as well as the latitude in one's personal life, that life in the basin offers them.

One can call the basin society by various names - multicultural, plural, egalitarian, liberal, etc.- but its defining feature is the realisation that civil life in a plural society cannot allow the imposition of any given communal revelation as if it was an indisputable truth. This however should not mean that religious beliefs are not respected, and politics cannot expect that believers will always restrain their beliefs to the private world. Far better to acknowledge that people take their beliefs seriously, and then examine the consequences for others of these beliefs. Hence civil social living demands caring and gentle people who respect both the privacy and commonality of human experience. This represents a shift from liberal secularism (wherein liberal values are regarded as free standing assertions automatically commanding respect) to the more realistic position of a liberal overlapping consensus (where liberal principles are formulated in religious or communal terms as necessary).

This is a difficult goal, but hope must be retained. For all the postmodernist propaganda, it is not yet time to give up the social ghost in a private orgy of an every man for himself scenario. Nor should we regress into oppressive communalisms, intolerant religious nationalisms or aggressive secularisms. There is a better way. Let

us work with community leaders and encourage those religious expressions that reinforce political liberalism. Only then will all our lives be both manageable and good.

The Last Word

Chapter 1 established the basic structure of the liberal State. Any society must have some unifying ideology and the liberal State is no exception. Its ideology is faith in human reason based on empiricism and logic. This ideology is incumbent upon all - the indigenous and the immigrants. Certain elements in the English educational system seem determined to undermine this reasonable approach. Through their flirtations with postmodern type ideological relativism, they neglect the correction of traditions which might undermine the liberal State.

Some traditions like the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Rāmānujācārya (Chapter 3) may be inherently liberal. These traditions should receive the patronage of the educational system. But the situation must be examined piecemeal since there is no logical relationship between the three parties - the State, any given religious community and other individual citizens. Religion may be friend or foe of the liberal State (Preamble). This leaves the most precious of the three participants in the triangular relationship - the individual. In the finite limits of a mortal life, he or she must co-ordinate objective civil obligations with subjective ideals. This commitment towards justice, while pursuing the good life, was the basic moral challenge outlined in Chapter 2.

The case-studies of Chapter 4 showed that the triadic relationship of State, religion and the individual can go wrong. It was suggested that the first step to disaster was alienation from one's own liberal tradition and the last the collapse of mutual trust. These are the steps towards communal conflict. In such times, one must rely on the trusty medic of reasonable dialogue. In particular, attention must focus on the consensus subjective visions of the good life share with the objective demands of justice.

Essential for such consensus is dialogue across liberally minded educationalists and religious leaders, and inter-traditional communication revolving around the principles of justice as fairness. The degree of consensus across justice and communal viewpoints will determine how tolerable these communities find a liberal society and, equally importantly, the extent to which they can be tolerated by the liberal mainstream. The State, any religious community, and other citizens, need not be in absolute consensus,

but all three must know where they stand on fundamental political issues. Anticipating that day we must, like Hanumanmahan, stumble along as best we can. The illuminations of Rawls, Lipner, and Gellner will help us advance.

So I have offered my views on Hindus and Englishmen, moral and political theory. In a sense all this is a progression from my relationship with a spider. In my sink in India lived a spider. It was a mystery how he sustained himself because he never seemed dislodged from plug-hole's rim. Perhaps he had minions running around gathering food for him (and eaten in turn?) - god knows, his presence was menacing enough to enforce such services.

Now, in India water pressure is very erratic. Out of consideration for his welfare I used to wash my hands in the faintest dribble to not risk drowning the fellow with a more robust delivery. I resented him for this inconvenience, but put up with the fact that his life was important to him. A liberal theory of justice, justice as fairness.

We both shared the same space yet without communication, spider's reasonable requirements slowly became irritating. Then one day the spider was not there - he had gone. Horrible that he was, I still found this a sad and deflating experience. He had played a huge part in my morning routine, yet now I was not even incidental to him. Fortunately, the sense of deflation was short lived - deep down I knew there is only so much one should expect from an arachnid.

Yet the experience did focus my thoughts on some important aspects of inter-human relationships. Like the spider, human beings must be free to chose with whom they do and do not maintain relations. If humans chose to associate, how they do so can have such profound consequences that one cannot afford to have overlapping worlds in conflict. Humans are capable of inter-personal communication on a scale that makes both dreams and nightmares realistic. The power of social organisation can ensure a world where even the most timid of people are free to live by their own lights. However, if abused, this power can suffocate individual freedom. The liberal person finds no end so lofty as to legitimise such abuse. This rejection comes not from a lack of vision but from a conviction that the highest ends of life can be achieved only when people treat others, and are themselves treated, as equal and free. Let us try and show believers that their God views likewise, and help these believers to not leave this vision betrayed.

Notes

Preamble → 1 The Political Context

Preamble

¹ Gellner's ideas on the preconditions for a civil society are presented in his last book:

Gellner E (1996) *The Conditions of Liberty: civil society and its rivals*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

² **Gellner E (1996)** pp 97-8.

³ Here are some telling words regarding the agenda of this controversial movement:

The ultimate vision of our work . . . is a perfectly organised state of society wherein each individual has been moulded into a model of ideal Hindu manhood and made into a living limb of the corporate personality of society [**Golwalkar MS (1966)** *Bunch of Thoughts*, Jagarana Prakashan, Bangalore, p 88].

The ideology of the movement is rooted in the following:

Savarkar V (1969) *Hindutva: who is a Hindu?* Savarkar SS, Bombay, (First published in 1923).

Golwalkar M (1939) *We, or our Nationhood Defined*, Bharat Prakashan, Nagpur.

(1966) *Bunch of Thoughts*, Jagarana Prakashan, Bangalore.

For a scholarly observation see **Anderson W and Damle S (1987)** *The Brotherhood in Saffron: the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu revivalism*, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi. See also Chapter 5, note 3.

⁴ Cover Story: flash point. *India Today*, 31 December 1992, pp 23-4.

⁵ The Soft State. *India Today*, 31 December 1992, p 9.

⁶ Fight the Menace Politically, *India Today*, 15 January 1993, p 9.

⁷ Gellner has acknowledged the un-modular character of most people:

. . . in most contexts man is remarkably un-modular. He belongs to a given culture and has internalised its values and assumptions: he is like a piece of furniture which is vividly marked by a given style. It is impossible to blend him effectively with men of a different cultural mould [**Gellner E (1996)** p 97-8].

⁸ The last word is stated at the end of chapter VI.

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1 The Political Context

¹ **Rawls J (1971)** *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

(1993) *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York.

² According to Rawls:

A conception is fully comprehensive if it covers all recognised values and virtues within one rather precisely articulated system; whereas a conception is only partially comprehensive when it comprises a number of, but by no means all, nonpolitical values and virtues and is rather loosely articulated. Many religious and philosophical doctrines aspire to be both general and comprehensive [**Rawls J (1993)** p 13].

In this Thesis theological paradigms will be viewed as comprehensive as defined above.

³ **Rawls J (1993)** pp 24-5.

⁴ Rawls defines primary goods as follows:

The basic list of primary goods (to which we may add should it prove necessary) has five headings as follows:

- a. basic rights and liberties, also given by a list;
- b. freedom of movement and free choice of occupation against a background of diverse opportunities;
- c. powers and prerogatives of offices and positions of responsibility in the political and economic institutions of the basic structure;
- d. income and wealth; and finally,
- e. the social bases of self-respect [**Rawls J (1993)** p 181].

Ignoring 'the social bases of self-respect' can cause political unrest and catastrophic conclusions. This theme will be elaborated upon later.

⁵ **Rawls J (1993)** p 23.

⁶ This point is taken up in greater detail in §3.1 and §5.

⁷ **Rawls J (1993)** p 9.

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⁸ Perfectionist liberalism feels it appropriate to sponsor one version of the good life rather than another, regardless of its popular appeal, provided that version does not contravene the basic liberal values. For a defence of such a position see **Raz J (1986) *The Morality of Freedom***, Clarendon Press, Oxford. Rawls disagrees and insists on the following three principles of neutrality:

a . . . the state is to ensure for all citizens equal opportunity to advance any conception of the good they freely affirm;

b . . . the state is not to do anything intended to favour or promote any particular comprehensive doctrine rather than another, or to give greater assistance to those who pursue it;

c . . . the state is not to do anything that makes it more likely that individuals accept any particular conception rather than another unless steps are taken to cancel, or to compensate for, the effects of policies that do this [**Rawls J (1993)** pp 192-3].

⁹ **Rawls J (1993)** p 9.

¹⁰ **Rawls J (1993)** p 271.

¹¹ For a taxonomy of liberal equality see **Dworkin R (1981) What is Equality? *Philosophy and Public Affairs***, Vol. 10, no. 3-4.

¹² The compassionate 'difference principle' has always been central to Rawls' ideology. Consider an extract from the 1971 work:

no one deserves his greater natural capacity nor merits a more favourable starting place in society . . . (but) it does not follow that one should eliminate these distinctions. There is another way to deal with them. The basic structure can be arranged so that these contingencies work for the good of the least fortunate. Thus we are led to the difference principle if we wish to set up the social system so that no one gains or loses from his arbitrary place in the distribution of natural assets or his initial position in society without giving or receiving compensating advantages in return [**Rawls J (1971)** p 102].

For an elaboration of the 'difference principle' see **Rawls J (1993)** pp 278-85.

¹³ **Rawls J (1993)** p 16.

¹⁴ This is why a liberal society allows conscientious objectors when a utilitarian one would not. Kymlicka gives a clear introduction to utilitarianism, in **Kymlicka W (1990) *Contemporary Political Philosophy***, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

¹⁵ **Rawls J (1993)** p 30.

¹⁶ **Rawls J (1993)** p 32.

¹⁷ **Rawls J (1993)** p 33.

See also Sir Isaiah Berlin's essay **Berlin I (1969) *Two Concepts of Liberty***, in *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, London.

¹⁸ For an introduction to this idea see **Thompson DF (1970) *The Democratic Citizen***, Cambridge University Press, New York. Also **Dewey J (1954, 3rd ed.) *Democracy and Education***, Macmillan, New York.

¹⁹ **Rawls J (1993)** p 34.

²⁰ **Rawls J (1993)** pp 48-54.

²¹ **Rawls J (1993)** p 54.

²² **Rawls J (1993)**, pp 103-4.

²³ By the good life, nothing more precise is meant than 'a life that the subject feels well worth living'.

²⁴ MacIntyre does not, at least in his major books, refer to himself as a communitarian. Nevertheless, the literature routinely locates him amongst other self acclaimed communitarians.

²⁵ **Sandel M (1982) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice***, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

²⁶ **Sandel M (1982)** p 121.

²⁷ See especially Chapter 3, 'Contract Theory and Justification', in **Sandel M (1982)** pp 104-32.

²⁸ **Rawls J (1971)** p 560.

²⁹ **Sandel M (1982)** p 19.

³⁰ **Sandel M (1982)** pp 120-1.

³¹ Here is Sandel criticising the OP in defence of his own 'thick' view of human nature:

But the deontological vision is flawed, both within its own terms and more generally as an account of our moral experience. Within its own terms, the deontological self, stripped of all

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possible constitutive attachments, is less liberated than disempowered. As we have seen, neither the right nor the good admits of the voluntarist derivation deontology requires. As agents of construction we do not really construct, and as agents of choice we do not really choose. What goes on behind the veil of ignorance is not a contract or an agreement but if anything a kind of discovery; and what goes on in 'purely preferential choice' is less a choosing of ends than a matching of pre-existing desires, undifferentiated as to worth, with the best available means of satisfying them. For the parties to the original position, as for the parties to ordinary deliberative rationality, the liberating moment fades before it arrives: the sovereign subject is left at sea in the circumstances it was thought to command [Sandel M (1982) pp 177-8].

³² For the quintessence of Sandel's critique see 'What really goes on behind the veil of ignorance', in Sandel M (1982) pp 122-32.

³³ Rawls anticipates many of Sandel's criticisms in Rawls J (1980) 'Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77, September, 1980.

³⁴ MacIntyre's book *After Virtue* was first published in 1981. The criticism that followed prompted MacIntyre to produce a 'second (corrected) edition'. All references are from this second edition:

MacIntyre A (1985) *After Virtue*, Duckworth, London, pp 195-6.

³⁵ MacIntyre A (1985) p 201.

³⁶ See MacIntyre A (1985) pp 217-8.

³⁷ Nausbaum M (1992) Virtue Revived, *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 July, p 9. See also

Gutmann A (1985) Communitarian Critics of Liberalism, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol.14, no.3.

³⁸ Rabinow P (1986) Representations Are Social Facts: modernity and postmodernity in anthropology, in Clifford J and Marcus GE (eds.) *Writing Culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p 252.

³⁹ Gellner E (1992) *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, Routledge, London, p 71.

⁴⁰ Gellner E (1992) p 60.

⁴¹ Gellner E (1992) p 61.

⁴² Gellner E (1992) p 54.

⁴³ Popper K (1972) *Objective Knowledge: an evolutionary approach*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p 154-5.

⁴⁴ Popper K (1972) pp 162-3.

⁴⁵ Popper K (1972) p 164.

⁴⁶ MacIntyre A (1957) What Philosophy is not, *Philosophy* 1957, reprinted in *The Definition of Morality* (1971) Methuen, London, p 26.

⁴⁷ MacIntyre A (1985) p 221.

⁴⁸ MacIntyre says concerning 'practices':

By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended [MacIntyre A (1985) p 187].

⁴⁹ MacIntyre A (1985) p 273.

⁵⁰ MacIntyre A (1985) p 275.

⁵¹ It must be stressed that there are many shades of liberalism, and not all of them are as decontextualised as some communitarians fear. This Thesis will itself argue for a political liberalism that respects the significance of tradition in the nurture of correct moral and civic attitudes.

⁵² Foot PR (1977) Approval and Disapproval, in Hacker PMS and Raz J (eds.) *Law, Morality and Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p 229.

⁵³ MacIntyre A (1985) p 206.

⁵⁴ MacIntyre A (1988) p 335.

⁵⁵ MacIntyre A (1988) p 338.

⁵⁶ MacIntyre A (1988) p 343.

⁵⁷ MacIntyre A (1985) p 6.

⁵⁸ MacIntyre A (1988) p 339.

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⁵⁹ *In Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre dissociates himself from an unreserved acceptance of inter-traditional relativism. In particular, he considers how, when and why aspects of one culture could be considered preferable to aspects of another:

... acknowledgement of the diversity of traditions of enquiry, each with its own specific mode of rational justification, does not entail that the differences between rival and incompatible traditions cannot be rationally resolved. How and under what conditions they can be so resolved is something only to be understood after a prior understanding of the nature of such traditions has been achieved. From the standpoint of traditions of rational enquiry the problem of diversity is not abolished, but it is transformed in a way that renders it amenable of solution [MacIntyre A (1988) pp 9-10].

⁶⁰ Here is a succinct statement of MacIntyre's position:

Insofar of course as such accounts of justice are either derived from or justified in terms of particular conceptions of practical rationality, the impossibility of identifying a neutral standard by which to judge between competing theories in the case of the latter entails a like impossibility in the case of the former [MacIntyre A (1988) p 333].

⁶¹ As MacIntyre appreciates:

Some conceptions of justice make the concept of desert central, while others deny it any relevance at all. Some conceptions appeal to inalienable human rights, others to some notion of social contract, and others again to a standard of utility. Moreover, the rival theories of justice which embody these rival conceptions also give expression to disagreements about the relationship of justice to other human goods, about the kind of equality which justice requires, about the range of transactions and persons to which considerations of justice are relevant, and about whether or not a knowledge of justice is possible without a knowledge of God's law [MacIntyre A (1988) p 1].

⁶² MacIntyre A (1988) p 352. A more complete account of the difficulties MacIntyre has in mind is given below:

Some problems are indeed shared. But what importance each particular problem has varies from tradition to tradition, and so do the effects of failing to arrive at a solution. Moreover, what counts as a satisfactory solution and the standards by reference to which different solutions are to be evaluated also differ radically from tradition to tradition. Thus once again any hope of discovering tradition-independent standards of judgement turns out to be illusory. From this it may well appear to follow that no tradition can claim rational superiority to any other. For each tradition has internal to itself its own view of what rational superiority consists in in respect of such topics as practical rationality and justice, and the adherents of each will judge accordingly. And if this is the case, two further conclusions may seem to follow. The first is that at any fundamental level no rational debate between, rather than within, traditions can occur. The adherents of conflicting tendencies within a tradition may still share enough in the way of fundamental belief to conduct such debate, but the protagonists of rival traditions will be precluded at any fundamental level, not only from justifying their views to the members of any rival tradition, but even from learning from them how to modify their own tradition in any radical way.

... A social universe composed exclusively of rival traditions, so it may seem, will be one in which there are a number of contending, incompatible, but only partially and inadequately communicating, overall views of that universe, each tradition ... unable to justify its claims over against those of its rivals except to those who already accept them. Is this indeed what follows? [MacIntyre A (1988) p 348].

⁶³ It is not always clear whether MacIntyre views this to be a good or bad thing, or whether he is simply making an observation.

⁶⁴ MacIntyre A (1988) p 353.

⁶⁵ Typically:

Of what did the Enlightenment deprive us? ... a conception of rational inquiry as embodied in a tradition, a conception according to which the standards of rational justification themselves emerge from and are part of a history in which they are vindicated by the way in which they

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transcend the limitations of and provide remedies for the defects of their predecessors within the history of that same tradition [MacIntyre A (1988) p 7].

⁶⁶ MacIntyre believes that:

To justify is to narrate how the argument has gone so far. Those who construct theories within such a tradition of enquiry and justification often provide those theories with a structure in terms of which certain theses have the status of first principles; other claims within such a theory will be justified by derivation from these first principles. But what justifies the first principles themselves, or rather the whole structure of theory of which they are a part, is the rational superiority of that particular structure to all previous attempts within that particular tradition to formulate such theories and principles; it is not a matter of those first principles being acceptable to all rational persons whatsoever . . . [MacIntyre A (1988) p 8].

⁶⁷ The full scenario is given in MacIntyre A (1988) pp 362-5. It is ironic that a man who complained about Rawls' disinterest in *truth* should conclude on such a *pragmatic* note, but the citation establishes this is the case. Incidentally, Rawls *is* interested in truth; his disinterest lies in trying to evangelise disputable convictions as if they were truths.

⁶⁸ MacIntyre A (1988) p 354.

⁶⁹ MacIntyre A (1988) p 355.

⁷⁰ MacIntyre A (1988) pp 361-2.

⁷¹ MacIntyre A (1988) pp 362.

⁷² MacIntyre A (1988) p 364.

⁷³ MacIntyre A (1988) pp 364-5.

⁷⁴ MacIntyre A (1988) p 365.

⁷⁵ MacIntyre A (1988) p 366.

⁷⁶ Large sections of MacIntyre A (1990) *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, Tradition*, Duckworth, London, are a reiteration of 'Whose Justice?'s dissociation from the charge of inter-cultural relativism to which *After Virtue* lent itself.

⁷⁷ This position seems complementary to the position of W.Kymlicka, where communities are defended since they provide options for choice. See chapter 2 § 2.3.1.

⁷⁸ Here is an example of MacIntyre's awareness that traditions can evolve through dialogue:

A tradition of enquiry is more than a coherent movement of thought. It is such a movement in the course of which those engaging in that movement become aware of it and of its direction and in self-aware fashion attempt to engage in its debates and to carry its enquiries forward. The relationships which can hold between individuals and a tradition are very various, ranging from unproblematic allegiance through attempts to amend or redirect the tradition to large opposition to what have hitherto been its central contentions. But this last may indeed be as formative and important a relation to a tradition as any other [MacIntyre A (1988) p 326].

A tradition becomes mature just insofar as its adherents confront and find a rational way through or around those encounters with radically different and incompatible positions which pose the problems of incommensurability and untranslatability. An ability to recognise when one's conceptual recourses are inadequate in such an encounter, or when one is unable to frame satisfactorily what others have to say to one in criticism and rebuttal, and a sensitivity to the distortions which may arise in trying to capture within one's own framework theses originally at home in another are all essential to the growth of a tradition whose conflicts are of any complexity or whose mutations involve transitions from one kind of social and cultural order to another and from one language to another [MacIntyre A (1988) p 327].

⁷⁹ Consider:

A social setting may be an institution, it may be what I have called a practice, or it may be a milieu of some other human kind. . . . Of course one and the same piece of behaviour may belong to more than one setting [MacIntyre A (1985) pp 206-7].

⁸⁰ For a discussion of this new diversity in the context of one nation see Gundara J and Jones C (1990) *Nation States, Diversity and interculturalism: issues for British Education*, in Ray D and Poonnawassie (eds.) *Education and Cultural Differences*, Garland, New York.

⁸¹ This theme is examined in Nairn T (1981) *The Break up of Britain: crises and Neo-Nationalism*, Verso, London.

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⁸² **Hobsbawn EJ (1994)** *The Age of Extremes: the short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, Michael Joseph, London.

⁸³ Green's observations are acute:

... while we may agree that the means of modern culture are irrepressibly global ... we can be less sure about what global culture actually is and what effects it will have on national cultures in particular cases. Cultural theorists ... are divided as to whether globalization means cultural standardisation or increasing diversity. The most plausible deduction seems to be that it means both at the same time. Cultural particularisms are more globally visible and present, leading to a greater diversity of cultural options for individuals and groups. At the same time, the dominant cultures of the West ... reach further across the globe. ... Cultures are transported across frontiers by similar means everywhere, but they are received and assimilated in different ways [**Green A (1997)** *Education, Globalisation and the Nation*, London, Macmillan, pp 162-3].

⁸⁴ See **Usher R and Edwards R (1994)** *Postmodernism and Education: different voices, different worlds*, Routledge, London.

⁸⁵ **MacIntyre A (1985)** p 6.

⁸⁶ **MacIntyre A (1985)** p 235.

⁸⁷ **MacIntyre A (1988)** pp 334-5.

⁸⁸ **MacIntyre A (1988)** p 344.

⁸⁹ Pericles as quoted in **Mendus S (1989)** *Liberal Man*, in **Hunt GMK (ed.) (1989)** *Philosophy and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p 45.

⁹⁰ **MacIntyre A (1988)** p 345.

⁹¹ Gellner has suggested that MacIntyre's type of politics and postmodern politics resemble the two ends of a horseshoe:

The continuities between these types of conservatism and the equally unselective hysteria of protest are of course numerous ... In both cases, there is an epistemology of the heart as against the head. In each case, there is a doctrine of knowledge as involvement in-a-situation, rather than as inquiry. ... Many of the adherents of this kind of conservatism were born into societies in which the basic decencies of liberalism are so totally taken for granted - in this they are *just* like the protestor - that they cannot really even imagine them absent, and hence are attracted by the apparently 'tolerant' conservatism as a kind of romanticism ... [**Gellner E (1974)** *The Dangers of Tolerance* in **Jarvie IC & Agassi J (eds.)** *Contemporary Thought and Politics*, Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, p 179].

⁹² Unless academics give specific acknowledgements, it is impossible to know who has influenced whom. Ideas can be formulated long before publication, and two minds can co-incidentally arrive upon the same ideas. It must therefore be noted that the evolution in Rawls' thinking from 1972-92 cannot be located to a formal Rawls-communitarian correspondence. It is possible that Rawls had long been aware of the limitations of *A Theory of Justice*, and would have corrected these even if Sandel and MacIntyre had never written a word. Nevertheless, the point remains that Rawls has in his post-1971 works incorporated elements of the *kind* of points voiced famously by Sandel and MacIntyre. Below are some landmark works in the liberal-communitarian debate:

Year	Rawls	MacIntyre	Sandel
1971	<i>A Theory of Justice</i> .		
1980	Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory.		
1981		<i>After Virtue</i> .	
1982			<i>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</i> .
1985	Justice as Fairness: political not metaphysical.	Second edition of <i>After Virtue</i> with a response to critics.	
1988		Whose Justice? Which Rationality?	
1990		Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, Tradition.	
1993	<i>Political Liberalism</i> .		

Fig.27 Important texts in the liberal-communitarian debate

⁹³ **Rawls J (1993)** ff.29. p 27.

⁹⁴ Rawls J (1993) pp 26-7.

⁹⁵ Here is an admission:

... the fact of a plurality of reasonable but incompatible comprehensive doctrines - the fact of reasonable pluralism - shows that, as used in *Theory*, the idea of a well-ordered society of justice as fairness is unrealistic [Rawls J (1993) pp xvi - xvii].

⁹⁶ Here are indications of the intuitional basis of Rawls' (1971) work:

'I assume that there is a broad measure of agreement that', 'it seems reasonable to suppose', 'which we can affirm on reflection.' 'match our considered ... conceptions of justice or extend them in an acceptable way,' 'which we can affirm by reflection,' 'we are confident,' 'it seems reasonable', pp 18-20.

'the natural answer seems to be', p 505.

'Now of course none of this is literally argument', p 509.

Nowhere is this confidence in his own intuitions clearer than in the admission that:

'We want to define the original position so that we get the desired solution', p 141.

⁹⁷ For an elaboration of the association between the 1971 Rawls and Kant see Levine A (1974) Rawls' Kantianism, *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol.3, no.1.

An important element of the (1993) Rawls' more qualified association is given below:

... the basic conceptions of person and society in Kant's view have, let us assume, a foundation in his transcendental idealism. ... What is essential is that justice as fairness uses as basic organising ideas certain fundamental ideas that are political. Transcendental idealism and other such metaphysical doctrines play no role in their organisation and exposition

[Rawls J (1993) p 100].

⁹⁸ Rawls J (1985) Justice as Fairness: political not metaphysical, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Summer 1985, p 225.

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ Rawls J (1993) 1993 p xv.

¹⁰¹ Rawls J (1985) p 245.

¹⁰² Jarvie IC (1983) Rationality and Relativism, *The British Journal of Sociology*, p 46.

¹⁰³ Jarvie IC (1983) p 45.

¹⁰⁴ Jarvie IC (1983) pp 46-7.

¹⁰⁵ Jarvie IC (1983) p 59.

¹⁰⁶ Sir Isaiah Berlin has expressed this throughout his work. For example:

If the claims of two ... types of liberty prove incompatible in a particular case, and if this is an instance of the clash of values at once absolute and incommensurable, it is better to face this intellectually uncomfortable fact than to ignore it ... [Berlin I (1969) *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford p 1].

¹⁰⁷ Rawls J (1980) 'Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77, September, p 542.

¹⁰⁸ Admittedly, this shift in the emphasis from *truth* to *process* does itself represent a commitment to the primacy of fairness above all other moral principles. However, it is hard to imagine how any plural society could remain civilised were its citizens to deny this primacy.

¹⁰⁹ Rawls J (1993) p 161.

¹¹⁰ Bosnia is one such tragic conclusion.

¹¹¹ Rawls J (1993) p 160.

¹¹² For a methodical treatment see Rawls J (1993) pp 158-68.

¹¹³ Rawls J (1993) p 168.

¹¹⁴ Rawls J (1993) p 201.

¹¹⁵ MacIntyre A (1985) p 216.

¹¹⁶ For a collection of sympathetic yet critical essays on Rawlsian justice see Daniels N (ed.) (1975) *Reading Rawls*, Blackwell, Oxford. See especially essays by Hart H (Rawls on Liberty and its Priority), Nagel T (On Rawlsian Justice) and Hare RM (The Original Position).

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¹ As Rawls has stated:

Now consider the fundamental idea of the person. There are, of course, many aspects of human nature that can be singled out as especially significant, depending on our point of view. . . . Since our account of justice as fairness begins with the idea that society is to be conceived as a fair system of cooperation over time between generations, we adopt a conception of the person to go with this idea [Rawls J (1993) *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p 18].

² Rawls J (1993) pp 86-7.

³ Rawls J (1993) p 88.

⁴ Rawls J (1993) pp 103-4.

⁵ Rawls J (1993) p 271.

⁶ This point is made by Judith Shklar in Shklar J (1981) *Ordinary Vices*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

⁷ Saint Matthew, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, King James' Version, 7:12.

⁸ Kant I (1724-1804) *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Paton HJ (trans.)(1964), Harper and Row, New York, pp 69-70. The source passage is tremendous:

But what kind of law can this be the thought of which, even without regard to the results expected from it, has to determine the will if this is to be called good absolutely and without qualification? Since I have robbed the will of every inducement that might arise for it as a consequence of obeying any particular law, nothing is left but the conformity of action to universal law as such, and this alone must serve the will as its principle. That is to say, I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law. . . .

Thus I need no far-reaching ingenuity to find out what I have to do in order to possess a good will. Inexperienced in the course of world affairs and incapable of being prepared for all chances that happen in it, I ask myself only 'Can you also will that your maxim should become a universal law?'. Where you cannot, it is to be rejected, and that not because of a prospective loss to you or even to others, but because it cannot fit as a principle into a possible enactment of universal law. For such an enactment reason compels my immediate reverence, into whose grounds (which the philosopher may investigate) I have as yet no *insight* [Paton HJ (1964) (trans.) pp 69-70; 71].

⁹ Hare RM (1973) Language and Moral Education, in Langford G & O'Conner DJ (eds.) *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education*, Routledge, London, p 160.

¹⁰ Wilson J (1990) *A New Moral Education*, Cassells, London, p 99. For enjoyable introductions to Morality see:

Berlin Sir Isaiah (1991) The pursuit of the ideal, in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, Knoff Press, New York.

Camus A (1960) *The Plague*, Penguin, London.

Hesse H (1979) *Narciss and Goldmun*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Williams B (1981) *Moral Luck*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

¹¹ See Scheffler S (1992) *Human Morality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

¹² Gilligan C (1982) *In a Different Voice: psychological theory and women's development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

¹³ Kohlberg L (1981) *The Philosophy of Moral Development: moral stages and the idea of justice*, Harper and Roe, New York, pp 409-12.

¹⁴ Kohlberg L (1981) Justice as Reversibility, in Kohlberg L (1981).

¹⁵ Kohlberg was later to suggest a mystical seventh stage. See Carter RE (1987) Beyond Justice, *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 16, no. 2.

¹⁶ Gilligan C (1977) In a Different Voice, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 47, no. 4, pp 481-2.

¹⁷ In response to Gilligan's gender orientated critique, Kymlicka points out that justice and care are complementary, not mutually exclusive moral virtues. See Kymlicka W (1990) Feminist politics, in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

¹⁸ Lyons N (1983) Two Perspectives on Self, Relationships and Morality, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 53, no. 2, p 136. (The table is a reformatted version of the original).

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¹⁹ Walker L J (1984) Sex Differences in the Development of Moral Reasoning: a critical review of the literature, *Child Development*, Vol. 55, pp 677-91.

²⁰ Gilligan C (1977) p 502.

²¹ As with Gilligan's gender orientated critique, reservations about Kitwood's work must be stated. This Thesis does not accept Kitwood's postmodern idea of 'the illusion of the unitary subject'. Instead, only some of his thoughts on the pre-conditions for moral well being are accepted. Kitwood's general position is explained in Kitwood TM (1988) Sentient Being, Moral Agent, *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 17, no. 1. See also Kitwood TM (1989) Moral Restoration and its Context, *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 18, no.1.

²² Haan N et al (1985) *On Moral Grounds*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

²³ Kitwood TM (1989) p 9.

²⁴ Kitwood TM (1990) p 6.

²⁵ Kitwood TM (1990) pp 8-9.

²⁶ Kitwood TM (1990) pp 10-1.

²⁷ On account of his postmodernist tendencies Kitwood might not approve of this association with Rawls. Nevertheless, this does not invalidate the limited connection.

²⁸ Nagel is concerned with the relationship between morality and politics. For example:

We must ask not only what type and degree of contribution to impersonal aims can reasonably be asked of divided creatures like ourselves, but also how we or our circumstances might reasonably hope to be transformed so that a life which better meets both sets of demands would become possible for us. This shows the connection between the ethics of individual conduct and political theory . . . [Nagel T (1991) *Partiality and Equality*, Oxford University Press, New York, p 17].

See also:

Nagel T (1979) 'War and massacre' and 'Ruthlessness in public life', both in *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

(1987) Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 3.

²⁹ Subsequent theological (Chapter 3), empirical (Chapter 4) and sociological (Chapter 5) investigations will contribute towards suggesting a model for religious education that can play a role in the nurture of citizens capable of perpetuating a liberal society (Chapter 6).

³⁰ For an introduction to this atheistic and hedonistic school see Dasgupta S (1992) (first edn. 1922) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Vol. 1, pp 78-80.

³¹ Shklar J (1984) *Ordinary Vices*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., p 1.

³² Shklar J (1984) pp 8-9.

³³ See the section 'Cruelty and Christian Practices' in Shklar J (1984) pp 10-4.

³⁴ Shklar J (1984) p 240.

³⁵ Shklar J (1984) p 1.

³⁶ See Shklar J (1990) *The Faces of Injustice*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

³⁷ For a sympathetic discussion on the significance of religion for modern society see:

Martin D (1969) *The Religious and the Secular: studies in secularisation*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

(1991) The Secularisation Issue: prospects and retrospect, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.42, no 3.

³⁸ Butterworth J (1981) *Cults and New Faiths: a book of beliefs*, Tring, London.

Eileen B (1989) *New Religious Movements: a practical introduction*, HMSO, London.

Irvina H (1986) *Understanding Cults and New Religions*, Eordmans WB, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Campbell C (1977) Clarifying the Cult, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28, no. 3.

³⁹ The *Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth Century Social Thought* regards Islam as the most cogent example of a fundamentalist religious style:

. . . In one sense Islam is inherently fundamentalist given the emphasis on the perfect word of God finally embodied in the Qur'an. Alongside this, as one of the 'fundamentals' of Islam, is the promotion of Islam and Islamic law as a complete way of life encompassing the State wherever power and numbers allow [Outhwaite W and Bottomore T (1993) *Twentieth Century Social Thought*, Blackwell, Oxford, p 239].

⁴⁰ Gellner (1975) *Muslim Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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⁴¹ **Kymlicka W (1989)** *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp 166-7.

⁴² **Menachen Mendle of Kotz** quoted by **Heilbron L**, in **Cairns with Desai (1995)** *Educating for Professionalism*, ResQuJE, London.

⁴³ This issue is sensitively discussed by Kymlicka. See 'The value of cultural membership', in **Kymlicka W (1989)** pp 162-81.

⁴⁴ This is a major theme of William Galston's splendid work. See especially:

Galston WA (1982) *Defending Liberalism*, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 72, September.

(1991) *Liberal Purposes: goods, virtues and diversity in the liberal state*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁴⁵ McGee is correct:

It is the function of the family to produce new members of the society and to equip them with the information, skills, norms and understandings which will permit them to function effectively as adults upon reaching maturity, however that is defined locally [**McGee R (1975)** *Points of Departure: basic concepts in sociology*, Dryden Press, Hindsdale IL, p 119].

See also: **Kohlberg L et al (1976)** Family Patterns of Moral Reasoning, *Child Development*, Vol. 47, pp 1203-6.

Wringe C (1994) Family Values and the Value of the Family, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 28, no. 1.

For a discussion of specifically social values see **Dynneson TL et al (1989)** *An exploratory survey of graduating seniors' perceptions pertaining to (i) qualities of a good citizen (ii) the sources of citizenship influence (iii) the combination of social studies courses and programmes of study for citizenship development*, Centre for Educational Research, Stanford, CA.

⁴⁶ The voluntary status of the fundamentalist presence distinguishes them from refugees, who have no tolerable option other than to live in a liberal society. Fundamentalists are free to emigrate to their respective *Ummas*.

⁴⁷ **Nagel T (1987)** Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 3, p 229.

⁴⁸ **Nagel T (1987)** p 232.

⁴⁹ **Rawls J (1993)** pp 40-3.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of this in an educational context see **Peshkin A (1986)** *God's Choice: the total world of a fundamentalist Christian school*, University Chicago Press, Chicago.

⁵¹ Fundamentalist readings of tradition are often a-historical. This matter is taken up further in Chapter 3 § 6.1 and Chapter 5 § 7.2.1.

⁵² **Gellner E (1996)** *Condition of Liberty*, Penguin, London, p 214.

⁵³ **Rawls J (1993)** p 152.

⁵⁴ There is controversy amongst leading analysts regarding whether hindutva deserves the fundamentalist classification. *India Today* often refers to hindutva as 'Hindu fundamentalism'. Others, for example Paul Brass, take the view that Hindu nationalism is in fact a *secular*, not religious phenomenon:

. . . the rise of a new ideology of Hindu Nationalism . . . has turned the official secular ideology on its head. The militant Hindu argument is that India cannot be a true secular State as long as Muslims are allowed . . . special privileges . . . with a special status in India. It is a great mistake to view this ideology as Hindu 'fundamentalist'. It is, like secularism in India, an ideology of State exaltation, which the B.J.P. wishes to infuse with Hindu symbols in order that a united India may come to occupy a respected place among the great states in the modern world [**Brass PR (1995)** *The Politics of India Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p 265].

Though later reflections will shed light on these issues (see Chapter V § 7), I would here like to say that I do not sympathise with *India Today's* presumptuous dismissals and believe that the *hindutva* phenomenon deserves a more sympathetic analysis than that given by the otherwise excellent publication.

3 The View From Brahman

¹ Dr Lipner highlighted innumerable deficiencies in the earlier version of this chapter and offered many suggestions for its improvement.

² The American constitution *does* hold freedom and equality to be self evident truth. Thankfully, some pedagogues are more realistic. Speaking of the values of liberty and equality, they warn that they :

... are neither revealed truths nor natural habits. There is no evidence that we are born with them. Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to the rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self restraint and self respect - all these must be taught and learnt [American Federation of Teachers (1987) *Education for Democracy: a statement of principles*, Washington DC, p 8].

This chapter provides a theological complement to this educational process.

³ For a discussion of this theme see Dahrendorf R (1962) *The Origin of Social Inequality*, in Laslett P & Fishkin J (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

⁴ For an appraisal of what is required for the origin and perpetuation of a liberal society see: Gellner E (1988) *The Origins of Society*, in Fabian AC (ed.) (1988) *Origins: the Darwin College lectures*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁵ Nagel T (1987) *Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy*, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 3, p 222.

Gellner E (1996) *Conditions of Liberty: civil society and its rivals*, Penguin books, Harmondsworth.

⁶ Lipner conveys elegantly the pluriform nature of Hinduism. For a sympathetic discussion see: Lipner JJ (1994) *Hindus: their religious beliefs and practices*, Routledge, London. For alternative purviews see:

Brokington J (1981) *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its continuity and diversity*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Radhakrishnan S (1980) *The Hindu Way of Life*, Unwin, London.

Those interested in the ancient history of the Hinduism may read:

Alchin B and Alchin R (1982) *The Rise of Civilisation in India and Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bhattacharya H (ed.) (1953) *The Cultural Heritage Of India: Vol. I The early Phase (prehistoric, Vedic and Upaniṣadic)*, Ramakrishna mission, Calcutta.

Mallory JP (1989) *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, Thames and Hudson, London.

⁷ Lipner JJ (1994) p 5.

⁸ Lipner JJ (1994) p 324. Lipner has added nuances to a traditional metaphor depicting the complexities of *saṁsāra*:

They (i.e. the Vedas) speak of an indestructible *aśvattha* tree which has its roots upwards and branches downwards and whose leaves are the Vedas. He who knows it knows the Vedas . . . and downward indeed to mankind extend the roots that consist of the effects of action which bind [Bhagavadgītā XV.1-2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) *The Gītābhāṣya of Rāmānuja*, Ananathacarya Indological Institute, Bombay pp 378-379].

⁹ See the range of philosophical positions found in Hinduism as reported in Dasgupta S (1992) (first edn. 1922) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi. Consider also that Jains do not aggressively oppose the Vedas and Upaniṣads, hence many regard them as a branch of Hinduism (though many Jaini beliefs are unique). Also, one can find adorned pictures of 'Isu Christ' in Hindu temples.

However, Buddhists ridicule the validity of the Vedic and Upaniṣadic texts and are therefore technically heterodox.

¹⁰ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* III. 10, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 75.

¹¹ Lipner JJ (1994) p 324.

¹² An alternative metaphor is of a bird sipping from a vast lake: *Bhagavadgītā* II. 46, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 49 (though the reference is specifically to the four Vedas, the spirit is generic).

¹³ Lipner JJ (1994) p 13.

¹⁴ Lipner JJ (1994) p 221.

¹⁵ Lipner JJ (1994) p 221.

¹⁶ Lipner JJ (1986) *The Face of Truth: a study of meaning and metaphysics in the Vedāntic theology of Rāmānuja*, State University of New York Press, Albany, pp 101-2.

¹⁷ Rāmānujācārya is foremost of all the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava-ācāryas or line of preceptors descending from the Goddess Śrī. A fine biography is Govindacārya A (1906) *Life of Rāmānujācārya* S. Murthy, Madras. Reprints are sporadically available from the Ananthacharya Indological Institute, Cuffe Parade, Bombay. Those unable to obtain the above may refer to Carman JB (1981) *The Theology of Rāmānujācārya: an essay in interreligious understanding*, Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Bombay, pp 24-48 [first published (1974) by Yale University Press, New Haven].

a. Literary Influences on Rāmānujācārya

Rāmānujācārya was influenced by the two traditions of Sanskrit Vedānta and the Tamiḷ Veda or Divya Prabandham [See the chapter: General evaluation and conclusion, in Chari SMS (1997) *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḷvārs*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi]. Both traditions evolved over vast periods of time, with contributions from many illuminaries.

The Sanskrit texts are often esoteric and ambiguous, allowing for at least five major orthodox schools of Vedānta. The Prabandham are less ambiguous in their theistic position and are explicitly devotional. Both traditions enthralled Rāmānujācārya with the idea of a God both immanent in, and transcendent to, this phenomenal world. While the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition maintains that the Sanskrit Vedānta and Tamiḷ Prabandhas are complementary, each does have its own unique characteristics:

a. Sanskrit Vedānta	b. Tamiḷ Divya Prabandham
1. Consists of the (i) four Vedas and (ii) one hundred and eight Upaniṣads.	1. Four thousand verses mystically relayed to Yamunācārya (preceptor of Rāmānujācārya) by the saint Nammālvār, foremost of the twelve Āḷvārs.
2. Sanskrit medium.	2. Tamiḷ medium.
3. Revelations received by pondering ascetics.	3. Spontaneous out-pourings of God intoxicated saints.
4. Philosophical in their focus.	4. Deeply devotional.
5. Emphasis on the majesty of Brahman.	5. Emphasis on God's tender intimacy with creation.

Fig.28 Salient features of the Sanskrit and Tamiḷ traditions

The Veda

Rāmānujācārya would have been familiar with the Vedas. These are texts of ritual scattered with philosophical illumination, e.g. the *Puruṣa Sūkta mandala*. For an introduction to the status and perception of Veda in Hindu thinking see Lipner JJ (1986) pp 12-24 and pp 25-73.

The Upaniṣads

During Rāmānujācārya's time polemics concentrated upon apparent contradictions within the Upaniṣadic texts. The *bheda* śrutis maintain a total distinction between this world and Brahman, whereas the *abheda* śrutis maintain an absolute unity. Similarly, some texts deny the existence of any distinction in Brahman (*nirguṇa* śrutis), while others depict a God of varied and magnificent qualities (*saguṇa* śrutis).

The Bhagavadgītā

Many Hindus believe this poem was sung by Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of God. The text speaks of human nature, the universe and God; of earthly duties and paths to salvation. It is the closest Hinduism has to a religious almanac. Vedāntins and commoners alike have persistently tried co-ordinate the various theological, philosophical and moral elements of the *Bhagavadgītā* into a coherent schema appropriate to their concerns and supportive of their own particular position.

The Tamiḷ Tradition: All of Rāmānujācārya's writing concentrated upon the Sanskrit tradition. However, he also held the Tamiḷ Divya Prabandham in the highest regard and ordained they be chanted anterior to the Vedic hymns in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava psalmster. He also gave discourses which

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formed the basis for his successors to write commentaries on the Prabandham. The influence of the Prabandham, though subterranean, was profound. See **Carman JB (1981)** pp 248-9.

b. Rāmānujācārya's nine literary works

Śrībhāṣya, *Vedārthasaṁgraha*, *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, *Vedāntasāra*, *Vedāntadīpa*, *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, *Śrīrangagadya*, *Śrī-Vaikuṇṭhagadya*, and *Nityagrantha*. See **Carman JB (1981)** pp 49-64.

Since the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, *Śaraṇāgatigadya* and *Śrībhāṣya*, are easily accessible in English translation, they are the main texts referred to in this Thesis.

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: Rāmānujācārya wrote the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* late during his earthly sojourn. Unlike the *Śrībhāṣya*, the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* is simple and expository rather than polemic. Here Rāmānujācārya 'stands revealed as a mystic, a devotee of God and a preceptor eager and competent to transform disciples by his teachings' [**Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p xxxi]. Translation used: **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** *Gītābhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya*, Ananthacarya Indological Institute, Bombay.

Śaraṇāgatigadya: Literally, the poem of surrender. Here Rāmānujācārya supplicates to the Lord on behalf of an errant humanity. It should be recited daily by all Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas. Translation used: **Ramanujan VV (1994)** *Gadyatrayam of Rāmānuja: text in Sanskrit with the commentary of Periyāccān Piḷḷai*, Yathiraj Paduka, Madras.

Śrībhāṣya: The *Śrībhāṣya* tries to reconcile the contradictory Upaniṣadic texts into a coherent theistic system. Rāmānujācārya's methodology is explained in the chapter 'The One and the Many: observations on Rāmānuja's theological method' in **Lipner JJ (1986)** pp 120-39. The translation of the *Śrībhāṣya* used is **Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988)** *The Vedāntasūtras with the Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi.

¹⁸ The following provide a clear introduction to the theology of Viśiṣṭādvaita:

Carman JB (1981) *The Theology of Rāmānuja: an essay in interreligious understanding*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Lipner JJ (1986) *The Face of Truth: a study of meaning and metaphysics in the Vedāntic theology of Rāmānuja*, State University of New York Press, Albany.

Srinivasachari PN (1946) *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras.

¹⁹ Śaṅkarācārya was a great genius, but it is regrettable that, particularly in the west, many regard his Advaita Vedānta as *the* Vedānta. Sengupta's is worth noting:

It is pointed out that the interpreters who characterise the Hindu view of the ultimate reality as abstract refer to Vedānta (Śaṅkara Vedānta) in defence of their interpretation. I may make two observations by way of criticism of this reference to Śaṅkara Vedānta: (a) to select one of the different schools of Vedānta and to view it as representative of the whole of vedāntic thought is unjustified; and (b) Śaṅkara Vedānta does not claim to be a religious view at all, for religion itself is relegated to the level of appearance, which is transcended or negated from the standpoint of the ultimate. . . . Theistic Vedānta and Vaiṣṇava theism are more representative of the practising faith of the Hindus than is Śaṅkara Vedānta [**Sengupta SC (1975)** *The Misunderstanding of Hinduism*, in **Hick J (ed.) (1975)** *Truth and Dialogue: the relationship between world religions*, Sheldon, London p 100].

²⁰ A quick and scholarly comparison of all the great Vedāntic schools is given in **Ghate VS (1981)** *The Vedānta: a study of the Brahma Sūtras with the bhāṣyas of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbarka, Madhva and Vallabha*, Government Oriental Series, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

²¹ Consider *Shikshapatri* verse 100 'Śarīrkāṇām bhagavadgītāyāḥ cavagamyatām, Rāmānujācārya kṛtam bhāṣyam ādhyātmikam mam'.

²² Here are the sources of dates for the ācāryas: **Lipner JJ (1994)**: Śaṅkarācārya p 42, Vallabhācārya p 60, Caitanya p 257; **Lipner JJ (1986)**: Rāmānujācārya p 1; **Dasgupta S (1992)** (Vol.IV): Madhvācārya pp 51-2, Dasgupta dates Vallabhācārya (1481-1533 CE) p 371.

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²³ The magnificence of God is inexhaustible and only those aspects relevant to the discussion can be presented here.

²⁴ See *R̥g Veda, Puruṣa Sūkta*, mandala X, also *R̥g Veda, Viṣvakarma Sūkta*, mandala X, 81.

²⁵ *Puruṣa Sūkta*, mandala X, 4-5.

²⁶ Summary from Muir, as cited in Dasgupta S (1992) p 33.

²⁷ *Puruṣa Sūkta, R̥g Veda* X.90.12.

²⁸ *R̥g Veda* I. 143.3.

²⁹ *R̥g Veda* X.168, 3-4.

³⁰ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as translated by Eggeling and cited in Dasgupta S (1992) Vol.I, p 20.

³¹ *R̥g Veda* III.54, Translated by Radhakrishnan, in Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) (first edn. 1953) *The Principal Upaniṣads*, Indus, Harper Collins, India, p 54.

³² Dasgupta S (1992) (first edn. 1922) Vol. I, p 12.

³³ Dasgupta S (1992) p 13.

³⁴ Dasgupta S (1992) p 14.

³⁵ The table is gleaned from Lipner JJ (1994) pp 35-8. The same text dates the *Mahābhārat* (within which is found the *Bhagavadgītā*) at c.400 BCE-c.400 CE. and the *Rāmāyaṇa* between 400 BCE- 300 CE (p 58).

³⁶ Dr. Lipner has emphasised the need for sensitivity towards the nuances of meaning of the term Brahman, even within a single text. This sensitivity becomes even more crucial when one is referring to Brahman as used across texts with origins spanning a thousand years such as the Upaniṣads. See also note 52.

³⁷ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.4.11, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 169.

³⁸ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.1.2, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 184. Subsequent verses [II.1. 3-12, p 184-7] substitute for the sun: moon, lightning, ether, air, fire, water, mirror, the quarters of heaven and shadow to culminate in II.1.13:

Gārgya said: The person here who is in the self, on him, indeed, do I meditate as Brahman.
‘Ajātaśatru said: ‘Please do not talk to me about him. I meditate on him, verily, as self-possessed’.

³⁹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.3.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 192-3.

⁴⁰ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.3.6, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 194.

⁴¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.5.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 201. The following verses substitute for the earth: the air, sun, moon, lightning clouds, the law, mankind, and culminate in the Self of verse II.5.14.

⁴² *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* V.3.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 291.

⁴³ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* V.7.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 294-5

⁴⁴ Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) Introduction, p 52.

⁴⁵ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* V.5.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 292.

⁴⁶ The *Puruṣa Sūkta* is also found in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.12.13.

⁴⁷ As the *Taittirīya-Brahmana*, intermediate between the Vedas and Upaniṣads, says:

“Which, indeed, is the wood, and which, indeed, is that tree out of which they fashioned the Heaven and earth? O wise men, question your mind as to which things He presided over - He who bears the worlds. The Brahman is the wood, the Brahman is that tree out of which He fashioned the Heaven and earth: the Brahman who supports the worlds presides over Himself with His mind, I tell you, you wise men” [*Taittirīya Brahmana* II. 8. 9 as quoted in *Śrībhāṣya*, II.1. 28, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 332].

Similar picturesque analogies can also be found in latter Upaniṣads:

“Just as the spider sends out and draws in its thread, just as medicinal herbs grow out of the earth, just as hairs on the head and on the body spring forth from a living person, similarly this whole universe is born out of *Akṣara* [*Muṇḍakopaniṣad* I.1.7] [as quoted in *Śrībhāṣya*,

I.2. 22, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 42].

The appropriateness of the analogues is elaborated as follows:

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The spider suggests how the Brahman creates the universe out of Himself and draws it within Himself during the process, of dissolution. From the example of the earth we see that the material cause can remain undestroyed and unconcealed even after producing the effect. The growth of hair and nails points out the possibility of the non-living springing from the living [ff.2] [*Śrībhāṣya*, I.2.22, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 42].

⁴⁸ Here is a lively example:

In the beginning this (world) was only the self, in the shape of a person. . . . He, verily, had no delight. . . . He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and man in close embrace. From that arose husband and wife . . . He became united with her. From that human beings were produced. She thought, 'How can he unite with me after having produced me from himself? Well, let me hide myself'. She became a cow, the other became a bull and was united with her and from that cows were born. The one became a mare, the other stallion . . . Thus, indeed, he produced everything whatever exists in pairs, down to the ants [*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.1-4, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) pp 163-5].

⁴⁹ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II.6.1, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) pp 547-8. See also Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 330.

⁵⁰ Lipner has suggested that in some respects a better description of Viśiṣṭādvaita is provided by the term panentheism than by pantheism. However, he has reservations about the term panentheism since it ignores the methodology of Rāmānujācārya's theology. Lipner suggests the spirit of both Rāmānujācārya's content and method is best captured by the phrase 'polarity theology'.

⁵¹ The formula *satyam-jñānam-anantam-brahma* appears in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.1.1. For a gloss see *Śrībhāṣya* I.1.2, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.)(1988) Vol. One, pp 199-201; also Vol. Three, pp 259-61. Those interested in the relationship between textual exegesis and theological ontology will find satisfaction in the chapters 'Predication and meaning' and 'The essential self' in Lipner JJ (1986). In relation to the formula *satyam-jñānam-anantam-brahma* see particularly pp 28-36.

⁵² The *bhāṣya* on the below sequence of verses illustrates how different savants utilise legitimate nuances of Brahman in defence of their own doctrinal positions:

From food all creatures (i.e. bodies) have their being; from rain is the production of food; from the sacrifice there arises rain; and the sacrifice is what is born out of action. Know that action springs from the Brahman (or the physical body); the Brahman proceeds from the imperishable (self); therefore, the Brahman which is everywhere is established in the sacrifice. He who does not move in conformity with the wheel thus set in motion here, (he), living the life of sin and revelling in the senses, lives in vain. O son of Pṛthā (Arjuna)! [*Bhagavadgītā* III.14-16, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 78].

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: Here what is indicated by the word, 'brahman', is the physical body which is made up of modifications of the *prakṛti*. For the *prakṛti* is indicated by the word, 'brahman', in (the scriptural text): "From Him is born this *brahman*, as also the world of matter and soul (*anna*) characterised by name and form" (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, I.1.9). Here (in the *Gītā*) also it will be said: "The womb of the universe is that great *brahman* of Mine" [*Bhagavadgītā* XIV.3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 78].

(ff.[125] Sampatkumaran's observations on the *bhāṣya*): The cycle of causes and effects or the 'wheel' does not seem to be complete on a cursory study of these verses. Indeed Professor Edgerton definitely states that rigorous logical sequence cannot be found among the members of the cycle. But our great *ācāryas* have tried to indicate how the cycle may be completed.

Śrī Rāmānujācārya, as may be seen above . . . solves the difficulty by interpreting 'brahman' as the *prakṛti*, 'akṣara' as the individual soul animating a body, and 'bhūtani' as embodied souls.

Śrī Śaṅkara takes 'brahman' to be the *Ṛgveda*, 'akṣara' as the Supreme Brahman, 'yajña' as 'apūrva' and 'karma' as the sacrificial ritual. His followers would complete the cycle this way: creatures study the *Ṛgveda* springing from the Supreme Brahman, and perform sacrifices revealed by them; thereby the gods become pleased; rain results; food grows; more creatures get born; in turn they study the *Ṛgveda* and perform sacrifices, and so forth.

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Śrī Madhva interprets 'brahman' as the Supreme Lord and 'akṣara' as the *Vedas*. He would complete the cycle by pointing out that the *Vedas* are made manifest by creatures. The *Vedas* are the cause of the Lord in the sense that they reveal Him to us. The cycle would thus be: creatures manifest the *Vedas*; the *Vedas* reveal the Brahman; the Brahman inspires the performance of duties; the latter lead to sacrifices; the sacrifices produce rain; rain produces food; from food creatures are born [Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 79].

The same author may also interpret and apply Brahman differently according to differing textual contexts. Consider Rāmānujācārya's various interpretations and applications:

Brahman as the Supreme Person:

Invocation of *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*. . . . He who is . . . the Supreme Brahman, the Highest Person and Narayana [Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 1-2].

Brahman as the individual self and the Universal Self:

Even now creation is conquered by those whose mind is established in equality. For the *brahman* (or the individual self), when unsullied (or free of contact with the *prakṛti*), is the same everywhere. Therefore, they abide in the *brahman* (i.e. realise its sameness everywhere) [*Bhagavadgītā* V.19, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 141].

Brahman as the *prakṛti* (matter):

The womb (from which the universe is born) is the great *brahman* (or the *prakṛti*) which belongs to Me. In it I cast the seed. The birth of all embodied beings. O Arjuna (Bharata), proceeds from that (association) [*Bhagavadgītā* XIV.3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 360].

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: That great *brahman* which forms the womb (for the whole universe to come out from) and which belongs to Me - in it I cast the seed. Here the non-intelligent *prakṛti*, described in the passage, "Earth, water, fire, ether, *manas*, *buddhi* (or the principle called *mahat*), and also *ahaikāra* (or the principle of egoity) - this *prakṛti*, thus divided into eight principles, is Mine", (VII 4-5), is called the great *brahman* because of its being the cause of modifications like the *mahat*, the *ahaikāra* and others . . . the *prakṛti* is denoted as 'brahman' as in 'He who understands all (in essence) and knows all (in their modes and manifestations) and whose austerity consists of knowledge (i.e. the effort of thinking and willing) - from Him proceeds this *brahman* (or undifferentiated creation), as also *anna* (or the world or matter and selves) characterised by name and form" (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. I.1.9) [Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 360].

Brahman as the doer, the deed, and the accessories:

By the Brahman is the oblation of the Brahman which has the Brahman for its instrument offered into the fire of the Brahman. By him who meditates on the Brahman as (the soul) of work, the Brahman alone is to be obtained [*Bhagavadgītā* IV.24, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 117].

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: What has been spoken of as '*Brahmārpaṇam*' (rendered as 'which has the Brahman for its instrument') forms an adjective to the oblation. '*Arpaṇa*' means that by which an offering is given, such as the ladle, etc. It is the Brahman because of its being the effect of the Brahman (footnote: This is so because the Brahman is the material cause of the universe) '*Brahmārpaṇam*', is that oblation of which the instrument is the Brahman. The Brahman is the oblation. The oblation of which the instrument is the Brahman also forms by itself the Brahman. It is offered by the Brahman as the agent into the fire of the Brahman, that is, into the fire which is the Brahman. He is *Brahma-karma-samādhi* who meditates in this way on all work as being made up of the Brahman on account of its having the Brahman for its soul. By him who mediates on the Brahman as (the soul of work), the Brahman alone is to be attained. That is, the true nature of the individual self, which is the Brahman on account of its having the Brahman for its self, is to be realised (Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 117-8).

Later discussions will emphasise that Rāmānujācārya uses Brahman with reference to an alluring, anthropomorphic Divinity, as well as the substratum of the sentient and insentient universe. (As a further indication of the diversity of meanings attached to Brahman here is a list of some verses from the *Bhagavadgītā* in which the term Brahman appears: III.15, III.16, IV.24, IV.31, V.6, V.19,

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VII.29, VIII.1, VIII.3, VIII.13, VIII.24, X.12, XIII.12, XIII.30, XIV.3, XIV.4, XVIII.50. Here is a list of some verses from the *Bhagavadgītā* in which the term Brahman appears in compounds: XVIII.42, IV.24; VIII.11, XVII.14; VI.14; IV.32, VI.38, VIII.17, XI.37, XIV.27, XVII.23; IV.24; V.10, V.19, V.20; II.72, V.24, V.24, V.26; VI.27, V.24, XVIII.54; XIV.26, XVIII.53; V.21; XVII.24; V.20; VIII.24; VI.28; XIII.4; IV.24, IV.25; XI.15; III.16.

⁵³ See *Bhagavadgītā* XI.18, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 284; *Bhagavadgītā* XI.38, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 296; *Bhagavadgītā* XV.18, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 392.

⁵⁴ Note however that Śrī-Kṛṣṇa went to great lengths to avert the war.

⁵⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.23-5, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* pp 288-9.

⁵⁶ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.31, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 291.

⁵⁷ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.45, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 300.

⁵⁸ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.18, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 284.

⁵⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.19, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 285.

⁶⁰ Consider those mentioned in *Bhagavadgītā* XI.26, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 290.

⁶¹ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.36, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 295.

⁶² See verses *Bhagavadgītā* XI.27-30, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 290-1.

⁶³ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.24, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 288.

⁶⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.25, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 289.

⁶⁵ Consider verses as:

You are the First God and the Ancient *Puruṣa*. You are the highest support of this universe . . . [*Bhagavadgītā* XI.38, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 296].

You are the Indestructible, the Supreme One. He who is to be known. You are the supreme abode of this universe. You are inexhaustible, the protector of perpetual *dharma*. My conviction is that You are the eternal *Puruṣa* [*Bhagavadgītā* XI. 18, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 284].

⁶⁶ *Bhagavadgītā* XI. 45-50, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* pp 300-2.

⁶⁷ *Bhagavadgītā* X.44, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 299.

⁶⁸ For example:

As they will become weak and unnerved in every limb (on account of separation from Me) I am born . . . showing My form which is adorable [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IV.8, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 106].

⁶⁹ And again:

. . . the Supreme Brahman . . . has assumed the mortal (human) form for helping the world (to salvation) . . . [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XI.50, *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 302].

⁷⁰ Lipner has emphasised that in relation to the contingent self, one must remember that the mind is a product of the *material* body. See also the instructive footnote in *Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)* p 362.

⁷¹ Kūrattālvān was in age much senior to Rāmānujācārya and the more profound scholar. Notwithstanding, he was also Rāmānujācārya's most obedient disciple.

⁷² *Govindacarya A (1906)* p 141.

⁷³ For a refreshingly clear account of this concept see *Lipner JJ (1986)* pp 49-62.

⁷⁴ *Lipner JJ (1986)* p 50.

⁷⁵ *Lipner JJ (1986)* pp 51-2.

⁷⁶ See *Śrībhāṣya* II.3.20; also *Śrībhāṣya* II.3.36.

⁷⁷ Consider:

Knowledge is taught to be an attribute inseparable from the essential nature of the self, because of the difference [ff.: 239] (between the self and knowledge) pointed out in the statement, "Knowledge, in their case, (illuminates) like the sun." Moreover, by the example of the sun, the position of the knower and knowledge as similar to that of light and the luminous object is indicated [ff.: 240]. Therefore, indeed, the contraction of knowledge by *karma* in the state of *saṁsāra* and (its) expansion in the state of *mokṣa* is proper and appropriate.

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ff.[239]: This is to stress the point that the self even in the pure state is a knower and not mere knowledge (*Tātparyachandrikā*).

ff.[240]: Śrī-Rāmānuja holds that the self, while being knowledge as substance, has also attributive knowledge. Hence the analogy with the sun which is light as substance and also has light as its attribute [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*.V.16, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p139**].

⁷⁸ Speaking of the ultimate goal, Rāmānujācārya says:

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya VIII.21 . . . the word, 'dhāman', may express 'light'. And light is here meant to stand for knowledge. The essential nature of the emancipated self, on account of its being of the form of unbounded knowledge, is the supreme light, when compared to the self which is in contact with the *prakṛti* and which is of the form of limited knowledge [**Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 216**].

See also *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* V.16, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 139**; *Bhagavadgītā* Chapter 14, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 358-76**.

⁷⁹ Carman reproduces Śrī-Govindācārya's description of the events of this famous episode:

Kurēśa (Kūraṭṭālvān) ceased writing, for to him such a definition, though valid, was as good as no definition, inasmuch as the most essential characteristic of the soul, namely its *allegiance* or *liegeship to God*, *śeṣatva*, was a serious omission: . . . for no basis for true religion was raised by merely apprehending the soul as *that which is characterised by consciousness*, unless the soul is also the *sole property* or possession of the Universal soul, God. . . . But Rāmānuja was absorbed in his thoughts: and continued dictating further but Kurēśa had come to a full stop. This incensed Rāmānuja, who cried:- "Sir, if *you* wish to write the commentary on the *Vyāsa Sūtras (Brahma Sūtras)* you may do so," and kicked him and ceased dictating [**Govindācārya A (1906) pp 187-88**, as quoted in **Carman JB (1981) p 96**].

⁸⁰ Many have pointed out that Rāmānujācārya appears here in less than perfect light. However, I would like to suggest that what happened between Rāmānujācārya and Kūraṭṭālvān was no more than a misunderstanding. Is it not possible that Rāmānujācārya had every intention of introducing the concept of *śeṣatva* into his account of the *ātman*, but *not at that particular point in the commentary*. Recall that *śeṣatva* had been a recurring theme in the earlier work, *Vedārthasaṅgraha*. Rāmānujācārya's irritation with Kūraṭṭālvān might then be interpreted as the Ācārya saying "Look Kūraṭṭālvān, have *you* forgotten that in *Vedārthasaṅgraha* I have already, at great length, prioritised *śeṣatva*? How then could you think that I would have failed, at a later point, to bring *śeṣatva* into our present *Śrībhāṣya* account!"

The fact that Tirukottiyūr Nambi gives authority for *śeṣatva* from the Tamil tradition is also significant. Could it be that Rāmānujācārya, seeking to highlight the unity between the Sanskrit and Tamil Veda, and aware that Tirukottiyūr Nambi was a savant in the Tamil tradition, sent Kūraṭṭālvān in search of supporting evidence for the thesis of their being a coherent *Ubhaya Vedānta*?

⁸¹ **Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) Srivachana Bhushanam by Piḷḷai Lokācārya**, Sadhana Press, Gwalior, pp 15-6.

⁸² Sampatkumaran indicates an important area of overlap between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions:

In *Acārya-hṛdaya* ('The Heart of the Master'), a work of the Southern School which seeks to penetrate into the depths of the mysticism of Ṣaṭakopa, (Nammālvār), noted among the *Āhāras* for the range and intensity of his experience of God, an interesting parallelism is shown between his *Tiruvāṅmoḷi* and the *Gītā*. Śrī Rāmanuja's description of the essential nature of the self as *śeṣatva* rests no doubt on notable śruti texts like those of the *Antaryāmi-brāhmana*: but the stress laid on it may owe something to a famous passage in *Tiruvāṅmoḷi* (VIII.8.2). [**Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) Introduction, p xxxi**].

(The passage *Tiruvāṅmoḷi* VIII.8.2 is that referred to by Tirukottiyūr Nambi).

⁸³ *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII.54, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 466**.

⁸⁴ Consider the closely located verses:

I shall teach you who are without envy this most secret knowledge along with its practical application, on knowing which you will be freed from what is inauspicious [*Bhagavadgītā* IX.1, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 223**].

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And others, offering in addition the sacrifice of knowledge, worship Me as one - (Me) who . . . am multiform [*Bhagavadgītā* IX.15, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 233].

Be one whose mind is placed on Me. Be My devotee. Be My worshiper. Prostrate before Me. Having engaged your mind in this manner and holding Me as the supreme goal, it is to Me only you will come [*Bhagavadgītā* IX.34, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 247].

The relationship between knowledge and devotion to the Lord is a recurring theme of *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*. For example:

. . . without devotion to Me, it is not possible to see Me as I am in reality (*Evamvidha*). But through exclusive devotion it is possible to know Me accurately by means of the *sāstras*. . . Accordingly, there is the *Śruti* text: "This Self is not reached by reflection, nor by steady meditation nor by extensive hearing (of the scriptures). Whomsoever He (the Self) chooses, by him alone is He reached. To him alone this Self reveals His own form (*Kathopanīṣad* II.23 and *Muṇḍaka Upanīṣad* III.2.3).

ff.[583]: In *Śrībhāṣya* (I., p18) Śrī-Rāmānuja thus comments on this text: "For it is indeed the dearest one that becomes worthy to be chosen. To whomsoever He is unsurpassingly dear, he alone is the dearest to Him" [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XI.54, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 304-5].

⁸⁵ Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 327. For the story see Radhakrishnan S (trans.)(1995) pp 446-67.

⁸⁶ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1.1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.)(1988) Vol. One, p 161.

⁸⁷ For a spirited defence of this position see *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XIII.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 321-32.

Lipner JJ (1986) provides a clear and complete explanation of the body-soul model. See the discussions on *tat tvam asi*: pp 36- 48; the *amśa-amśin* or 'a part-part possessor' relationship, pp 86-8; and 'the One and the many' pp 120-39.

⁸⁸ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1.13, The translation is from Carman JB (1981) p 116.

⁸⁹ *Śrībhāṣya* II.1.9, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 262. In transliteration:

ato yaśya cetanaśya, yadhravyam sarvātmanā svārthe niyantum dhārayitum ca śakyaṃ taccheṣataikasvarūpam ca tat tasya śārīram iti śārīralakṣṇam āstheyam [*Śrībhāṣya* II.1.9].

The above position is routinely supported on the basis of a battery of Upaniṣadic texts. Typically:

"Entering in along with this individual self, which is (also) the same as Myself, I evolve the differentiations of name and form" - (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI.3.2), "All this has That for its Self" - (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI.8.7), "He who has entered within is the ruler of all things that are born, and is the Self of all" - (*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III.21), "He who, dwelling in the self, is within the self, whom the self does not know, whose body is the self, and who internally rules the self, etc., - (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Madhyāndina recension, III.7.22), "He is the internal Self of all beings. He is devoid of sin. He is the Divine Lord. He is the One Nārāyaṇa" - (*Subala Upaniṣad*, VII.1) . . . [*Śrī Bhāṣya* I.1.31, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, p 324].

⁹⁰ Speaking of the consequences of *karman* one can distinguish between the result of an action and its fruit:

The 'fruit' of an action is the pleasant or unpleasant saṁsāric consequence of that action, revealed on authority (usually scriptural authority) [Lipner JJ (1986) p 68].

The 'result' of an action, on the other hand, is what naturally follows its performance, either subjectively (for instance, satisfaction on giving alms, remorse on inflicting cruelty) or objectively (for example, a kingdom or wealth consequent upon victory in battle), and as such open to discernment from everyday experience [Lipner JJ (1986) p 69].

One often finds that the two term are used interchangeably.

⁹¹ Lipner JJ (1986) p 68.

⁹² Whaling points out that even during the Vedic and early Upaniṣadic times the word *dharma* was variously applied as referring to "religious ordinance" (*R̥g Veda* I.22.18), "principles of conduct" (*R̥g*

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Veda IV.53.3), “the whole body of religious duties” (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VII.17), “truth” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.4.14), and “the duties peculiar to each stage of life” *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* II.23.1 [Whaling F (1980) *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rāma*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, p 39].

⁹³ Jaimini says:

‘*codanā lakṣaṇo*’ *rtho dharmah*’, i.e. *Dharma* concerns some directive [Jaimini’s *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* 1.1.2 as translated in Lipner JJ (1994) p 221].

For an example of the intimate connection between *dharmā* as description and *dharmā* as prescription consider:

Śrī-Kṛṣṇa: For I am the basic support of the individual self which (in its pure state) is immortal and immutable, as also of everlasting power and glory (or *dharmā*), and of perfect bliss [*Bhagavadgītā* IX.27, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 375].

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: Though the phrase, ‘everlasting *dharmā*’ is denotative of that (conduct or activity) which leads to attainment, yet because what follows and what precedes (it) are indicative of goals of attainment, this (phrase), too, being placed among them, denotes an attainable goal [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*: XIV.27, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 375].

See also note 111.

⁹⁴ Many Hindus believe Kṛṣṇa is God incarnate. The prefix Śrī is often used as an honorific: in this Thesis the honorific is used to invoke thoughts of the Goddess Śrī. This seeks to emphasise the inexorable association of the Divinity with the feminine aspect. Hence Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī-Rāma, etc.

⁹⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* III.30, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 89.

⁹⁶ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* III.30, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 89.

⁹⁷ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IV.8, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 106.

⁹⁸ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 224.

⁹⁹ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 225.

¹⁰⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* IX.31, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 246.

¹⁰¹ Lipner JJ (1986) p 69.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Lipner JJ (1986) p 72.

¹⁰⁴ Lipner JJ (1986) p 72.

¹⁰⁵ Lipner JJ (1986) p 69. See also note 23 in Lipner JJ (1986) p 163.

¹⁰⁶ *Vedānthasāṅgraha* paragraph 82, Raghavachar SS (trans.) (1956) *Vedānthasāṅgraha of Rānānuja*, Ramakrishna Mission, Mysore.

¹⁰⁷ Lipner highlights a fascinating area of inquiry by contrasting the avtār with the Christian Incarnation:

It is true that the anthropomorphic *avatāras* . . . are real: but, we may ask, are they ‘the real thing’? Compared to the Incarnation in traditional Christian teaching, according to which the Son took real flesh in the humanity of Jesus, the answer is ‘No’. The avatāric bodies, as phenomenalizations of the supernal form, are non-*praktic* in nature . . . They may look and behave and feel like saṁsāric bodies but they are not real enfleshments in the manner of such bodies. From the Christian point of view, at least, such a view may well be thought to distance the *avtār* from man, theologically and perhaps devotionally [Lipner JJ (1986) p 103].

The following enquiries do not seek to challenge the cited observations: they are presented so as to gain a better understanding of the Christian attitude towards the avtār.

I have a difficulty with the above. Is the avtār so different from the Incarnation once one considers that (even from the Christian point of view?), the significant (i) similarities and (ii) distinctions between Christ and man lie not primarily in the biophysical nature of their respective types of body, but in the fact that Christ (i) empathised absolutely with the human condition despite the fact that (ii) He was free from sin. The avtār (i) too feels the sufferings of humankind as if they were His own (*paraduḥkhaduḥkhi*) and (ii) this pain is not a consequence of *karma*, i.e. the avtār is free from sin (see note 203).

Moreover, if authenticity requires the Person to be bound to an association with a physical body, then is not that requirement satisfied by the Lord who, as *antaryāmi*, can be said to have taken on a

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physical body? Like Christ, the Lord as *antaryāmi* ensoules a physical body while still remaining free from sin.

Once again, I wish to stress that I am aware that my difficulties arises from my own ignorance, and I raise them merely to clarify my thinking.

¹⁰⁸ *Śrī Bhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 21. Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, p 307.

¹⁰⁹ Rāmānujācārya's introduction to the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 3. The citation states that the Supreme Lord is concerned for *all creatures*:

... being the vast ocean of boundless mercy, affability, affection and generosity, He made His own form in conformity with the nature of the configuration of each one of the several species of beings, without giving up His own essential nature: and thus descending again and again into each one of (their) regions, and being worshipped by (the respective beings of) each one of them, He bestowed upon them fruits known as righteousness, wealth, enjoyments and the salvation of soul-emancipation, conformably to the wish of each [Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 3].

Consider also the special relationship of Lord and the *jñānin* (VII.18 and X.10-11).

¹¹⁰ The *Bhagavadgītā* is an encyclopaedic work of interrelated themes, e.g. *Prakṛti* and the *guṇas*, *ātman*, *Īśvara*, *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga*, *bhakti yoga* and of course *dharma*. Each of these themes lends itself to various interpretations. It is impossible to do justice to this tapestry. The attempt here is only to offer a morally and politically worthwhile interpretation of *dharma* that can be found in the *Bhagavadgītā*. There are other interpretations to which the text lends itself.

¹¹¹ The word *dharma* appears in the following senses and verses of *Bhagavadgītā/Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*:

Virtue/duty: II.31, 33; IV.7; XII.20, VII.11; XVIII.31-34, 47.

Both nature of the soul and means to realise this nature: XIV.27, IX.2.

Of the nature of worship: IV.8, IX.3, 31, (highest *dharma*: XVIII.66).

¹¹² Lipner JJ (1994) p 86.

¹¹³ *Bhagavadgītā* II. 1.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 15.

¹¹⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* II. 34-6, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 40-1.

¹¹⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* II. 32, 37, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 39, 41.

¹¹⁶ See for example: *Bhagavadgītā* I.40, II.31-33, IV.7, XVIII.47. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 13, 38-9, 105, 461.

¹¹⁷ *Bhagavadgītā* IV. 7. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 105-6. The *bhāṣya* emphasises the socio/ communal *dharma*:

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: There is no restriction as to the time of Our birth. For whenever there is decline of *dharma*, of that which ought to be done, as determined by the arrangement of the four castes and four stages of life, and taught in the Vedas: and whenever there is the rise of its opposite, *adharmā*; then I Myself by My own will and in the manner described, create Myself.

¹¹⁸ *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII 66. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 474.

¹¹⁹ Lipner JJ (1994) p 220.

¹²⁰ Lipner JJ (1994) pp 220-1.

¹²¹ Lipner JJ (1994) p 221.

¹²² Bhīṣmadeva. *Mahābhārata* 2.62.14-16 as cited in Lipner JJ (1994) p 208. The discussion of *dharma* is soothing and illuminating. Read especially Chapter 8. A Story With a Tail.

¹²³ Lipner JJ (1994) p 222.

¹²⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* II. 62-3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 59.

¹²⁵ *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad I.3.3, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 623.

¹²⁶ *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad I.3.4, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 624.

¹²⁷ *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad I.3.5, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 624.

¹²⁸ Consider:

The objects of the senses, save only for the relish, turn away from an embodied being who has no food (for the senses). But even the relish goes away on perceiving what is supreme (beyond them) [*Bhagavadgītā* II. 59, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 57].

- ¹²⁹ As stated:
To work alone is your right and never to the fruits (thereof). Do not become (i.e. do not regard yourself as) the cause of work and (its) fruit, nor have attachment to inaction [*Bhagavadgītā* II.47, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 50].
- ¹³⁰ Consider:
Actions are being done in every way by the *guṇas* of the *prakṛti*. He whose nature is led astray by egotism thinks, "I am the agent" [*Bhagavadgītā* III.27, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 86].
- ¹³¹ *Bhagavadgītā* II. 58, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 56.
- ¹³² Consider *Bhagavadgītā* II.60; III.5; III.8. **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** pp 57; 70; 71-2.
- ¹³³ *Bhagavadgītā* III.20-21, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 83.
- ¹³⁴ Consider the allocation of duties according to psychological and social types:
Control of the senses, control of the mind, austerities, purity, forbearance as also rectitude, knowledge (of what is higher and lower), comprehension of particulars (about the extraordinary qualities of the Lord), faith (in God and religion) - all this is the duty of the Brahmin derived from his innate disposition [*Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 42, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 457].
Heroism, invincibility, resoluteness, skill as also dauntlessness even in battle, generosity, and masterfulness - this is the duty of the Kṣatriya arising from his innate disposition [*Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 43, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 459].
Farming, cattle-breeding, and trade comprise the duty of the Vaiśya arising from his innate disposition. But the duty of the Śūdra arising from his innate disposition is essentially of the nature of service [*Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 44, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 459].
- ¹³⁵ The circle of dharmic responsibility does not stop with humanity - humanity has a responsibility towards the greater ecosystem. This is an important topic, but beyond the scope of the present discussion.
- ¹³⁶ **Lipner JJ (1994)** p 224.
- ¹³⁷ See the discussion in **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 223-9.
- ¹³⁸ Consider the process of argument and counter-argument in *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍ, cantos 101-112.
- ¹³⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII 66, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 474.
- ¹⁴⁰ **Lipner JJ (1994)** p 225.
- ¹⁴¹ This is the general theme of *Bhagavadgītā* chapters X and XI.
- ¹⁴² Recall *Bhagavadgītā* IV. 24, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 117.
- ¹⁴³ Śrī-Kṛṣṇa reminds us:
Bear in mind that all beings have these [My powers] for the source of their birth. I am the (place of) origin as well as the (place of) dissolution of the whole universe [parenthesis added] [*Bhagavadgītā* VII.6, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 181].
- ¹⁴⁴ Again:
(Thus), other than Myself, there is nothing whatever which is higher . . . Like collections of gems on a string, the whole of this (universe) is strung on Me [*Bhagavadgītā* VII.7, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** p 182].
Bhagavadgītābhāṣya: And it is established that the universe and the Brahman exist in the relationship of the body and the soul in the *Antaryāmi-brāhmaṇa* (i.e. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.7) and similar *śruti* texts . . .
Therefore, as everything forms the body of the Supreme Person and is only a mode of the Supreme Person who is its Self, therefore the Supreme Person alone exists as having all things as modes. Hence, by all words, His denotation alone is effected. [**Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985)** pp 182-3].
- ¹⁴⁵ Arjuna says:
You are He who is the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Light, and the Supreme Purifier. All the sages speak of You as the eternal, divine *Puruṣa*, the Primal Creator, the Unborn and the All-pervading. So also (declare) the divine sage Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa. You

Yourself also tell me (so) [*Bhagavadgītā* X. 12-3. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 259].

¹⁴⁶ Śrī-Kṛṣṇa:

I am the Self, O Arjuna (Guḍākeśa), seated in the hearts of all embodied beings. And, I indeed, am the beginning, the middle and the end of embodied beings [*Bhagavadgītā* X. 20. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 265].

¹⁴⁷ *Bhagavadgītā* II.71-2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 63.

¹⁴⁸ *Bhagavadgītā* V.18, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 140.

¹⁴⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* V.25, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 144.

¹⁵⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* VI. 9, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p153.

¹⁵¹ *Bhagavadgītā* VI.29, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p162.

¹⁵² *Bhagavadgītā* VI.30, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p163.

¹⁵³ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* X.5, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 254.

¹⁵⁴ Here is a beautiful verse recited to Brahmin couples soon after marriage:

Then he (Yājñvalkyā) said: 'Verily, not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear but a husband is dear for the sake of the Self. Verily, not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear but a wife is dear for the sake of the Self. . . . Verily, not for the sake of the beings are the beings dear but the beings are dear for the sake of the Self. Verily, not for the sake of all is all dear but all is dear for the sake of the Self. Verily, O Maitreyī, it is the Self that should be seen, heard of, reflected on and meditated upon. . . . [*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.4.5. Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 197].

¹⁵⁵ The present account on the relationship between *sva-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma* can be examined under the framework of Rāmānujācārya's theological method as explained in:

Lipner JJ (1994) pp 37-39; 134. For example, might *sva-dharma* be viewed as the centripetal and 'from below' perspective on *dharma*, with *sanātana-dharma* being the centrifugal and 'from above' perspective on *dharma*?

¹⁵⁶ *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII.7, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 432.

¹⁵⁷ *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 45, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 460.

¹⁵⁸ Radhakrishnan S (1995) *Religion and Society*, Harper Collins, New Delhi, p 14.

¹⁵⁹ See *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IV.8, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 106; *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 224; *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 225; *Bhagavadgītā* IX.31, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 246.

¹⁶⁰ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.31, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 246.

¹⁶¹ Consider the following verses from the *Bhagavadgītā*: VII.5. VII.16. IX. 34. XI.54. XII.2. XII.6 and ultimately XVIII.65.

¹⁶² *Bhagavadgītā* XI.55, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 305.

¹⁶³ *Bhagavadgītā* XII.13, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 314.

¹⁶⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* XII. 14, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 314.

¹⁶⁵ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XII.14, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 315-6.

¹⁶⁶ *Vedārthasaṅgraha* paragraph 121, Raghavacarya SS (1956) (trans) p 150.

¹⁶⁷ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* VII.12, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 184. Compare also: *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.5, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 226.

¹⁶⁸ Carman JB (1981) p 146.

¹⁶⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* VII. 17, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 190. Recall also *Bhagavadgītā* VII.19, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 191.

¹⁷⁰ Consider the following:

. . . My conviction is that the man of wisdom is (My) very self. I regard Myself as depending on him for My support and sustenance. Why is it so? Because this man holds Me to be the highest goal, finding it impossible to support himself without Me, therefore it is not possible for Me also to maintain Myself without him.

ff.[356]; Tātparyachandrikā points out that . . . the statement of identity has to be construed as an expression of the intense love felt by the Lord for this devotee . . . Only persons whose hearts

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beat in unison can understand the Lord's conviction. Thus, while all the other classes of devotees merely contribute to the glory of the Lord, the man of wisdom sustains Him in His essential nature [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* VII.18, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 191].

¹⁷¹ Here is the verse:

Arjuna: Therefore, bowing down, prostrating the body, I beg pardon of You, the praiseworthy Lord. It is proper, O Lord, that You, who are dear to me, should bear with me who am dear (to You), as a father with (his) son and as a friend with (his) friend [*Bhagavadgītā* XI.44, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 299].

Concerning the phrase *priyaḥ-priyāvāḥasi* Sampatkumaran says:

'*priyaḥ-priyāvāḥasi*' is construed by Śrī Rāmānuja as *priyaḥ priyāva arhasi* and by Śrī Śaṅkara as *priyaḥ priyāvāḥ arhasi*. In the latter case, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is entreated to forgive Arjuna as a lover forgives his beloved. Both constructions are not free from grammatical difficulty [*Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) ff.[574], p 299*].

Ramanujan VV (a scholar in the Rāmānujan tradition), translates the phrase as referring to lovers [*Ramanujan VV (1994) p 54*].

¹⁷² Since 'servitude' has unfortunate connotations one must clarify its usage. Rāmānujācārya does not consider servitude a humiliating condition. Instead the servant and master care for, and enjoy the company of, each other.

The desire to be of service is (in turn) a result of the immense joy of Divine experience (*bhagavadanubhava*) an experience which is the ultimate in desirability beyond which there is nothing to be desired; an end in itself, eternal, uninterrupted, full and clear (without any trace of doubt or confusion) [*Śaraṇāgatigadya, Ramanujan VV (1994) p 26*].

Rāmānujācārya's position may be contrasted to that of Aristotle:

Master and slave have nothing in common: a slave is a living tool . . . therefore there can be no friendship with a slave as a slave though there can be friendship as a human being: for there seems to be some room for justice in the relations of every human being with every other that is capable of participating in law and contract, and hence friendship is also possible with everyone so far as he is a human being [*Nicomachean ethics, VIII xi 7*].

Lipner provides a sensitive discussion of these issues in Lipner JJ (1986) pp 132-3.

In passing, it should be noted that it behoves the *āman* to be ultimately a servant of none but God. Indeed the efficacy of the body soul metaphor depends on appreciating the individual *āman* as the master within its own limited context. The topic of the *āman* as master of its own body, and superior to the elemental nature, is the central theme of *Bhagavadgītā*, Chapter XIII [*Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 319-57*].

¹⁷³ The sense of debt the Lord feels to one who offers Him the scope to extend His love is established in the following:

Whoever offers to Me with loving devotion a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit or water . . . I enjoy it as if I was attaining a desired object lying far beyond the range of My hopes . . . Accordingly, it has been declared (in the) *Mokṣa-dharma* (section of the *Mahābhārata*): "Whatever rites are performed by those whose intellects are concentrated in exclusive devotion, all these the Lord Himself receives on His head" (*Mahābhārata* XII.353.64) [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya, IX.26, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 242*].

. . . those who worship Me, having My worship as their sole objective, on account of their inability, through My being excessively dear to them, to sustain themselves without my worship - whether they are high or low, according to birth, etc.- they remain with Me at ease as if they were of qualities equal to Mine. I also remain with them, as if with My superiors [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya, IX.29, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 244-5*].

¹⁷⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* VII.6, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 181.

¹⁷⁵ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XVIII. 65, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 473. See also *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX.1, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 223.

¹⁷⁶ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988), Vol. One, p 12.

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- ¹⁷⁷ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988), Vol. One, p 13.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, p 15. See also *Śrībhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 4, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, pp 229-30.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* VI.31, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 164.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* XIV.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 359. This qualitative equality between the soul in the ideal condition and God is referred to in *Śrībhāṣya* also:
“He attains with the omniscient Brahman all the auspicious qualities” [*Taittirīya* Upaniṣad II.1.1 as quoted in *Śrībhāṣya* I.i.4, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One p 238].
“Except in the matter of the activity relating to (the creation, etc., of) the world, (the released souls possess all the powers belonging to the Lord). . .” [*Śrībhāṣya* IV.4.17, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Three, p 472].
- ¹⁸¹ *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* text quoted by Rāmānujācārya in *Bhagavadgītā* VI.30, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 163.
- ¹⁸² In the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* the Lord’s favourite devotee Śrī. is introduced as ‘*abhimatānarūpa*’ or one whose form is in all respects appropriate to the Divine character.
- ¹⁸³ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XVIII.66, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 474-5.
- ¹⁸⁴ Lipner JJ (1986) p 73.
- ¹⁸⁵ Speaking of such persons it is said that they ‘make over (to God) all their works’ [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XII.7, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 310].
- ¹⁸⁶ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IV.24, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 117-8.
- ¹⁸⁷ Whereas the majority of Rāmānujācārya’s written works were polemics or expositions, he composed three poems (*Gadyatrāya*) of an altogether devotional nature. Particularly important of the trio is the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* where Rāmānujācārya elaborates on the relationship between the *ātman* and God. A few words upon the setting will convey the mood.
Imagine a full moon night, midnight breezes offering relief from the relentless heat of high summer. On this *Panguni Uttirai* night, the most ancient iconic form of Lord Narayan stands waiting upon His consort in most gentlemanly fashion. Since the Goddess is forever inclined to look after her recalcitrant children, Rāmānujācārya considered this a most opportune situation to appeal for the Lord’s grace.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Śaraṇāgatigadya*: 4, Ramanujan VV (1994) pp 30-49.
- ¹⁸⁹ Carman provides an overview of the following issues in Carman JB (1981) pp 65-97.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Śrībhāṣya* III.3. sūtra 13, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Three, p 260.
- ¹⁹¹ It is important to note that these *svabhāva* qualities are not a product ‘de nos jours’ but are innate to Brahman’s nature. They are however, for lack of scope, dormant in the primordial condition. Though inherent to Brahman’s nature, an autonomous one-ness offers little opportunity for their expression.
- ¹⁹² Śrī Parāsarabhaṭṭar swamikal (11th Century) (1965) *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāna Bhāṣya*, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, Tirupati, verse 472, as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 196.
- ¹⁹³ See Carman JB (1981) pp 77-87.
- ¹⁹⁴ The conversation has been relayed to us through the auspices of Śrī Manavālamāmunigaḷ Jeer, second incarnation of Rāmānujācārya and the most illustrious of the post-Rāmānujan scholars.
- ¹⁹⁵ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 4.
- ¹⁹⁶ There is a minor shift in emphasis between the Tēgalai (who eulogise the lovely *saubhāya* virtues) and Vaḷḡali followers of Rāmānujācārya. The Vaḷḡali occasionally maintain that the Tēgalai emphasis on *saubhāya* is somewhat excessive, lacking in majesty, sobriety and imbalanced. For an impartial discussion of these issues see Carman JB (1981) pp 212-51 and Mumme P (1988) *The Śrī-Vaiṣṇava Theological Dispute: Manavālamāmunikhal and Vedānta Desika*, New Era Publications, Madras.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX. 34, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 248.

¹⁹⁸ Carman quoting Kūrattālvān: Carman JB (1981) p 224.

¹⁹⁹ Sudarśana Sūri, commentary on *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, paragraph 5 as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 196.

²⁰⁰ Periya Āccān Pilla, on *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, paragraph 5 as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 196.

²⁰¹ Vedānta Deśika, on *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, paragraph 5 as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 196.

²⁰² Sudarśana Sūri, *Gadyatrayavyākhyā Bhāṣyam K (1916)(trans.) Śrībhagavadrāmānuja Śaraṇāgatigadya*, Ubhaya Vedānta Granthamala, Liberty Press, Madras, paragraph 5.

²⁰³ It is essential to realise that the suffering felt by the Lord arises out of the intimate empathy and affection the Lord has for the individual person. Such suffering is different from the ‘*karma* imposed’ suffering felt by the soul itself. A famous text says:

“One of them eats the sweet *pippala* fruit, while the other shines in splendour without eating at all” [*Muṇḍakopaniṣad* III.1.1; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV.6, as quoted in *Śrībhāṣya* I.i.4, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, p 238.].

Also:

The Supreme Self dwelling within the finite self does not experience the pleasure or pain of the latter’s body, for such experience is brought about by the *karma* of that self. This subjection to *karma* is impossible for the Supreme Self, who is free from evil [*Śrībhāṣya* I.ii.8, Thibaut G (trans.) (1904) *The Vedānta Sūtras with the Commentary by Rāmānuja, Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 48, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p 265].

“He is the inner soul of all beings. He is devoid of evil” [*Subāla Upaniṣad* VII, as cited in *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* VII.7, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 183].

The *avtār*, while entirely in empathy with the natural creation, is above sin and its consequences. As the ‘venerable Parāśara’ confirms:

“That [activity of the incarnation] is (intended) for the good of the worlds and is not produced by means of *karma* (i.e. by means of the effect of works operating upon Him)” [*Viṣṇu purāṇa* VI.7.70-2].

See also the discussion on *amalatva* in Carman JB (1981) pp 103-11.

²⁰⁴ Rāmānujācārya never wrote a commentary on the *Prabandham*. However, his expositions on these verses were noted by his disciples and have been relayed through *guru-paratīparā*.

²⁰⁵ Saint Nammālvār is foremost of the twelve Tamil saints who between them have sung 4,000 sacred verses known as the *Divya Prabandham*. *Tiruvāimoḥi* is Saint Nammālvār’s contribution. Modern scholarship dates Nammālvār to the seventh to eight centuries CE [see Lipner JJ (1994) p 61].

²⁰⁶ Saint Nammālvār, *Tiruvāimoḥi* I.i.i. Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1985) *Tiruvāimoḥi of Nammālvār*, Ananthacarya Indological Institute, Bombay.

²⁰⁷ Rāmānujācārya’s commentary on *Tiruvāimoḥi of Saint Nammālvār* I.i.i., Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1985).

²⁰⁸ Lipner JJ (1986) p 133.

²⁰⁹ This organisation of virtues aside vices is heavily influenced by the general character of Judith Shklar’s beautiful, though somewhat prejudiced, book Shklar J (1981) *Ordinary Vices*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (It should be noted Shklar seems unaware of the characterisation of the Deity as presented in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition. Moreover, even when restricting her attention to Christianity, she unfairly takes the worst instances of Christian activity as representative of the tradition as a whole).

²¹⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* VII.11, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) p 183.

²¹¹ *Bhagavadgītā* VII.8, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) p 183.

²¹² *Bhagavadgītā* VII.9, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) p 183.

²¹³ See the balanced purview in Lipner JJ (1994) pp 169-76.

²¹⁴ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* III. 10, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 75.

²¹⁵ See *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XIV.16, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) p 369. See also *Bhagavadgītā* XVI.15: 19-23, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) pp 404; 406-8. .

²¹⁶ *Bhagavadgītā* IX.20-1, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) p 237.

²¹⁷ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XIV. 6-7, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) pp 362-3.

²¹⁸ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XV.1-3, Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) pp 378-80.

²¹⁹ Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) *The Vedānta-sūtras with the Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, p 2.

²²⁰ Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) pp 2-4.

The *Karmakāṇḍa* is that section of the Vedic scriptures which includes the Mantras, the Brāhmanas and such portions of the Āraṇyakas as deal with rituals and their performance [ff.4, p 2].

The 'three miseries' are the three kinds of miseries known as the *Ādhyātmika*, i.e. those which are due to one's self, the *Ādhidaivika*, those that arise out of deities or are of supernatural origin, and the *Ādhibhautika*, those that arise out of natural causes and beings [ff.2, p 4].

²²¹ *Śrībhāṣya* I.1. sūtra 1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. One, p 15.

²²² See *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* VII (introduction), Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 175-6, and also references in notes 176-8.

²²³ See *Bhagavadgītā* XIV.2, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 359.

²²⁴ See *Śrībhāṣya* I.1.21, I.2.8, III.2.20, III.3.33.

²²⁵ Recall *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII.54, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 466.

²²⁶ Lipner JJ (1986) p 78.

²²⁷ Lipner JJ (1986) p 79.

²²⁸ Lipner JJ (1986) p 119. Lipner is commenting on the famous text *Śrībhāṣya* I.3.7.

²²⁹ Lipner JJ (1986) p 7.

²³⁰ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad V.2.1-3, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) *The Principal Upaniṣads*, Indus, Delhi, pp 289-90.

Radhakrishnan's commentary: The gods are said to be naturally unruly and so are asked to practice self-control.

Men are naturally avaricious and so they should distribute their wealth to the best of their ability.

The demons are cruel, given to inflicting injury on others: they should have compassion and be kind to all [Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 290].

²³¹ The following points apply with equal force to any other sector of humanity erroneously 'traditionally' regarded as inferior, e.g. women or non-Hindus.

²³² *Puruṣa Sūkta*, *R̥g Veda* X.90.12, Reddy VM (1991) *The Vedic Epiphany: an exposition and celebration of the inaugural Dawn in the light of Śrī Aurobindo*, Volume One: The Vedic Vision, Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad, p 178.

²³³ Lipner JJ (1994) p 83.

²³⁴ Lipner JJ (1994) p 331 note 24. Incidentally, Manu is no more charitable to women:

Night and day women must be kept dependent by their menfolk, and if they become attached to worldly things they must be kept under one's control. Protected in childhood by her father, in youth by her husband, and in old age by her sons, a woman is not fit for independence [*Manu Smṛti* 9.2-3 as translated by Lipner, in Lipner JJ (1994) p 100].

²³⁵ *Manu-Smṛti* IV.80 as cited by Rāmānujācārya under *Śrībhāṣya* I.3. sūtra 39, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 143.

²³⁶ *Śrībhāṣya* I.3.33. As translated by Lipner, in Lipner JJ (1986), p 170, note 20.

²³⁷ Rāmānujācārya's discussion of *Śrībhāṣya* I.3.33-39 provides the classic defence of this position. However, what the contemporary Brahmin tradition often forgets is that Rāmānujācārya would have been equally vigorous and rigorous in his defence of texts as:

A twice-born man, who, not having studied the Veda, applies himself to other [tasks] soon falls, even while living, to the condition of a Śūdra . . . [Buhler G (1967 reprint) *The Laws of Manu*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, p 61].

As Lipner confirms:

Thus Manu 2.157 declares that a Brahmin unschooled in the Veda (*anadhīyāna*) is a Brahmin in name only . . . Again, the non-hereditary view of social standing finds expression in other authoritative *smṛti* works, like the *Mahābhārata* [3.180.21, 13.143.50]. And the tendency in the increasingly popular and pervasive *bhakti* traditions beginning with the concession of *Gītā*

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9.32 to regard (low) caste as no barrier to attaining final salvation from this life, gave valuable support to this view [Lipner JJ (1994) pp 111-2.]

²³⁸ Lipner JJ (1986) p 105. Mention is made in *Śrībhāṣya* 1.3.33 to Vidura.

²³⁹ *Śrībhāṣya* 1.3. sūtra 33, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 136.

²⁴⁰ For a more complete treatment see Lipner JJ (1986) pp 99-118.

²⁴¹ Rāmānujācārya cites the below verse in his commentary on Brahma Sūtra 1.1.1:

... 'This Self is not to be obtained by discussion, nor by the intellect nor by much scriptural instruction; him whom this [Self] chooses, by him is it to be obtained, and to him this Self reveals its form' (Kāthopaniṣad 1.2.23) [Lipner's translation, Lipner JJ (1986) p 99].

For the context, see from 'All this has been well explained by the Vākyakāra' to '... exclusively by bhakti [B.G., VIII.22], etc.' [Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol One, pp 15-7].

²⁴² Consider:

"He is the bridge (*setu*) leading to immortality" [*Muṇḍakopaniṣad* II.2.5]

... The meaning is that He enables us to reach that immortality which is found on the other shore of the ocean of *saṁsāra* [*Śrībhāṣya* I.iii.1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 66].

"Although He is unborn, He is born in various ways ... [*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.*, III.13.1], - it is declared that, in order to be capable of being approached (in worship) by gods and other beings, the Highest Person gets into association with the form, configuration, qualities and actions suited to each particular class of beings; and without in the least giving up His own nature, He is, of His own accord, born in many ways, ... [*Śrībhāṣya* I.iii.1, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Two, p 67].

²⁴³ From a passage that refers to both the 'bridge' and 'whom the Self chooses' texts:

... it is appropriate for the Supreme Person, who is the object of attainment, to be Himself the means of attaining Him [*Śrībhāṣya* III.2.34, Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) Vol. Three, p 231].

²⁴⁴ Rāmānujācārya's introduction to *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 3.

²⁴⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* IX. 32, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 247. Consider also:

Bhagavadgītābhāṣya IX.34: (The Supreme Person is) ... the ocean of boundless mercy, affability, beauty, sweetness, majesty, magnanimity and maternal solicitude ... the refuge of all without exception and without regard to their particular qualities ... [*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IX. 32, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 248.

²⁴⁶ Consider from 'An alternative explanation is also possible. ...', in *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* XVIII. 66, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 475-6.

Later, Maṇavālamūnigaḷ was to emphasise the role played by the Lord:

... when it is a case of '*paraḡatasvīkāra*', that is, the Lord (owner) seeking the hand of 'Man' (reclaiming his property), even the latter's massive sins will be no impediment [Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) aphorism 143, p 32].

²⁴⁷ Dasgupta S (1992) Vol. III, p 103.

²⁴⁸ Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) introduction, pp xiii-xiv.

²⁴⁹ The *upanayana* ceremony of initiation is incumbent even upon those born in the Brahmin caste.

²⁵⁰ Carman summarises the famous episode in Carman JB (1981) pp 39-41.

²⁵¹ This is a major theme of *Vedārthasaṁgraha*; see Raghavachar SS (trans.) (1956).

²⁵² Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 44.

²⁵³ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 33.

The sentiments relate to *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍ, cantos 50-2. Later, Śrī-Rāma says of Guha 'He is my friend, as good as my own self' [*Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ, canto 125, verse 5]. It should be noted that Śūdras are within the varṇa scheme: Śrī-Rāma befriended Guha even though he was beyond the pale.

²⁵⁴ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 46. See also *Rāmāyaṇa*, Aranya Kāṇḍ, canto 74.

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²⁵⁵ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 7. The full events are related in *Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ, cantos 17-18. See especially the 'Rāmāyaṇa Carama Sloka' [Yuddha Kāṇḍ canto 18, verse 33].

²⁵⁶ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 2. See *Rāmāyaṇa*, Uttara Kāṇḍ, cantos 43-5.

²⁵⁷ The unfortunate episode is related in *Rāmāyaṇa*, Uttara Kāṇḍ, cantos 73-6. This episode may be an interpolation. Interpolation or not, the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition has never given it a high profile.

²⁵⁸ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 43. The discussion on the status of lower-caste devotees in aphorisms 194-238 (pp 40-47 of the above) is instructive.

²⁵⁹ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 6. See also where Sītā extends her grace to even to Rāvaṇa: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara Kāṇḍ, canto 21, verses 19-22.

Incidentally, Sītā also exemplifies giving of 'respect where respect is due'. The perfect wife does not hesitate to cite in her list of praiseworthy wives Damayātī, whose husband was a Niṣadha (Brahmin father and Śūdra mother). See: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara Kāṇḍ, canto 24 verses 9-13.

²⁶⁰ *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad IV.1. For the gist see Lipner (1994) pp 55-7.

²⁶¹ *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad IV.4.1-5. For the gist see Lipner (1994) p 111.

²⁶² *Keno* Upaniṣad III.1-12; II.1-6. Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) pp 587-93.

²⁶³ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad II.5.7. Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) p 283-4.

²⁶⁴ Consider the favourable portrayals of the following ladies:

Ahalyā: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bāla Kāṇḍ, cantos 48-9; 51.

Kausalyā: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍ, cantos 19, 20, 25, 104.

Anuśūyā: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍ, cantos 117-9.

Mandodri: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ, canto 111.

²⁶⁵ The acceptance (*Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ canto 18, verse 33) and coronation (Yuddha Kāṇḍ, canto 112) of Vibhīṣiṇa can be seen as evidence that respect for dharmic people must transcend national barriers.

²⁶⁶ The following are instances of a respectful and sensitive portrayal of animals:

Vālmiki's sorrow at the suffering of two cranes: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bāla Kāṇḍ, canto 2.

Demigods sire monkeys and bears to assist God's work: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bāla Kāṇḍ, canto 17; also Aranya Kāṇḍ, canto 54; friendship forged with Hanumān and Sugriva: Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ, cantos 3-5, and the colourful events of Sundara Kāṇḍ.

The touching relationship between Vāsiṣṭha and the plentiful cow Sabala: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bāla Kāṇḍ cantos 52-4.

The eagle Jaṭāyu and his information about the origins of all creatures, indicating a unified ecology: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Aranya Kāṇḍ, canto 14; again brave (Aranya Kāṇḍ, cantos 49-51) and respectable (Aranya Kāṇḍ, cantos 67-8) Jaṭāyu. See also Sampāti: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ cantos 56-63.

²⁶⁷ Lipner JJ (1994) p 182.

²⁶⁸ *Bhagavadgītā* II.47. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 50.

²⁶⁹ *Bhagavadgītā* XI.32. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 292.

²⁷⁰ The original prayer is:

God, give us the grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other [*The Serenity Prayer*, first published by Federal Council of Churches in 1943].

²⁷¹ *Bhagavadgītā* III.17. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 80.

²⁷² *Bhagavadgītā* III.18. Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 80.

²⁷³ Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990) *Tulasi dāsa's Rānacāritamānas: the holy lake of the acts of Rāna*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, p 555.

²⁷⁴ Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990) p 556.

²⁷⁵ Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990) p 560.

²⁷⁶ Consider also the episode relating to conquest of Vālin as described in *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ, canto 17, verse 8.

²⁷⁷ Srinivasachari P (1946) *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar Library, Madras, p 154.

²⁷⁸ Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 214.

²⁷⁹ Lipner JJ (1986) p 144.

²⁸⁰ This point is discussed in Bhatacarya K (1967) The Status of the Individual in Indian Metaphysics, in C.A. Moore *The Indian Mind*, East West Press.

²⁸¹ Lipner JJ (1994) p 237.

²⁸² Lipner doubts whether the doctrine of *karma* was dominant at the time of the original telling of the Mahābhārata [Lipner JJ (1994) p 231]. Nevertheless, I hope I do not violate the spirit of the original telling, nor Lipner's view, by using the tale to highlight the relationship between *karma* and humility.

²⁸³ *Bhagavadgītā* IV.11, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 108. Hindus will find it illuminating to read the work of John Hick as a commentary on this verse.

²⁸⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* VII.21, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 193.

²⁸⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* X.23, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 239.

²⁸⁶ This point is beautifully supported by an amusing story related in a talk given by Satyamurthi Gwalior:

A devotee always carried about him, his nut wallet and in it, he had kept a Śāligrām Image as his constant companion. When, by accident, the tiny marble-like Image mixed up with the nut, and entered his mouth while chewing the nut, he would of course feel the hardness of the marble different from the nut. He would then reverently take it out, wash it in water, dry it with his robe, dress it and taking cymbals in his hand, sing a song of praise from Saint Nammālvār's Prabandham and then lull it to sleep again, in his nut wallet. This confusion often happened with him. A Vaiṣṇava, more of the ritual type than of love to God, who observed this quite often and got enraged at the blasphemy, approached that gentleman one day, unable to contain himself any longer, and asked for a present to him of the desecrated marble-God. The holy property changed hands and the other Vaiṣṇava ... started worshipping it, in all the strict details of ceremonial worship. The Image, however, appeared in his dream, on the first night itself, and said "Fool, I was happy where I was. I had the felicity of becoming bathed in the nectar-like saliva of his holy mouth, holy due to the constant chanting of Saint Nammālvār's hymns. I had also the supreme delight of listening to the sweet canticles from the Divya Prabandham, which he warbled to me. But now, you have deprived me of all this happiness, and subjected me to the tedious trials of your formal worship." [Discourse handout].

Note however that tolerance is not unqualified, and not 'anything goes' in Hinduism. For a balanced discussion see Lipner JJ (1994) pp 180-90.

²⁸⁷ Zaehner RC (1974) *Our Savage God*, Collins, London pp 97-8.

²⁸⁸ Zaehner is a modern example of a tradition of Christian thinkers who read ancient Hindu texts as inconclusive on basic moral matters. For an earlier example see Keith A.B. (1925) *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Vol.II, pp 586-7; 594.

²⁸⁹ Lipner JJ (1994) p 214.

²⁹⁰ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* IV.35, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) p 125.

²⁹¹ Kāṭha Upaniṣad I.2.23-4, Radhakrishnan S (trans.) (1995) pp 619-20.

²⁹² *Bhagavadgītā* XIV.24-5, Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) pp 373-4.

²⁹³ *Śrībhāṣya* II.2.3, as translated in Lipner JJ (1986) pp 101-2.

²⁹⁴ For example:

... take the case of the Supreme Lord, who spares no pains to incarnate among His subjects and wean them away from the ephemeral worldly pleasures. During His Avatars, a good many have not merely not shown the desired response but have been positively repulsive, hostile and indifferent to Him. ... At the end of His Avatar, the Lord goes back to the Celestium with but a partial fulfilment of His mission and yet, in a sense, happy that this land, with its worldly contents, has not been wiped off, thanks to the recalcitrant elements met with during the Avatar. On the yonder side of heaven, He would, however, not mention to anyone, not even His consorts about the unwholesome behaviour of the Subjects, down below [Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 65].

²⁹⁵ Consider:

... the Lord is such a robust optimist that, in the midst of the numerous transgressions committed by the subjects, He seldom loses heart but ... pick(s) out, here and there, even evil acts, which could possibly be stretched into the domain of merit, according to His extra-liberal standards, and give them credit therefore – what is known as '*agnata sukrita*' (hidden or unknown merit), leading to vicarious redemption [Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 69].

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- ²⁹⁶ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 70.
²⁹⁷ ibid. Circumambulation of the icon is an act of worship.
²⁹⁸ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 69.
²⁹⁹ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) P 71.
³⁰⁰ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 9.
³⁰¹ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 50.
³⁰² Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) aphorism 274, p 56.
³⁰³ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 58.
³⁰⁴ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) aphorisms 366-406, pp 66-74.
³⁰⁵ Satyamurthi Gwalior (trans.) (1972) p 65.

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- ¹ Winch P (1958) *The Idea of a Social Science*, Routledge, London, p 107.
² The founder of this approach was Auguste Comte (1798-1857). For an introduction to the tradition in its present form see Bryant CA (1985) *Positivism in Social Theory and Research*, Macmillan, Basingstoke. See also Durkheim E (1938) *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Free Press, New York, and Radcliffe-Brown AR (1948) *A Natural Science of Society*, Free Press, Ill. Winch takes the work of Evans-Prichard as the focus of his critique in Winch P (1964) *Understanding a Primitive Society*, American Philosophical quarterly, Vol.1, pp 307-24.
³ Winch P (1958) p 1.
⁴ Winch P (1958) p 108.
⁵ Winch P (1958) p 23.
⁶ Winch P (1964) p 106.
⁷ Winch P (1964) pp 103-4.
⁸ Winch P (1964) p 106.
⁹ Winch quoting Pareto:
There are actions that use means appropriate to ends and which logically link means with ends. There are other actions in which those traits are missing. . . . Suppose we apply the term *logical actions* to actions that logically conjoin means to ends not only from the standpoint of the subject performing them, but from the standpoint of other persons who have a more extensive knowledge - in other words, to actions that are logical both subjectively and objectively in the sense just explained. Other actions we shall call non-logical (by no means the same as 'illogical') [Winch P (1958) p 97].
¹⁰ Winch P (1958) pp 100-1.
¹¹ Winch P (1958) p 102.
¹² Bauman Z (1972) *Culture, Values and Science of Society*. Inaugural Lecture delivered by Bauman on February 7th. 1972 and published in *The University of Leeds Review*, Vol. 15, no.2.
¹³ The person is the *sati*, the event is the *sutee*.
For a cautionary note regarding the judgmental stage see Martin R & Hanson FA (1973) The Problem of Other Cultures, *Philosophy Social Sciences*, Vol.3, pp 191-208.
¹⁴ For recent examples of this position see the essays Clifford J (1986) Introduction, Partial Truths; and Rabinow P (1986) Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Postmodernity in Anthropology. Both essays are in Clifford J and Marcus GE (eds.) (1986) *Writing Culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
¹⁵ Sen A (1998) On Interpreting India's Past, in Bose S and Jalal A (1998) *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and politics in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp 12-5. (The entire article is fascinating.). For an elaboration on the concept of Positional Objectivity see Sen A (1993) Positional Objectivity, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*.
¹⁶ Sen A (1998) p 15.
¹⁷ Karl Popper (1972) *Objective Knowledge*, Clarendon Press, Oxford pp 164-5.
¹⁸ I am indebted to Dr. Lipner for making me see the need to clarify my position on the relationship between data and postulation. The emphasis now is on the conjectural nature of sociological theorising, and the attitude of a Vedic seer is adopted.

Who truly knows? Who here may declare it?
 Whence it is born? Whence indeed its creation?
 Even the gods were subsequent to the world's emergence
 Then who knows from whence it arose?
 That out of which this creation has come into being
 Whether it upheld it or if it did not?
 He who is the Lord of all this in the highest heaven
 Surely knows it, or perhaps He does not !

(*Rg Veda, Nasadiya Sūkta*, X. 129. 6-7.)

¹⁹ Lipner JJ (1994) pp 2-4. See also the analysis of 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' pp 6-21.

²⁰ Note however that the Gujarati community of Ramakabirs are either Hindus or Muslims, or both, or neither, depending on which criteria are applied. See also Lipner (1994) pp 16-7.

²¹ This survey was merely a pilot study to get a 'feel' for the relevant issues. It makes no pretensions of possessing statistical clout since the sample size of 553 is insignificant considering the large size and inherent diversity of the Hindu population. This is, of course, even more true of the case-studies; see 'An important note on sample size' (§5.1.2.2).

²² For a survey of this trend see:

Duara P (1991) The New Politics of Hinduism. *Wilson Quarterly*, Summer.

Gold D (1991) Rational Action and Uncontrolled Violence: explaining Hindu communalism. *Religion*, Vol. 21, pp 357-70.

Sarvepalli G (ed.) (1991) *Anatomy of a Confrontation: the Babri-Masjid-Ranjannabhumi issue*. Penguin Books. New Delhi.

van der Veer P (1985) God Must be Liberated! A Hindu liberation movement in Ayodhyā, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, no. 2.

²³ In India, youngsters often refer to their age in terms of the 'year running', i.e. somebody who has completed their 15 th. year may refer to themselves as 16. However, this is not always the case, i.e. somebody who is almost 19 may register themselves as 18. Hence the age bracket would have spread from those just 15 to those almost 19.

²⁴ A response was classified as a good if it was congruent with a liberal outlook. For example the following responses would be considered 'good':

Attitudes towards multiculturalism

[6] Is it possible that your best friend could be a non-Hindu? **Yes.**

[7] Do you think the Law of the land should be made to suit Hindu principles
 (i.e. to suit only Hindus) ? **No.**

[8] Do you think any particular community should be treated better than anyone else? **No.**

[9] Do you think India should be a country only for Hindus? **No.**

[10] Is it important for different communities to understand each other's values and customs? **Yes.**

[11] Are you interested in the values and customs of other communities? **Yes.**

²⁵ Rokeach (1973) *The Nature of Human Values*, Free Press. New York, pp 358-61; 422-5.

²⁶ The following is a resume from an educated member of the Anāvil community of how the community perceives itself. Ideally, such a summary should have come from an academic. Nevertheless, I remain thankful this kind and helpful contribution:

The Anāvil Community

a. The Anāvil community traces its identity to a formal absorption into the body politic as an ajachak Brahmin jāti by Lord Śrī-Rāma, an avatāra. Up to the eighteenth century, it was a land owning community settled on the western coast of India. Thereafter, with the rise of the Maratha power, it acquired a new role in land administration. This process had triggered an internal hierarchy which has now almost lost its significance.

b. During the Raj, this move towards an administrative role facilitated a general move towards purpose orientated western education with its emphasis towards professional, administration and office work making these the central focus of its economic activity.

c. When India acquired independence in 1947, its strong land reform laws resulted in a drastic diminution of the agricultural role of the community with a substantial boost for the move away from agriculture towards urban administrative and professional occupations. This also accelerated the tendency for emigration from the traditional homeland, initially to urban areas

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in the surrounding areas, then to other parts of India and finally overseas, particularly to the African parts of the British empire.

d. The African migration had also led to the community branching off into business, a role that found its fruition when the community was steadily squeezed out of post-independence Africa and it emigrated to England, the USA and other parts of the English speaking world. However, the increased availability of education is strengthening a move for the younger generation towards the traditional professional and administrative role.

e. Thus the community now has a strong reliance on education oriented occupations with a strong, small, but relatively prosperous business sector in its economically prosperous western world counterpart and a vestige of agriculture in India. Its overall economic position in the larger society in which it finds itself is broadly upper middle class, in both its within and out of India components. The greater prosperity of the developed world compared to India has led to the overseas component being economically better off than its Indian counterpart.

f. In the current Indian social structure, the operational role of the community identity is limited to its role as an endogamous marriage unit. Even this role is losing its original monolithic significance.

g. The elder generation of the overseas component does have a desire to retain its social, cultural and religious identity and to nurture its roots in what is seen to be a different society, as compared to the Indian counterpart which is comparatively more at home with the larger society.

²⁷ These ramblings are not reported but they did help to confirm that the views expressed in the interview were representative of the subjects' overall position.

²⁸ During the latter stages of research these informal contexts found two of the subjects routinely keen to learn my views on the issues concerned. They thought it only fair that having given so much of themselves they had a right to access my thoughts. Nevertheless, these were not disclosed during the interview and informal situations. However, acknowledging the point on fairness, my position was stated on completion of the research.

²⁹ The present case-studies are not even unanimous.

³⁰ Harshad's confused sentiments find him in august company. No lesser light than Swami Paramānanda has apparently expressed similarly incoherent sentiments:

Now, even if Ramlalla himself comes down from the heavens and asks us to stop the *kārsevā* we will not listen to him [Swami Paramanand, quoted by Ashish Nandy, in **Nandy A et al (1995) *Creating a Nationality: the Ramjannabhumi movement and fear of the self***, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 183]. For the meaning of '*kārsevā*' see note 106.

³¹ Era of Fear and Paranoia, *India Today*, March 1993, pp 40-1.

³² Compare these sentiments with those expressed in 'Stretched to the Limit: the bonds remain', *India Today*, 31 January 1993, pp 33-5.

³³ The reference is to the great and loyal M. Azharudhin, long standing captain of the Indian team.

³⁴ The following is a chain of thought that is one of many that can be found within the Vedāntic texts. I believe it to be consistent with the overall spirit of the ancient texts.

³⁵ *Puruṣa Sūkta*, *R̥g Veda* X.90.2 as quoted in **Reddy VM (1991) *The Vedic Epiphany: an exposition and celebration of the inaugural Dawn in the light of Śrī Aurobindo, Volume One: The Vedic Vision***, Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad, p 177. Compare also:

In the beginning there arose Hiranyagarbha.
He was born sole Lord of all existence.
He is the sustainer of the earth, the heaven and the rest
. . . . He who is the father of both heaven and earth . . .
[*Puruṣa-sūkta*, *R̥g Veda* X.121, **Reddy VM (1991)** pp 238-9].

³⁶ *R̥g Veda* V.185.2, **Reddy VM (1991)** p 60. Compare also:

I invoke Heaven and Earth - the two wide, beautiful and lofty realms, the parents of the gods and mighty progenitors of plenty to bring us life. O Heaven and Earth protect us from peril and suffering [*R̥g Veda* V.185.6, as quoted in **Reddy VM (1991)** p 60].

³⁷ *Prithvi- Sūkta*, *Artha Veda* XII.1.12, as quoted in **Reddy VM (1991)** p 228. Compare also:

O Sons of the infinite Mother, may we become infinite beings . . . becoming may we become you. O Heaven and Earth [*R̥g Veda* VII.52.1, **Reddy VM (1991)** p 269].

- ³⁸ *Rg Veda VII. 76.3*, Reddy VM (1991) p 348.
- ³⁹ Śrī Aurobindo, Centenary Volume 10, p 429 as quoted in Reddy VM (1991) pp 356 - 7.
- ⁴⁰ *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, Rg Veda X.121.1*, Reddy VM (1991) p 238.
- ⁴¹ *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, Rg Veda X.121.2*, Reddy VM (1991) p 238.
- ⁴² *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, Rg Veda X.121.3*, Reddy VM (1991) p 238.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, Rg Veda X.121.9-10*, Reddy VM (1991) p 239.
- ⁴⁵ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.2, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 226.
- ⁴⁶ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.6, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 227.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.7, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 226.
- ⁴⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.9, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 227.
- ⁵¹ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.10, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 227.
- ⁵² *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.25, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 230.
- ⁵³ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.29, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 230.
- ⁵⁴ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.35, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 231.
- ⁵⁵ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.23, 25, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) pp 229, 230.
- ⁵⁶ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.46, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 233.
- ⁵⁷ *Prthvi Sūkta XII.1.52, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) pp 233-4.
- ⁵⁸ *Prthvi Sūkta verse XII.1.61, Artha Veda*, Reddy VM (1991) p 235.
- ⁵⁹ Here is the most famous verse which supports this assertion of a Vedic monotheism:
The One Existent, the sages speak of in many ways as Indra, as Yama, as Matarishwan, as Garutman, as Agni. The One Being, beautiful of plumage, the illumined seers by their words formulate in many forms [*Rg Veda I.164.46*, as quoted in Reddy VM (1991) p 106].
- ⁶⁰ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad I.4.1*, Radhakrishnan S (1994) p 163.
- ⁶¹ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad I.4.3*, Radhakrishnan S (1994) p 164.
- ⁶² Sometimes the Goddess is also portrayed in a terrifying and ruthless aspect. For example, consider the exploits of Dūrga in the *Devīmahātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. The terrifying aspect tends to be highlighted by Śakta believers, for whom the Goddess is the main Divinity and the god associated with Her is a minor figure.
- ⁶³ Lipner JJ (1986) pp 97-8.
- ⁶⁴ The status of the goddess Śrī is a matter of dispute amongst the followers of Rāmānujācārya. The Tengalai school (the view held here) believe that the goddess is perfectly divine, but still a subordinate soul. The Vaḍagali feel that She is in *all* respects on an equal par with the Godhead. Concluding a very fair and sensitive discussion on this difference of opinion, Srinivasacari concludes:
To the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavite as a Viśiṣṭādvaitin it is sufficient assurance that the Īśvara is not merely a judge but is also a deliverer and the essential nature of Brahman is to brahmanise the *jīva* and, from the pragmatic point of view, there is not much difference between the disputants as followers of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism [Srinivasacari P (1946) *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar Library, Madras, p 169].
- ⁶⁵ *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, opening phrase.
- ⁶⁶ Rāmānujan VV (1994) *Gadyatrayam of Bhagavad Rāmānuja: text in Sanskrit with the commentary of Periyāccān Piḷḷai*, Śrī Parampara Sabha, Bangalore, p 32.
- ⁶⁷ Rāmānujan VV (1994) p 24.
- ⁶⁸ Carman JB (1981) p 197.
- ⁶⁹ Arulāḷa Perumāl Emberurmānār, *Jñānasāram*, verse 9, as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 223.
- ⁷⁰ Śrī Parāśarabhaṭṭar swamikal (11th Century) (1965) *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma Bhāṣya*, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, Tirupati, verse 472, as quoted in Carman JB (1981) p 196. Rāvaṇa is the villain who abducted Sītā, wife of Śrī-Rāma.
- ⁷¹ Incidentally, the same Manu who often speaks of women in less than reverential tones does hold womanhood in its motherly aspect in the highest regards:

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From the point of view of reverence due, a teacher is tenfold to a mere lecturer, a father a hundredfold to a teacher, and a mother a thousandfold to a father [*Manu-smṛti* 11.145 as quoted by Swami Tathagatananda, in **Thompson HN (ed.) (1988) *Pluralism and Religious Education, Religious Education Press, Alabama* p 281].**

⁷² As Srinivasachari explains:

In the history of the adventure of souls, occur certain epochs of moral crisis, when egoism becomes so inflated and sinfulness becomes so iniquitous that Isvara in His infinite mercy withdraws the instruments of evil and thus arrests the wrong doers from their career of crime and sin. This is called *pralaya* and has a soothing effect on the self. *Sṛṣṭi* is also a redemptive process and after the refreshment of *pralaya*, the *jīva* wakes up to moral activity, enters on a new life, and is given a fresh opportunity for attaining freedom [**Srinivasachari P (1946)** p 156].

⁷³ As cited in **Lutgendorf P (1991) *The Life of a Text: performing the Rāmcaritmānas of Tulsidas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p 1.**

⁷⁴ **Lutgendorf P (1991)** p 63.

⁷⁵ **Lutgendorf P (1990) *Rāmāyaṇa*: the video, *The Drama Review*, Vol.4, no.2, p 136.**

⁷⁶ See *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara Kāṇḍ, cantos 26: 30-40.

⁷⁷ A *pardesi* is an Indian either born or settled outside of India. Such grooms (and increasingly brides) are valued. However, in many cases the parents of the newly wed must bear the sadness of not seeing their child as frequently as they might like. This sadness becomes acute when grandparents are not able to attend gestation and the childhood *saṁskāra* ceremonies.

⁷⁸ See also *Mumukṣuppaṭi* 129:

Hanumān had taken full account of the sins of the *rākṣasīs* who had threatened and chided Sītā for ten months; he was eager to inflict severe punishment. But it was she who made the strong-willed Hanumān relent and forgive them by means of her instruction, saying such things as “Who has committed any sin?” (*Rāmāyaṇa* VI.116.38) and “No one has done anything wrong at all (*Rāmāyaṇa* VI.116.42) [**Mumme PY (trans.) (1987) *The Mumukṣuppaṭi of Piṭṭai Lokācārya with Maṅḍavālamāmuni's Commentary*, Ananathacārya Indological Research Institute, Cuffe Parade, Bombay].**

⁷⁹ Here is the very popular verse:

Tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva tvameva bandhuśca gurūstvameva
tvameva vidyā draviṇaṁ tvameva tvameva sarvaṁ mama devadeva
[**Rāmānujan VV (trans.) (1994)** p 49].

Oh Lord of Lords! You are my mother, you are my father; you are my (sole) relative; You are my Guru (remover of ignorance and giver of knowledge); You are knowledge! You are wealth; You are (my) all. You are everything to me [**Rāmānujan VV (trans.) (1994)** p 52].

⁸⁰ *Rg* Veda X.82.3.

⁸¹ *Rg* Veda X.72.

⁸² It must be noted that the economic need for both parents to be in employment, or indeed sometimes the unemployment of the father, has led to fathers being more involved in infant care. Moreover, as with the international trend, Hindu male chauvinism is receding and fathers are more willing to take on or share in ‘women’s duties’.

⁸³ For example: Sīta-Rama, Mādri-Pāṇḍu, Sāvitrī-Satyavat, Gāndhārī-Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Satī-Śiva, Arundhatī-Vāsiṣṭha, Mandodari-Rāvaṇa. Notice that even when the husbands are far from ideal (Rāvaṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra), the devotion of their respective wives (*patiseva/ pativrata*) remains an ideal in itself. As confirmed by Manu:

Though devoid of virtue, debauched or completely bereft of good qualities, the husband must always be revered by a good wife as a god (5.154) [as cited with reservations by Lipner in **Lipner JJ (1994)** ff. 46, p 332].

Husbands must never abuse the above reverence.

⁸⁴ **Nandy A (1995) An Intelligent Critic’s Guide to Indian Cinema**, in **Nandy A (1995) *The Savage Freud and other essays on possible and retrievable selves***, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 220.

⁸⁵ **Nandy A (1995)** p 220-1.

⁸⁶ **Nandy A (1995)** pp 221.

⁸⁷ Nandy A (1995) p 222.

⁸⁸ Nandy A (1995) p 219.

⁸⁹ Ramanujam BK (1979) Toward Maturity: problems of identity seen in the Indian clinical setting, in Kakar S (ed.) (1979) *Identity and Adulthood*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 48.

⁹⁰ Vecna Das (1979) Reflections on the Social Construction of Adulthood, in Kakar S (ed) (1979) p 90.

⁹¹ Vecna Das (1979) p 92.

⁹² Recall that Harshad's mother was a full time schoolteacher. In the case of Nitin and Pushpa, as well as Radha, mother stayed at home but was without the support of the extended family. Hence the pressures indicated would, to a greater or lesser extent, be incumbent upon all three mothers.

⁹³ Similar issues are discussed in Rai G (1979) A Study of Certain Socio-psychological Dimensions of Childrearing Practices Adopted by Indian Mothers, *Psycholinguistics*, Vol.9, no.1.

⁹⁴ Sinha D (1979) The Young and the Old: ambiguity of role-models and values among Indian Youth, in Kakar S (ed.) (1979) p 63.

⁹⁵ Ramanujam BK (1979) p 39.

⁹⁶ Ramanujam BK (1979) p 41.

⁹⁷ Lynn DB (1961) The Husband-Father Role in the Family, *Marriage and Family Living*, Vol. 23, p 269 as cited in Ramanujam BK (1979) p 40.

⁹⁸ In addition to the works cited in this Thesis, Kakar has also written an important book:

Kakar S (1978) *The Inner World: a psychoanalytic study of childhood and society in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi. My reasons for not referring to this classic are:

(i) A leading aspect of the methodology of the book is to view sacred mythology as an illumination on human, at times carnal, sexuality. Many may regard this as an insight: I consider it blasphemy.

(ii) Kakar often uses language and ideas which while decent on the analyst's couch are irreverent in the context of discussing Divinities.

(iii) I suspect that Kakar may be corrupting people with his interpretations on gender/ parental relationships. I am not suggesting a censoring of his work; however, I wish to have no part in familiarising, through citation, others with his interpretations.

Nevertheless, I respect Kakar for his creativity and sincerity.

⁹⁹ Kakar S (1990) *Intimate Relations: exploring Indian sexuality*, Penguin, New Delhi, p 35.

¹⁰⁰ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.2.1.21 The citation is by Hara and taken from Lipner JJ (1994) p 346.

¹⁰¹ Bipin Chandra Pal (4th edn.) (1958) *The Soul of India: a constructive study of Indian thoughts and ideals*, Yugayatri Prakashak, Calcutta, p 134 as cited in Bose S (1997) Nation as Mother: representations and contestations of 'India' in Bengali literature and culture, in Bose S and Jalal A (eds.) *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and politics in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 50.

¹⁰² Ghose Sri Aurobindo (1965) The Life of Nationalism, in *On Nationalism, First Series*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

¹⁰³ Nandy A (1994) *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, Oxford university Press, Delhi, p 85. Nandy is referring to Koenigberg RA (1977) *The Psychoanalysis of Racism, Revolution and Nationalism*, The Library of Social Science, New York.

¹⁰⁴ The translation used here is from Ghose A (1942) *Collected Poems and Plays*, vol 2, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry pp 227-8.

Incidentally, *Bande Mataram* was a candidate for India's national anthem.

¹⁰⁵ Jaffrelot C (1996) *The Hindu Nationalist movement and Indian Politics: strategies of identity building, implementation and mobilisation, 1925 -1990's*, Harper and Collins, pp 428-31.

¹⁰⁶ Nandy says:

Kāṛ-sevaks are those who offer *kāṛ-seva*, worship through work. There is no tradition of *kāṛ-seva* in Hinduism. No Hindu temple has ever been built through *kāṛ-seva*. In much of Hindu India, the word did not even make any sense till recently. The idea and the term have been borrowed from Sikhism and, as a result, have meaning only for north Indians [Nandy A et al (1996) p 6].

I am not sure about the above. On one hand, Hindus are familiar with the idea of worship through work, and many Hindu temples have been built with the voluntary labour. Such worship through work is called *karmayoga*. Nandy would then be wrong, or at least merely quibbling over words. On the

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other hand, Nandy's comments are still valuable since they stimulate us to enquire why the borrowing of a new term from Sikhism, when an adequate 'Hindu' word already exists. The following reasons might be relevant:

a) The use of a Sikh term would consolidate the affinity between Hindus and Sikhs against the alleged common foe - the Muslims. Moreover, Sikhism has an explicit martial aspect, and use of a Sikh term might help the hindutva programme to appear tougher.

b) Had the VHP used the term *karmayoga* there would have been inevitable associations with the traditional understanding of *karmayoga* (see Chapter 3 §6.2), as well as *jñāna* and *bhakti* yoga. In this case, considering the work sought to be done, the process would have been challenged by associations with knowledge or love. Perhaps to side-track such complications an alternative term had to be found.

¹⁰⁷ Jaffrelot C (1996) p 429.

¹⁰⁸ Jaffrelot draws from the work Gerard Heuze. Note however that the subjects of Heuze's study were poorly educated and unemployed and hence in contrast to the educated, and still in education, subjects of the present researcher. See: Heuze G (1992) Shiv Sena and "National Hinduism", *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, 3 October 1992, p 2189.

¹⁰⁹ Jaffrelot C (1996) p 429.

¹¹⁰ Kapur A (1991) *Times of India*, 1 October 1991, as quoted in Farmer VL (1996) Mass Media: images, mobilisation, and communalism, in Ludden D (ed.) (1996) *Making India Hindu: religion, community and the politics of democracy in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 103.

¹¹¹ van der Veer P (1997) Writing Violence, in Ludden D (ed.) (1996) p 269.

¹¹² Sadly, a belief that 'there is only one God' has not prevented her prejudice. If this trend is common, then it may represent in the younger generation a parallel of the schizophrenic split in the adult Hindu psyche on issues of religion and pluralism. See A Nation Divided, *India Today*, 15 January 1993, pp 14-9.

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¹ For introductions see:

Pandey G (1990) *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Robinson F (1997, first edn. 1975) *Separatism Amongst Indian Muslims*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

² One must also remember that, as with the Hindu community, there are a plurality of viewpoints within the Muslim community. See the instructive article: Hasasn M (1996) The Myth of Unity: colonial and national narratives, in Ludden D (ed) *Making India Hindu*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

³ The RSS or *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (league of volunteer servants of the nation) has always seen itself as the moral guardian of parliamentary democracy:

The political rulers were never the standard bearers of our society. They were never taken as the props of our national life. Saints and sages, who had risen above the mundane temptations of self and power and had dedicated themselves wholly for establishing a happy, virtuous and integrate society were its constant torch bearers [Golwalker MS (1966) *Bunch of Thoughts*, Jagarana Prakashan, Bangalore, p 93].

By the late forties, a membership exceeding 600,000 [Andersen W and Damle S (1987) *The Brotherhood in Saffron, The Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh and Hindu revivalism*, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, p 50] made for an alliance in 1951 with the Jan Sangh (People's Party) [See: Baxter C (1968) *The Jan Sangh: a biography of an Indian political party*, Oxford University Press, Bombay]. The Jan Sangh was later to transmute into the Bharatiya Janta Party or B.J.P. (Indian People's Party).

⁴ See chapter of the same name in Jaffrelot C (1996) *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990 's*, Hurst & Company, London, pp 63-4.

⁵ See Dayananda Saraswati (1981) *The Light of Truth*, Upadhyaya GP (trans.), Dr Ratna Kumari, Svadhyaya Sansthana, Allahabad, p 484.

⁶ Minault G (1982) *The Khalifat Movement: religious symbolism and political mobilisation in India*, Columbia University Press, New York.

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⁷ **Bose S (1997)** Nation as Mother: representations and contentestations of 'India' in Bengali literature and Culture, in **Bose S and Jalal A (eds.)** *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and politics in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 64.

⁸ **Savarkar VD (1969 first edn. 1923)** *Hindutva: who is a Hindu?* S. Savarkar, Bombay.

Ram Prasad has summarised the Hindutva ideology that was to evolve from Savarkar's work:

- a. The people whose identity is to be recovered and defined are to be found in a nation;
- b. that nation is one in which a unique inclusivistic attitude is historically revealed as having been intentionally advocated.
- c. That unique attitude is the attitude of a certain people;
- d. the nation to which these people belong is India.
- e. That attitude is essential to being a Hindu.
- f. In consequence, therefore, all those who are Indian, upon holding that attitude as it was historically held, will be true Hindus.

[**Ram Prasad (1993)** *Hindutva Ideology*, *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 2, no. 3, p 300].

⁹ **Golwalkar MS (1939)** *We, or our Nationhood Defined*, *Bharat Prakashan*, Nagpur.

Nandy has decently pointed out Golwalker disowned the above work. See **Nandy A et al (1995)** p 84, ff 37.

¹⁰ *Young India*, 6 October 1921.

¹¹ See the classic work **Nehru J (1946)** *The Discovery of India*, Signet Press, Calcutta.

¹² Lok Sabha debates (1st series) XV, II, (17 September 1951) cols. 2705-. Note also the observations of Gopal that Nehru:

. . . in defiance of logic, refused to consider alterations in Muslim personal law on matters of monogamy and inheritance so as to place all Indian women on par. There should be no impression of the Hindu majority forcing anything, however justified, on the Muslim minority and changes would only be enacted when the Muslims wanted them [**Gopal S (1984)** *Jawaharlal Nehru: a biography*, Jonathan Cape, Vol. 3, London p 172, as quoted in **Jaffrelot C (1996)** p 104].

¹³ *Organiser*, 10 September 1951, p 14.

¹⁴ **Puri B (1993)** *Towards insurgency*, Orient Longman, New Delhi.

¹⁵ See *Hindusthan Times*, 5-13 February 1961.

¹⁶ *Organiser*, Diwali Special, 1964.

¹⁷ For the role that the cow protection issue has played in mobilising political identities see:

Batra SM (1986) The Sacredness of the Cow in India, *Social Compass*, Vol.33, 2-3.

Freitag S (1980) Sacred Symbol as mobilising ideology: the north Indian search for a "Hindu community." *Comparative Study of Society and History*, Vol.22, no.4.

¹⁸ **Advani LK (1977)** *A Prisoner's scrapbook*, Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi.

¹⁹ For an example see **Rudolph LI and Rudolph SH (1982)** Cultural Policy, the Textbook Controversy and Indian Identity, in **Wilson AJ and Dalton D (eds.)** *The States of South Asia*, Hurst, London.

²⁰ **Noorani AG (1990)** Indira Gandhi and Indian Muslims, *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, 3 November 1993.

Graff V (1990) Aligarh's Long quest for minority status, AMU (Amendment) Act, 1981, *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, 11 August 1990.

²¹ **Engineer AA (1987)** *The Shah Bano Controversy*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad.

²² See: **Malhotra I (1989)** *Indira Gandhi: a personal biography*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, p 289.

Manor J (1990) Parties and the Party System, in **Kohl A (ed.) (1990)** *India's Democracy: an analysis of changing state-society relations*, Princeton University Press.

Organiser, 1 February 1984, p 16.

Banerjee A (1990) Comparative Curfew: changing dimensions of communal politics in India, in

Das V (ed.) (1990) *Mirrors of Violence: communities, riots and survivors in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

²³ **Noorani AG (1991)** Legal Aspects of the Issue, in **Gopal S (ed.) (1991)** *Anatomy of a confrontation: the Babri Masjid -Ram-Janna Bhumi issue*, Viking, New Delhi.

²⁴ For a description of the event see:

Hindustan Times, 12 November 1989, p 23.

Indian Express, 10 November 1989, pp 1-9.

Consider also the observations of Vajpayee (BJP) and Shahabuddin (Janata Dal) as cited by Nandy:

Vajpayee: It was not the B.J.P. which made Ayodhyā into a burning issue. It was the Congress which did that. It was they who allowed the ṣilānyās ceremony. It was Rajiv Gandhi who went to Faizabad to start his election campaign and he solicited votes on the promise of ushering in Rāmrajā. The B.J.P. had to respond to the situation [Nandy A et al (1996) p 38].

Shahabuddin: Mrs Gandhi from 1979 onwards indirectly helped the Hindu communal and chauvinistic forces. I don't say that she was communal in a strategic sense. But in her quest for power she could take help from Hindu communalism as a tactical measure. It was she who really reopened the Babri Masjid issue [Nandy A et al (1996) p 38 footnote 19. The entire note is instructive].

²⁵ See *Organiser*, 16 May 1982, p 6; *Organiser*, Independence Day Special, 1981, p7.

Suseelan B (1988) *India under Siege*, VHP, New Delhi.

²⁶ *India Today*, 30 November 1993, pp 30, 34, 36.

Organiser, 23 October 1983, p 15; 27 November 1983, p 13; 12 February 1984, p 6.

Hayat S (1984) Hindu Revivalism: genesis and implications. *Regional Studies*, Vol. 2, no. 4.

²⁷ *Organiser*, 22 April 1984, pp 1-2. For an entertaining summary of proceedings see:

van der Veer P (1985) God Must be Liberated! A Hindu liberation movement in Ayodhyā, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, no. 2.

²⁸ *Times of India*, 4 November 1989, p 1; 6 November 1989, p 6.

Organiser, 20 August 1989, pp 16-7.

Hindustan Times 16 November 1989.

²⁹ *India Today*, 30 June 1989, p 40-3.

³⁰ *India Today*, 31 January 1990, p 54.

³¹ For an overview see:

Datta PK (1993) VHP's Rama: the Hindutva movement in Ayodhyā, in Pandey G (ed.) (1993).

Pandey G (ed.) (1993) *Hindus and Others: question of identity in India Today*. Viking, New Delhi.

Rudolph LI (1992) The Media and Cultural Politics, in Mitra SK and Chiriyankandath J (eds.) *Electoral Politics in India*, Segment Books, New Delhi.

³² Kapur A (1993) Deity to Crusader: the changing iconography of Rama, in Pandey G (ed.) (1993).

³³ The phase is ongoing, and the closing date refers only to the conclusion of the Thesis research.

³⁴ *Indian Express*, 2 August 1990.

Statesman (Delhi), 27 June 1990.

³⁵ *Indian Express*, 30 September 1990; 3, 6, 15 October 1990.

For an overview see:

Shah G (1991) Tenth Lok Sabha Elections- BJP's victory in Gujarat. *Economic and Political Weekly*, (EPW) 21 December, p 2924.

³⁶ See the knowledgeable article: Davis R.H. (1996) The Iconography of Rama's Chariot, in

Ludden D (eds.) (1996). Also:

Indian Express, 30 September 1990; 3 October 1990, pp 14-5.

The National Mail 7-8 October 1990.

³⁷ *National Mail* 29-30 October 1990.

Indian Express, 1 November 1990.

³⁸ *Statesman (Delhi)* 21 February, 1991.

³⁹ *About Us* 18 November 1990.

Statesman (Delhi) 14, 18 December 1990.

⁴⁰ Here is an official statement from the BJP. Note that despite the disclaimer, it is clear with whom the Party's sympathies lie:

The demolition of the disputed structure was an uncontrolled and, in fact, uncontrollable upsurge of spontaneous nature which was provoked only by the callousness of the Government in dealing with the Ayodhyā issue without understanding the sensitive nature of the issue [BJP's White Paper on Ayodhyā, p 131 as cited in Jaffrelot C (1996) p 455].

However, see also:

The Pioneer, 10 December 1992.

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Chandan Mitra (1992) Control Room that had no Control, *The Hindustan Times*, 8 December 1992.

⁴¹ See: *Times of India*, 8 December 1992, p 5.

⁴² For examples see: **Nandy A et al (1995)** pp 195-7. Also more generally, see **Dutta P and Sarkar S (1994)** Manufacturing Hatred: the image of the Muslim in the Ramjanmabhumi movement, in **Arslan M and Rajan J (eds.)** *Communalism in India: challenge and response*. Manohar, Delhi, p 83.

⁴³ For confirmation see the below periodicals from 1990 onwards:

India Today (fortnightly).

The Hindu (daily).

The Times of India (daily).

For a general summary of this social context see:

Bjorkman J (ed.) (1986) *Fundamentalism, Revivalists and Violence in South Asia*. Riverdale Company, Riverdale Md.

Duara P (1991) The New Politics of Hinduism, *Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1991.

Embree A (1990) *Utopias in Conflict: religion and nationalism in modern India*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Juergensmeyer M (1989) India, in **Mews S (ed.) (1989)** *Religion in Politics: a world guide*. Longman, London.

⁴⁴ Here is Pandey's working definition of the term communalism:

In its common Indian usage the word 'communalism' refers to a condition of suspicion, fear and hostility between members of different religious communities [**Pandey G (1990)** *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p 6].

⁴⁵ **Pandey G (1990)** p 5.

⁴⁶ **Juergensmeyer M (1996)** *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p 6.

⁴⁷ **Juergensmeyer M (1996)** p 14.

⁴⁸ This is extensively discussed in **Smith DE (1963)** *India as a Secular State*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

⁴⁹ The discussion will concentrate on **Nandy A (1983)** *The Intimate Enemy: loss and recovery of self under colonialism*, Oxford University Press, Delhi. A number of other works have since elaborated on the central theme of this classic. See especially **Nandy A (1994)** *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, and **Nandy A et al (1995)** *Creating a Nationality*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.

⁵⁰ Though Nandy's use of masculine and feminine is not precise, his categorising of the feminine (*nārīva*) virtues usually refers to 'the softer side of human nature' and approximates to Gilligan's ethics of care and to the maternal virtues as attributed to the God of Vedānta. Unlike the feminine, the masculine (*puruṣatva*) carries unwholesome connotations and is invariably associated with aggression, power and 'realpolitik'. His use of the term androgynous (*klībatva*) can be surmised to be the masculine psyche counselled and regulated by the feminine virtues. For an elaboration on the terms *nārīva*, *puruṣatva* and *klībatva* see **Nandy A (1983)** pp 7-11.

⁵¹ **Nandy A (1983)** p 71.

⁵² **Nandy A (1983)** p 7.

⁵³ **Nandy A (1983)** p 7.

⁵⁴ This is the main theme of **Nandy A (1994)** *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*. For Nandy's caricature of the early stalwarts of the Indian Independence struggle see **Nandy A (1983)** pp 23-7.

⁵⁵ **Nandy A (1983)** pp 23-4.

⁵⁶ For Malinowski's position see **Malinowski B (1960)** *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. The book was first published in (1944) by Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. See also:

Firth R (ed) (1957) *Man and Culture: an evaluation of the work of B Malinowski*, Routledge and Keegan Paul, London.

Mendelbaum M (1969) Functionalism in Social Anthropology, in **Morgenbesser S et al (eds.)** *Philosophy, Science and Method*, St. Martins, New York.

Roy E et al (eds.) (1988) *Malinowski Between Two Worlds: the Polish roots of an anthropological tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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Strensky I (1992) *Malinowski and the Work of Myth: selected and introduced by Ivan Strenski*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

⁵⁷ Malinowski B as quoted in **Firth R (ed.) (1957)** pp 60-1.

⁵⁸ Malinowski B as quoted in **Firth R (ed.) (1957)** p 57.

⁵⁹ **Strenski I (ed.) (1992)** p 100.

⁶⁰ There are many other external circumstances (such as the socio-economic relations across these two communities) that are of relevance to the present discussion. Further, in the context of this research, an important external circumstance is the behaviour of Indian Muslims. The question whether Indian Muslims *are or are not* fundamentally illiberal, and appeal to liberal values only when it suits their own advancement, requires investigation. It may be that Indian Muslims are a liberal and genteel people, perfidious only when themselves exploited. If that were to be the case then, in the light of the external circumstances, aggressive attitudes from Hindus would be unjustified.

Unfortunately, obtaining decisive factual data on these issues was beyond the limitations of the investigation. Investigation was also curtailed by the media policy of the (then) Congress government. Fearing that India would otherwise be seen by the world as regressing towards a 'medieval theocracy', the State television channel, Doordarshan, imputed unfavourable connotations to any attempt to reassert Hindu pride and generally portrayed Muslims as victims. This led to selective reporting, making it difficult to get a clear picture on Muslim attitudes towards liberal Indian citizenship. It was therefore impossible to determine completely the 'facts' of Muslim behaviour. [Articles from *Times of India* or *India Today* will support this statement. Alternatively, the essays of Mark Tully imply a similar conclusion. See especially Chapters 4, 8 and epilogue in: **Tully M (1992)** *No Full Stops in India*, Penguin, Harmondsworth].

⁶¹ These representations do construct a social reality that is objective in the sense of being external to the mind of any given individual. This socially constructed reality can be just as influential on attitudes as the 'hard-facts' of the physical world. It constitutes an external circumstance that is particularly influential upon impressionable young Hindus.

It is important to clarify what is *not* being asserted at this point. The use of the term 'social construction of reality' is not to be associated in toto with the term as used by Berger and Luckman. Here is their position:

- a. One could say that the sociological understanding of reality and knowledge fall somewhere in the middle between that of the man in the street and that of the philosopher.
- b. The man in the street does not ordinarily trouble himself about what is 'real' to him and about what he 'knows' unless he is stopped short by some sort of problem. He takes his reality and his knowledge for granted.
- c. The sociologist cannot do this, if only because of his systematic awareness of the fact that men in the street take quite different realities for granted - as between one society and another.
- d. The sociologist is forced by the very logic of his discipline to ask, if nothing else, whether the difference between the two realities may not be understood in relation to various differences between the two societies.
- e. The philosopher, on the other hand, is professionally obligated to take nothing for granted, and to obtain maximal clarity as to the ultimate status of what the man in the street believes to be reality and knowledge. Put differently, the philosopher is driven to decide where the quotation marks are in order and where they may be safely omitted, that is, to differentiate between valid and invalid assertions about the world.
- f. *This the sociologist cannot possibly do.* Logically, if not stylistically, he is stuck with the quotation marks (tabulation imposed on Berger & Luckman) [**Berger P & Luckman T (1971)** *The Social Construction of Reality*, Penguin, London, p 14].

While in agreement with (b, c and e), and reserved about (a and d), I find (f) disputable. Unlike Berger and Luckman, I do not believe that sociology is stuck with the quotation marks. No doubt an empathic understanding of the content of the quotation marks is significant to sociological understanding, but this is only the first stage of the research rationale. The world is too seriously demanding a place to tolerate Berger and Luckman's obsession with this first stage. A more responsible approach would be to state explicitly that after having understood the contents of the quotation marks, the researcher *must* evaluate them in terms of their objective validity, i.e. 'philosophically / scientifically' (Chapter 4 §1.2).

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Further, unlike Berger and Luckman, one must realise that the social, somewhat 'wobbly' human reality is itself a subset of a far more rigid universe. People can, and obviously do, construct their social worlds but only on terms that external reality will allow. As such, contrary to what Berger and Luckman may like to believe, sociology *is* stuck with determining what deserves to go in quotation marks (soft reality) and what does not (hard reality). I believe Jarvie speaks the truth when he says:

When we choose and act we are subject to two sets of constraints; on one hand hard reality: our physical surroundings and bodily limitations; on the other hand soft reality: our putative knowledge, our morals, fears, neuroses, imagination, etc. Between hard and soft, further constraining us . . . - the frame of reference, so to speak - is the social world made of other people, institutions, groups, friendships, relatives, etc. These are neither hard nor soft but a bit of both [Jarvie IC (1981) Social Perception and Social Change, *Journal of Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 11, no.3, p 232].

This position is carefully explored by Quine, in Quine WV (1976) *The Ways of Paradox and other essays*, Harvard University Press, Mass.

⁶² Consider Hay's observations on the popularity of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's magnificent *Bande Mātaram*:

Bankim's original concept, "the Mother" of *Bande Mātaram*, referred at the same time to the land of Bengal and to the female aspect of the Hindu deity. From this fusion of the hitherto separate objects of patriotic and religious devotion sprang the central concept of modern Hindu nationalism. The concept of the divine Motherland, equating as it did love of country with love of God, made an instinctive appeal to the devout Hindu peasantry, for whom the secular reformism and Westernized nationalism of the Moderate leaders remained beyond comprehension [Hay S (ed.) (1988) *Sources of Indian Tradition: Volume 2, Modern India and Pakistan*, Columbia University Press, New York, p 131].

Not only rustic simpletons, but also contemporaries capable of comprehending the merits of secular reformism and Westernized nationalism, found the equation of love of God with love of country appealing, e.g. Aurobindo (1872-1950), Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869- 1948). However, their interpretations of the nation-Godess-mother motif were more gentle than that of Chatterjee.

⁶³ Essay on Aryan Men and Aryan Speech, *Hindu Excelsior Magazine*, 1882, p 225.

⁶⁴ Traces of the Ancient Aryan, *National Magazine* Vol. I (1875-1876) p 338. For an introduction to this viewpoint see Kenneth W Jones (1989) *Arya Dharm: Hindu consciousness in the 19th Century Punjab*, Manohar, New Delhi.

⁶⁵ Banerjea S (1848-1926)(1925) *A Nation in the Making: being the reminiscences of fifty years in public life*, Oxford University Press, London, pp 397-8.

⁶⁶ Ranade MG as quoted in Hay S (ed.) (1988) pp 106-7.

⁶⁷ Savarkar VD (1969, first edn 1923) p 113.

⁶⁸ Tandon P (1948) *National Herald*, 15 June, 1948, p 7.

⁶⁹ KS Sudarshan from an interview in *Indian Express*, 12 February 1993.

⁷⁰ The Shah Bano controversy concerned the rights of Muslim divorcees (in parity with non-Muslim divorcees) to claim alimony from their husband. For a discussion see:

Engineer AA (ed.) (1987) *The Shah Bano Controversy*, Orient Longmans, Hyderabad.

Momin AR (1986) Conflict of Law and Religion in Contemporary India, *Social Compass*, Vol. 33, no. 2-3.

⁷¹ Aligarh Muslim University is discussed in Brass BR (1974) *Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge University Press, London, pp 223-7.

⁷² A clear introduction is provided by Brass BR (1996) pp 215-27.

⁷³ See Iqbal's presidential address at the All India Muslim League, December 29, Allahabad in:

Iqbal M (1948) *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (2nd ed.) Compiled by 'Shamloo', Al-Manar Academy, Lahore, Pakistan.

⁷⁴ The reference is to the unfortunate speech in: Jinnah MA (1946-47) *Recent speeches and writings*, Vol. I, Jamil-ud-din Ahmed (ed.), M. Ashraf, Lahore, pp 174-80.

⁷⁵ Feelings of suspicion and resentment towards Indian Muslims were a recurring theme with the older generation in the case-study research. Moreover, most adults encountered by the researcher in

the Brahmin communities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Bengal and Himachal Pradesh shared such concerns.

⁷⁶ Śrī-Rāma is one of the ten principal *avatārs* of Śrī-Viṣṇu.

⁷⁷ Those interested in the archaeological veracity of such a claim may consult:

Nath R (1991) *Architecture and site of the Babri Masjid of Ayodhyā: historical critique*, Historical Research Documentation Programme, Jaipur.

Pannikar KN (1991) A Historical overview, in **Gopal S (ed.) (1991)** *Anatomy of a Confrontation: the Babri Masjid-Rama-Janma Bhumi issue*, Viking, New Delhi.

⁷⁸ This is consistent with Rawls' understanding of rationality (Chapter 1 §2.3). See also

Rudner R (1966) *Philosophy of Social Science*, Englewood, New Jersey.

⁷⁹ **Malinowski B (1974)** *Magic, Science and Religion, and other essays*, Souvenir Press, London, p 281.

⁸⁰ **Malinowski B (1974)** p 303.

⁸¹ **Malinowski B (1974)** p 306.

⁸² For a full presentation of the constitution see **Seervai MM (1975)** *Constitutional Law of India*, MM Tripathi Private Limited, Bombay. Citations in the text are taken from the more accessible works as referenced.

⁸³ **Nehru J (1946)** *The Discovery of India*, J. Day, New York as quoted in **Hay S (ed.) (1988)** p 320.

⁸⁴ **Nehru J (1950)** *Independence and After: a collection of the more important speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru from September, 1946-May 1949*, Government of India, New Delhi, pp 346-8.

For a similar line see **Ranade M G (1901)** in **Chintamani CYT (ed.)**, *Indian Social Reform, Part 2*, Thompson, Madras pp 89-95, as cited in **Hay S (1988) (ed)** pp 103-9. For an influential non-Hindu brown sahib see **Naoroji P (1887)** *Essays, Speeches and Writings on Indian Politics of the Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji*, Caxton, Bombay. For an accessible introduction see **Hay S (1988) (ed)** pp 87-96.

It is worth pointing out that many western academics share Nehru's views on Indian nationalism. The editor of the distinguished tome, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, believes:

Before the British conquest, the concept of membership in a stable political order embracing and involving them all seems to have been unknown to the inhabitants of India. . . .

A new chapter opened when British arms and diplomacy placed the whole of the subcontinent under one paramount power for the first time in history. . . .

The new political and economic order attracted able Indians anxious to improve their status and increase their wealth by entering its service. A new class emerged to mediate between the foreign rulers or traders and the mass of the people. . . .

But the English Education that provided so many willing collaborators for the British in India eventually proved the undoing of their empire. For one thing, the members of the new middle-class . . . could all communicate with each other through the medium of a common language. Equally important, their reading of the English classics instilled in them Western ideals of justice, freedom, and love of country. . . .

Under these circumstances, it was not long before the seed-idea of nationalism implanted by their reading of Western books began to take root in the minds of intelligent and energetic Indians [**Hay S (ed.) (1988)** pp 84-5].

⁸⁵ **Nehru J (1961)** *The Discovery of India*, Bombay, p 552f.

⁸⁶ In Rawlsian terminology, one could say that for Nehru, secularism was more than a political position, it was a 'comprehensive doctrine'. Whereas the Rawlsian OP was meant to be a device of representation, Nehru sought to apply its principles as a substantive model of the good life, i.e. a commitment to rationalism and the scientific enterprise was seen as a comprehensive and exclusive good, and the second moral power was equated with the first.

⁸⁷ Had it not been for the rude awakening that he was not quite an Englishman, and his later involvement with a 'half naked' and 'seditious fakir' (Sir Winston Churchill's appraisal of Mahatma Gandhi. See: **Fischer L (1950)** *Gandhi, His Life and Message for the World*, New York, Harper, p 103) Nehru might never have mixed with common Indians to feel 'the thrill of mass feeling' [**Nehru J (1937)** *Nehru: an autobiography*, John Lane, p 1].

⁸⁸ **The Constitution of India (1979)** 51.A. As quoted in **Hay S (ed.) (1988)**, pp 338-9.

⁸⁹ **Gellner E (1979)** *An Ethic of Cognition*, in *Spectacles and Predicaments*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p 170.

⁹⁰ Recall that every citizen of India must 'develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform'.

⁹¹ Consider Banerjea:

. . . much yet remains to be done, and the impetus must come from England. To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our peoples. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our lifeblood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom . . . Where will you find better models of courage, devotion and sacrifice . . .

We should be unworthy of ourselves and our preceptors - we should, indeed, be something less than human - if, with our souls stirred to their inmost depths, our warm Oriental sensibilities roused to an unwanted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is . . . (the awakening of a new national life) . . . is the work of Englishmen - it is the noblest monument of their rule - it is the visible embodiment of the vast moral influence which they are exercising over the minds of the people of India. Never in the history of the world have the inheritors of an ancient civilisation been so profoundly influenced by the influx of modern ideas [Banerjea S (1927) *Speeches and Writings of the Hon. Surrendranath Banerjea*, Natesan, Madras as quoted in: Hay S (ed.) (1988) pp 100-1].

So persistent has been this influence that as late as 1981 we find Sheshadri meekly suggesting:

. . . the problem of moral education in India is essentially one of deciding on what it should mean in a social context characterised by cultural and religious pluralism . . . The west which has inspired us with its liberal doctrines of democracy, secularism and socialism might, through its current intellectual ferment on the perplexing problem of moral education as well, indicate unexplored directions in which we may profitably pursue our thinking to find a satisfactory solution to the problem [Sheshadri C (1981) *The concept of Moral Education: India and Western - a comparative study*, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 17, no. 3, pp 307-8].

⁹² Nehru J (1954-68) *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, 1949-1964, Vol. I, 1963-64*. The Publications Division, Government of India, as quoted in Hay S (ed.) (1988) p 351.

⁹³ Consider Gellner's entertaining and perceptive observation:

The Liberaliser does not suffer from the illusion that he is standing at the dawn of history. His problem is, rather, that he wishes to remove certain encumbrances without causing an avalanche. He is willing or eager to preserve a great deal of the past, not because he has many illusions about it, but because he is by now strongly imbued with a sense of the perils of loss of legitimacy, of chaos and anarchy [Gellner E (1979) *From the Revolution to Liberalisation*, in Gellner E (1979) *Spectacles and Predicaments*, p 329].

⁹⁴ As Nandy has observed:

In fact, the anti-Muslim stance of much of Hindu nationalism can be construed as a partly displaced hostility against the colonial power which could not be expressed directly because of the new legitimacy created within Hinduism for this power [Nandy A (1983) ff. 26].

⁹⁵ Compare this to Rawls' complementary point that:

For our sense of our own value, as well as our self-confidence, depends on the respect and mutuality shown us by others. By publicly affirming the basic liberties citizens in a well-ordered society express their mutual respect for one another as reasonable and trustworthy, as well as their recognition of the worth all citizens attach to their way of life. Thus the basic liberties enable the two principles of justice to meet more effectively than the other alternatives the requirements for self-respect [Rawls J (1993) pp 319-20].

⁹⁶ Gilligan C (1977) *In a Different Voice*, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 47, no.4, p 502.

⁹⁷ *Bhagavadgāā* IX.15. Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985) *The Gāābhaṣya of Rāmānuja*, Ananthacharya Indological Institute, Bombay, p 233.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ For various perspectives on the significance of Gandhiji see:

Ambedkar BR (1945) *Gandhi and Gandhism*, Bheem Patrika Publications, Jullandar.

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Bondurant JV (1988) *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian philosophy of conflict*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Brown J (1969) The Mahatma and Modern India, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.III, no.4.

(1989) Gandhi: prisoner of hope, *Yale University Press*, London.

Dalton D (1967) The Gandhian View of Caste and Caste after Gandhi, in **Mason P (ed.) (1967)** *India and Ceylon: unity and diversity*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Keer D (1962) *Mahatma Gandhi*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

¹⁰⁰ Gandhiji as quoted in **Bhose NK (1957)** *Selections From Gandhian*, Navjivan, Ahmedabad, p 7.

¹⁰¹ **Parekh B (1989)** *Gandhi's Political Philosophy*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp 89-90.

¹⁰² **Parekh B (1989)** p 57.

¹⁰³ Consider for example the leading character of Graham Greene's sensitive novel, *The Whisky Priest*. In the context of his times, the whisky priest was not a good citizen, but certainly amongst the best of men.

¹⁰⁴ **Parekh B (1989)** p 57.

¹⁰⁵ **Gellner E (1973)** *Scale and Nation in Contemporary Thought and Politics*, in **Jarvie IC and**

Agassi J (ed.) (1973) Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p 151.

¹⁰⁶ Gandhiji as quoted in **Gosh M (1991)** *The Concept of Secular Education in India*, BR Publishing Corporation, Delhi, p 198.

¹⁰⁷ Gandhiji as quoted in **Ghosh M (1991)** p 131. These sentiments need to be diligently nurtured as opposed to being regarded as self evident truths.

¹⁰⁸ Gandhiji was indeed a 'prisoner of hope'.

¹⁰⁹ **Mahatma Gandhi (1947)** *The Harijan*, 23 March 1947.

¹¹⁰ See **Douglas H (1988)** *Abdul Kalam Azad: an intellectual and religious biography*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.

¹¹¹ Syeed Abid Hussain was another great Muslim who suggested to his fellow Muslims that:

... if they live as an integral part of the nation and discharge their civic and national duties as sincerely and zealously as they do their religious and communal duties, with a conviction that both would lead to the realisation of moral values (which are really Islamic values), the dualism in their thinking would disappear and they would regard every act which is meant for the material or moral welfare of God's creatures whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, as a religious act [**Hussain SA (1965)** *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay p161].

For an unbiased discussion of issues relating to Islam and national law see **Krishna G (1986)** *Islam, Minority Status and Citizenship: Muslim experience in India*, *Archives European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, pp 353-368. Also:

Kabir H (1968) *Minorities in a Democracy*. Firmakl Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta.

Mahmood T (1977) *Muslim Personal Law*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.

¹¹² Here is a more extensive citation of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad:

I am a Musalman and am proud of that fact. Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance. I am unwilling to lose even the smallest part of this inheritance. The teaching and history of Islam, its arts and letters and civilisation are my wealth and my fortune. It is my duty to protect them.

As a Musalman I have a special interest in Islamic religion and culture and I cannot tolerate any interference with them. But in addition to these sentiments, I have others also which the realities and conditions of my life have forced upon me. The spirit of Islam does not come in the way of these sentiments; it guides and helps me forward. I am proud of being an Indian. I am proud of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim.

Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievement. Our language, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour ... This joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the times when this joint life had not began. If there are any Hindus amongst us who desire to bring back the Hindu life of a thousand years ago and more, they

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dream, and such dreams are vain fantasies. So also if there are any Muslims who wish to revive their past civilisation and culture, which they brought a thousand years ago from Iran and Central Asia, they dream also and the sooner they wake up the better. These are unnatural fancies which cannot take root in the soil of reality. I am one of those who believe that revival may be a necessity in a religion but in social matters it is a denial of progress.

This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible. No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity. We must accept the logic of fact and history and engage ourselves in the fashioning of our future destiny [**Ghose Sankar (ed.) (1972) *Congress Presidential speeches*, West Bengal Pradesh Committee, Calcutta, pp 356-63; as quoted in *Hay* pp 239-41].**

¹¹³ Maulana AK Azad quoted in **Ghosh M (1991) p 124.**

¹¹⁴ **Ghosh M (1991) p 137.**

¹¹⁵ **Shukla VN:** The Constitution on India quoted from Constitutional Assembly Debate, Vol. 2, no 2, p 884 as quoted in **Ghosh M (1991) p 140.**

¹¹⁶ **Ghosh M (1991) pp 137-8.**

¹¹⁷ **Ghosh M (1991) p 137.**

¹¹⁸ The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) **Ghosh M (1991) p 151.**

¹¹⁹ The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) p 290. **Ghosh M (1991) p 148.**

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) p 301, **Ghosh M (1991) 154.**

¹²² The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) pp 302, **Gosh M (1991) p 152.**

Speaking of pragmatics:

In the early stages . . . books should contain no formal lessons but the lives of great men as things of supreme human interest . . . These books must be written with dignity, beauty, and tenderness.

. . . In the Secondary schools stories which illustrate great moral and religious principles are used, in college classes, ideas, events and leading figures associated with religious movements should be studied [**The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) pp 330-1, Gosh M (1991) p 153.**]

¹²³ **Radhakrishnan S (1995, first edn. 1947) *Religion and Society*, Indus-Harper Collins, New Delhi, p 118.**

¹²⁴ Report of The Secondary Education Commission pp 103-4 as quoted in **Gosh M (1991) p 157.**

¹²⁵ Similarly, the Muslim community may become convinced that all Hindus have an anti-Muslim outlook.

¹²⁶ Consider Robinson's observations:

The ideas associated with creating and sustaining 'the best nation raised up for men' contained in the Islamic tradition (that Muslims form part of a community; that the laws of the community are God-given; that it is the duty of the ruler to put them into effect; that he must have the power to do so; that all Muslims are brothers; and that they are distinct from and superior to non-Muslims) have continually influenced many north Indian Muslims towards trying to realise the ideal religio-political community. Moreover, as a minority in the midst of idolaters, abiding concerns were both to draw sharp distinctions between idolaters and themselves and to ensure that Islam lived hand in hand with power. Understandably, these were concerns which grew in force with the decline of Mughal power and the emergence of the modern state in non-Muslim lands [**Robinson F (1994) *Islam and Nationalism*, in Hutchinson J and Smith AD (eds.) (1994) *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp 214-5].**]

For primary source evidence regarding Hindu fears see Jinah's speech at Lahore in 1940, that became the rallying call for partition in:

Jinah MA (1946-47) *Recent speeches and writings*, Vol. I, Jamil-ud-din Ahmed (ed.), M. Ashrat, Lahore, pp 174-80. See also: **Jinah MA (1942) *Selected writings and speeches of Mr. Jinah*, Vol. II, pp 174-5, Jamil-ud-din Ahmed (ed.) M. Ashrat, Lahore.**

Iqbal M (1948) *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (2nd ed.). Compiled by 'Shamloo', Al-Manar academy, Lahore, Pakistan.

¹²⁷ 'Myth' here is used in the sense of a narrative whose significance does not rest upon its historical veracity. This is not to concede that the events did not happen as the texts relay.

¹²⁸ **Whaling F (1980)** *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rāma*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp 42-3.

¹²⁹ **Whaling F (1980)** pp 46-7.

¹³⁰ The date is as per **Lipner JJ (1994)** p 137.

¹³¹ Whaling has suggested that Tulsidās was more directly and profoundly influenced by the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* than by the *Rānāyaṇa* of Vālmiki:

Tulsī Dās inherits the story and symbol of Rāma transmitted by the whole Rāma tradition up to his time and above all through the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* [**Whaling F (1980)** p 224].

Even if this is the case, the claim that Tulsidās remained true to Vālmiki's Śrī-Rāma is not undermined since Whaling also states:

The overall picture of Rāma that emerges in the *Adhyātma* is that outwardly at the worldly level he is a moral, truthful, dharmic, and even compassionate character. . . . The whole weight of evidence reveals that the earthly Rāma retains his characteristics at the moral level that are found in Vāl. (*Rānāyaṇa* of Vālmiki) [**Whaling F (1980)** pp 150-1].

¹³² The original *Rānāyaṇa* of Vālmiki is in Sanskrit, the *Rānacāritmānas* of Goswami Tulsidas is in the Avadhi dialect of eastern Hindi. For differences in narrative content and emphasis see the chapters in **Whaling F (1980)**: The Story of Rāma in Vālmiki, pp 11-35. The story of Rāma in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, pp 116-45 and The Story of Rāma in Tulsī Dās's *Rānacāritmānas*, pp 229-51.

¹³³ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** *Tulasi dāsa's Rānacāritamānas: the holy lake of the acts of Rāma*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, p 21.

¹³⁴ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 129.

¹³⁵ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** pp 386-7.

¹³⁶ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 415.

¹³⁷ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 487.

¹³⁸ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 473.

¹³⁹ See also **Whaling F (1980)** pp 301-3.

¹⁴⁰ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 587.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 588.

¹⁴³ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 588-9.

¹⁴⁴ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 672.

¹⁴⁵ **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 587.

¹⁴⁶ As Amartya Sen has suggested:

It is certainly true that early Muslim invaders (like Mahmud of Ghazni in the early 11 th. century) were terribly ruthless and destroyed many temples and cities . . .

. . . reference is often made of Aurangzeb's intolerance of Hinduism, his destruction of temples, the special taxes he imposed for a period on the Hindus, and so on. All this is true of Aurangzeb, but . . . none of the other Moghuls showed anything like the intolerance of Aurangzeb, and some - like Akbar - had made great efforts to treat different religious communities in an even-handed way and to combine the cultural and artistic activities of Hindus and Muslims [**Sen A (1993)** *Indian Pluralism*, Synopsis of a lecture delivered at the India International Centre on 1st July, 1993].

¹⁴⁷ B.P. Saksena as quoted in **Prasad RC (ed.) (trans.) (1990)** p 721.

¹⁴⁸ **Lipner JJ (1994)** *Hindus: their religious beliefs and practices*, Routledge, London, p 179.

Rāma-janma-bhumi movement is the name given to the agenda for building a temple at the birth-site of Bhagavan Rama. Related readings are:

Chakraverti S (1994) *From Poverty to Ayodhyā: a complete solution to India's problems*, Verus, New Delhi.

Kakar S (1996) *The Colours of Violence: cultural identities, religion and conflict*, University of Chicago Press, Ill.

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Koenrad E (1991) *Ayodhyā and After: issues before Hindu society*, Voice of India, New Delhi.
Pradeep N (1993) *The Politics of the Ayodhyā Dispute: rise of communalism and future voting behaviour*, Commonwealth Publications, New Delhi..

¹⁴⁹ **Kapur A (1991)** *Times of India*, 1 October 1991, as quoted in **Farmer VL (1996)** *Mass Media: images, mobilisation, and communalism*, in **Ludden D (ed.) (1996)** p 103.

¹⁵⁰ See **Kapur A (1991)** Militant Images of a Tranquil God, *Times of India*, 1 October 1991.

¹⁵¹ Pacific reason was applied but to no avail because the opposing forces were rigid. See *Rāmāyaṇa*, Araṇya Kāṇḍ, cantos 50, 53; Sundara Kāṇḍ cantos 21, 51, Yuddha Kāṇḍ canto 14.

¹⁵² *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ, canto 18, verse 60.

¹⁵³ *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ, canto 18 verse 64.

¹⁵⁴ *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ, canto 25 verses 9-10.

¹⁵⁵ Śrī-Rāma said while speaking to Vibhīṣaṇa, that 'Rāvaṇa is as well mine as yours' [*Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ, canto 111 verse 101].

¹⁵⁶ *Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha Kāṇḍ, canto 111 verse 91.

¹⁵⁷ **Nandy A et al (1995)** p 60.

¹⁵⁸ **Nandy A et al (1995)** p 34. On this theme Nandy recommends **Nandy A (1985)** An Anti-Secularist Manifesto, *Seminar*, October 1985 (314).

¹⁵⁹ **Nandy A et al (1995)** p 63.

¹⁶⁰ **Nandy A et al (1995)** p 78.

¹⁶¹ Nandy is acute:

The choice of Ram as a symbol in the 1990s was determined by political strategy and cost calculation, not by religious fervour or theology or by any attempt to return to the fundamentals of faith. It was a perfectly instrumental, hard-headed, secular choice made possible in an environment where the dispassionate, cynical use of the faith of others has acquired certain political legitimacy [**Nandy A et al (1995)** p 99].

Note: While I share Nandy's reservations for the present Rāmarājya-without-Rāma (i.e. without an authentic representation of Śrī-Rāma) kind of hindutva, I regret his references to Hindu nationalism as 'an illegitimate child of modern India, not of Hindu traditions'. There *have* been ideologies of Hindu nationalism that are profoundly spiritual and consistent with tradition (consider the *later* work of Aurobindo Ghose), and provided the egalitarian and maternal aspects of the Hindu God arc emphasised it may yet be possible to present a Hindu nationalism that is caring and respectful of all religious traditions. The challenge is to interest the present sympathisers of hindutva in these more liberal readings. See also § 8, especially (5) and (6).

¹⁶² Consider Jaffrelott:

Hindu nationalist identity found itself reinvigorated through the reactivation of a vulnerability complex among many Hindus that was sparked off by conversions to Islam in 1981 and sustained by the Shah Bano affair. Thus militant Hindu identity was once again refashioned through a strategy of stigmatisation and emulation of 'threatening Others' [**Jaffrelot (1996)** p 527].

¹⁶³ See:

Barnett RB (1980) *North India between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720-1801*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Lawrence B (1982) Islam in India, *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Vol. 17, pp 27-43.

van der Veer P (1993) Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity: the Vishva Hindu Parishad, in **Marty M and Appleby S (eds.)** *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, University of Chicago press, Chicago.

Robinson F (1983) Islam and Muslim Society in South Asia, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 17 pp 185-203.

¹⁶⁴ Despite extremely curtly qualifications such as 'Ayodhyā, however, is not all pastoral innocence. There have been Hindu-Muslim conflicts even in the earlier centuries [**Nandy A et al (1995)** p 4]' the general impression sought to be given is one of harmony.

¹⁶⁵ See the chapter 'Creating a Nationality' in **Nandy A et al (1995)** pp 24-99.

¹⁶⁶ **Nandy A et al (1995)** pp 59-60. Also see Nandy's argument in **Nandy A (1991)** Hinduism versus Hindutva: the inevitability of a confrontation, *Times of India*, 18 February 1991.

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¹⁶⁷ Nandy A et al (1995) p 60.

¹⁶⁸ For an entertaining discussion see Lorenzen D (1978) Warrior Ascetics in Indian History, *Journal of American Oriental Sociology*, Vol.98, no.1.

¹⁶⁹ Nandy A et al (1995) pp 57-8.

¹⁷⁰ Nandy A et al (1995) pp 90-1.

¹⁷¹ See the chapter: General evaluation and conclusion in Chari SMS (1997) *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Ājvārs*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

¹⁷² Nandy A et al (1995) pp 57-8.

¹⁷³ Nandy A et al (1995) p 59.

¹⁷⁴ Nandy A et al (1995) p 60.

¹⁷⁵ Nandy A et al (1995) p 62.

¹⁷⁶ Nandy A et al (1995) p 62.

¹⁷⁷ Nandy A (1994) pp 5-6.

¹⁷⁸ Nandy A et al (1995) p 85.

¹⁷⁹ Nandy A et al (1995) p ix.

¹⁸⁰ Nandy is sympathetic towards the epistemological anarchy most provocatively formulated by Feyerabend. See Nandy A (1983), pp 2.3 and ff p3, and of course Feyerabend P (1978) *Science in a Free Society*, NLB, London.

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¹ It is customary to distinguish the meaning attached to the word secular in the Western and Indian contexts:

By *secular* I mean simply nonreligious. I use it to refer to principles or ideas that have no reference to a transcendental order of reality or a divine being. This definition may seem obvious to Americans used to the notion of a secular society, but in some Asian societies, including India, the term is used to refer to religious neutrality - the notion that religion in general may be accepted as true without showing favour to any particular variety of religion [Juergensmeyer M (1996) p 205].

In England, secular refers to a god-less outlook, whereas in India it refers to an attitude of equal respect for all religions. Politically however the difference is ineffectual. In both polities, secularity means the refusal to justify the use of political power on the basis of any supernatural or scriptural authority. As such, in both countries it is mundane human reason that directs affairs of State.

² Cox E & Cairns J (1990) *Reforming Religious Education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p 66.

³ For a survey of English problems see Banks JA and Lynch J (eds.) (1986) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Eastbourne.

Lynch J (1986) *Multicultural Education: principles and practice*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

⁴ Juergensmeyer M (1996) p 15.

⁵ See Barrington J M (1981) From Assimilation to Cultural Pluralism: a comparative analysis, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 17, no 1.

Feinberg W (1995) Liberalism and the aims of Multicultural Education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 29, no 2.

⁶ See: Usher R (1994) *Postmodernism and Education*, Routledge, London.

Gilbert R (1992) Citizenship, Education and Postmodernity, *British Journal of the Sociology of Education*, Vol. 13, no 1.

Forster H (ed.) (1985) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London.

⁷ Lyotard JF (1979) *The Post Modern Condition: a report on knowledge*, Bennington G and Massumi B (trans.), University of Minnesota Press, Minn. p xxii.

⁸ Lyotard JF (1979) p xxiv.

⁹ This theme is elaborated upon by Martin Barker in Barker M (1981) *The New Racism: conservatives and the ideology of the tribe*, Junction Books, London.

¹⁰ This was graffiti on a bus stop in Leicester.

¹¹ Rawls J (1993) Political Liberalism, *Columbia University Press, New York*, p 34.

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¹² These themes are elegantly elaborated upon in **Gellner E (1983)** *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford. See especially chapters on 'Culture in an agrarian Society' and 'Social entropy and equality in Industrial society'.

¹³ This is explained in **Cox E and Cairns J (1990)**.

¹⁴ **Walvin J (1984)** *Passage to Britain*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, p 33.

¹⁵ **HMSO (1964)** *The Second Report by the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council*, Cmnd. 226, HMSO, London, as quoted in **Watson JKP (1988)** From Assimilation to Anti-racism: changing educational policies in England and Wales, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 9, no.6, p 537.

¹⁶ This impression has been gained after many conversations with first generation Asian immigrants.

¹⁷ My father has made me aware of this.

¹⁸ This has been my observation concerning my own Hindu community.

¹⁹ **Smith AD (1981)** *The Ethnic Revival*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

²⁰ This theme is sensitively elaborated upon in **Watson JL (ed.) (1977)** *Between Two Cultures: migrants and minorities in Britain*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

²¹ **Stewart A (1995)** Two Conceptions of Citizenship, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, no. 1.

²² **Brubaker (1992)** *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Harvard University Press, London, quoted by A. Stewart, in **Stewart A (1995)** Two Conceptions of Citizenship, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, no.1, p 65.

²³ **Stewart A (1995)** p 75. Quoted within the above: **Fraser N (1992)** Rethinking the Public Sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy, in **Calhoun C (ed.)** *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, London, MIT Press, p 130.

²⁴ **HMSO, Department of Education and Science (1971)** *The Education of Immigrants*, HMSO, London, p 120 .

²⁵ **HMSO, Department of Education and Science (1977)** *Education in Schools: a consultative document*, Cmnd 6869, HMSO, London, as quoted in **Watson JKP (1988)** p 543.

²⁶ For example see:

HMSO, Department of Education and Science (1977) *Education in Schools*.

HMSO, Department of Education and Science (1981) *The School Curriculum*, HMSO, London.

²⁷ For a philosophical introduction to phenomenology see **Husserl E (1859-1938) (1973)** *Cartesian Meditations: an introduction to phenomenology*, M. Nijhoff, The Hague. The reader is warned that the relationship between phenomenology and its educational namesake is esoteric.

²⁸ **Swann MS (1985)** *Education for all: the report of the committee for enquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups*, HMSO, London, as quoted in **Jones M (1986)** The Swann Report on 'Education for All: a critique, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 20, no. 1, p 107.

²⁹ **Swann MS (1985)** p 5, as quoted in **Watson JKP (1988)** p 538. For an overview of Lord Swann's concerns see: **Swann MS (1985)** *Education for all: a brief guide to the main issues of the report*, HMSO, London. For opinions on this influential document see **Haydon G (1987)** *Education for a Pluralist Society: philosophical perspectives on the Swann Report*, Bedford Way Papers, Institute of Education, London, and **Verma GK (1989)** *Education for all: a landmark in pluralism*, Falmer, London.

³⁰ **Swann MS (1985)** p 220, as quoted in **Watson JKP (1988)** p 531.

³¹ This State sponsorship of valuable minority cultures has been formulated in an explicitly political context by Joseph Raz:

Supporting valuable forms of life is a social rather than an individual matter . . . perfectionist ideals require public action for their viability. Anti-perfectionism in practice would lead not merely to a political stand-off from support for valuable conceptions of the good. It would undermine the chances of survival of many cherished aspects of our culture [**Raz J (1986)** *The Morality of Freedom*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p 162] .

Raz's argument is that certain aspects of culture require State support to avoid oblivion. Swann highlights these concerns in the context of ethnic cultures. Unless an effort is made to preserve minority cultures they will become extinct. To allow such demise would be to deny all our children a valuable source of options in life.

³² Banks JA, Bullivant BM and Butts RF are notable exceptions to this trend. See:

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Bullivant BM (1981) *The Pluralist Dilemma in Education: six case-studies*. George Allen and Unwin. Sydney.

(1984) *Pluralism: Cultural Maintenance and Evolution*. Avon: Multilingual Matters. Clevedon .

Banks J A (1986 a) *Multiethnic Education: theory and practice*, Allyn and Bacon. Boston.

(1986 b) *Multicultural Education: development, paradigms and goals*. in **Banks JA & Lynch J (ed.) (1986)** *Multicultural Education in Western Societies*. Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Eastbourne.

Butts RF (1980) *The Revival of Civic Learning*, Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, IN.

(1989) *The Civic Mission in Educational Reform: perspectives for the public and profession*. Hoover Institution Press. Stanford. CA.

³³ See the elegant studies: **Hay D (1990)** *Religious Experience Today: studying the facts*, Mowbray, London, and **Robinson E (1977)** *The Original Vision: a study of religious experience of childhood*, Religious Experience Unit, Manchester College, Oxford.

³⁴ **Sutherland S (1993)** Summary of keynote address, *Resource* (1993), Vol. 16, no. 1.

For a further example of such existential spiritualities see **Crawford M and Rossiter G (1996)** *The Secular Spirituality of Youth: implication for religious education*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 18, no. 3. For alternative representations of spiritual development see **Carr D (1995)** *Towards a Distinct Conception of Spiritual Education*, *Oxford Review of Education*, No 1, 1995, pp 83-98.

³⁵ **Sutherland S (1993)** Summary of keynote address. *Resource* (1993), Vol. 16, no. 1.

³⁶ See **Thatcher A (1991)** *A Critique of Inwardness in Religious Education*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 14, no. 1.

³⁷ **Gellner E (1974b)** *The Legitimation of Belief*, Cambridge University Press, London, pp 163-4.

³⁸ **Gellner (1994)** p 167.

³⁹ **Gellner (1994)** pp 168-9.

⁴⁰ **Gellner E (1974b)** pp 163-4.

⁴¹ Any religion offers its believers a complete world and way of thinking. While this must be respected, believers must reciprocate by respecting the political circumstances prevailing in the greater society. Liberal political systems do not impose on a citizen a comprehensive moral or religious philosophy, but they do expect a commitment to a style of cognition that has come to dominate our world - reason. Correspondingly, all people are now expected to conform to reasonable political regulations.

⁴² The following in no way seeks to devalue existing schools of religious education but only to enhance their utility in establishing and perpetuating a stable liberal society. For a general introduction to the current climate in religious education see:

Hull J (1991) *Mishmash: religious education in multicultural Britain: a study in metaphor*, CEM, Birmingham.

Grimmet M (1994) *Religious Education and the Ideology of Pluralism*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 16, no. 3 .

Hirst PH (1985) *Education and Diversity of Belief*, in **Felderhop MC (ed.) (1985)** *Religious Education in a Pluralist Society*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

⁴³ See the landmark work. **Cox E (1983)** *Problems and Possibilities for Religious Education*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

⁴⁴ The most resilient advocate for the vitality of contemporary religion is David Martin. See:

Martin D (1991) *The Secularisation Issue: prospect and retrospect*, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 42, no. 3 .

⁴⁵ This is not to say differences are trivial.

⁴⁶ **Rabbi Hugo Gryn (1991)** *A Jewish response*, in **Cox E & Cairns J (1990)** p 90. The work of John Hick voices a complementary hope for harmony and dialogue across diverse traditions. See:

Hick J (1974) (ed.) *Truth and Dialogue: the relationship between world religions*, Sheldon, London.

(1977) *God and the Universe of Faiths: essays in the philosophy of religion*, Fount, London.

⁴⁷ **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 166-7.

- ⁴⁸ See the conversation between father and son in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI.i.1-7:
Radhakrishnan S (1995, first edn. 1953) (trans) *The Principal Upaniṣads*, Indus-Harper Collins, India, pp 446-7.
- ⁴⁹ Naciketas probably feared that on seeing his return, his father would doubt the efficacy of the sacrifice.
- ⁵⁰ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I.i.20-1, **Radhakrishnan S (trans) (1995, first edn. 1953)** pp 603-4.
- ⁵¹ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I.iii.1-2, **Radhakrishnan S (trans) (1995, first edn. 1953)** p 621.
- ⁵² *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I.iii.3-9, **Radhakrishnan S (trans) (1995, first edn. 1953)** pp 623-4
- ⁵³ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I.iii.10-11, **Radhakrishnan S (trans) (1995, first edn. 1953)** pp 625-7.
- ⁵⁴ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* II.44, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans.) (1985) *Gītābhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya***, Ananthacarya Indological Institute, Bombay, p 47.
- ⁵⁵ *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* II.45, **Sampatkumaran MR (trans) (1985)** II.45, pp 46-9.
- ⁵⁶ **Rangacharya M and Varadaraja Aiyangar MB (trans.) (1988) *The Vedānta-sūtras with the Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya***, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, p 2.
- ⁵⁷ **Rawls J (1993)** p 203.
- ⁵⁸ **Rawls J (1993)** p 152.
- ⁵⁹ My father produced the phrase ‘codification of a traditional liberal charter’.
- ⁶⁰ **Rawls J (1993) *Political Liberalism***, Columbia University Press, New York, pp 140-1.
- ⁶¹ **Rawls J (1993)** pp 139-40.
- ⁶² **Rawls J (1993)** p 144.
- ⁶³ **Rawls J (1993)** p 134.
- ⁶⁴ **Rawls J (1993)** p 134.
- ⁶⁵ **Rawls J (1993)** p 142.
- ⁶⁶ **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 134-5.
- ⁶⁷ **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 58; 125-30; 136-43.
- ⁶⁸ **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 58; 125-6; 131-6.
- ⁶⁹ **Lipner JJ (1994)** p 190.
- ⁷⁰ **Lipner JJ (1994)** p 123.
- ⁷¹ **Lipner JJ (1994)** pp 165-95.
- ⁷² **Rawls (1993)** p 319.
- ⁷³ I feel that working from an entirely independent framework, J. Cairns was directing religious education along lines compatible with Rawls’ respect for ‘citizens’ essential interests as formed and encouraged by their social arrangements’. Cairns trains community educators who try to present religious education in a way that is sensitive to the pupils’ social arrangements. This process began with her work with the Ismaili community and continues with the Jews in the form of ResQuJE. Listening to Chief Rabbis and Professors through to uneducated housewives, she counsels them all on how their communal needs can be met within a prosperous multiculturalism.
(I must state that Cairns may or may not consider my juxtaposing of her work in the context of the ideologies of Rawls, Gellner and my own humble views appropriate. Nor should the IATaLIC programme be assumed to be in agreement with her own agenda, which is vast and beyond my comprehension. However, I have tried not to say anything that is too antagonistic to her own position. I have often presented my interpretation of her work to Cairns, who has never expressed any disapproval).
- ⁷⁴ **Rawls J (1993)** p 154.
- ⁷⁵ **Rawls J (1993)** p 200.
- ⁷⁶ This is the co-ordinating theme of **Gellner E (1994) *Reason and Culture***, Blackwell, Oxford.
- ⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant has famously elaborated on the centrality of both order and free-will to the human condition. See the touching works:
Kant I (1724-1804) (1958). *Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, **Weldon TD (trans.)** Clarendon press, Oxford.
(1964) *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. **Paton HJ**, Harper and Row, London .
Also see **Berlin I (1969) *Four Essays on Liberty***, Oxford University Press, London .
- ⁷⁸ Other political systems may work better in other places and at other times.

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

Entries are taken from the glossaries as found in Lipner JJ (1986) and Lipner JJ (1994).

Where an entry is not available in Lipner, contributions (*) are taken from Sir Monier Moiner-Williams (1899) *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi. Only the relevant descriptions have been reproduced and Victorian 'judgements' have been omitted.

- ācārya Learned teacher, master scholar.
- Advaita Non-duality; the philosophical-theological system of non-dualism in which ultimately there is but one reality, Brahman-Ātman, homogeneous, relationless and ineffable. From this viewpoint the pluralistic world is sublated away into the non-dualism of the Ultimate. The greatest *ācārya* of Advaita is Śaṅkara (c.Eighth century CE).
- ālvār One of a select group of innovative Tamiḷ *bhakti* saints of the Vaiṣṇavas (c. Sixth-ninth centuries CE).
- amśa Part or aspect.
- amśin Part-possessor.
- ānanda Bliss, the affective side of consciousness, and usually contrasted with *sukha*: (worldly) pleasure.
- apauruṣeya Non-personal.
- artha Object; meaning; something of substance, property; one of the *puruṣārthas*.
- āśrama Stage of life: traditionally four for the twice born (*dvija*) - brahmacharya, gārhaṣṭhya, vānaprasthya, saṁnyāsa.
- ātman The spiritual centre of an individual: self; spirit.
- avatāra Literally 'descent': in corporeal form of a/ the deity or a superhuman being/ liberated soul into *saṁsāra*.
- bhāṣya Written commentary.
- Bhedābheda Literally, difference/non-difference; philosophical-theological position maintaining some relation of identity-in-difference between the supreme being and finite reality.
- Brahman Literally, the 'Great One': the supreme spiritual being.
- dharma Code of right conduct socially and religiously; law, virtue. Order; code of practice; religion; characteristic.
- duḥkha Suffering; grief; usually paired with *sukha*.
- guṇa Constituent of *prakṛti*: quality.
- jīva Individual finite self (or *ātman*).
- jñā(-ātr, ātā) Knower.
- Jñāna Knowledge.
- kāma Desire; concupiscence; lust.
- karma Meta-empirical, personal deposit of (morally) meritorious and unmeritorious unenlightened action, to be experienced in *saṁsāra*. Acquired merit or demerit.
- karman Action, deed.
- karṭr (ṭā) Doer, performer of *karman*.
- mokṣa Liberation, salvation. Spiritual liberation from worldliness.
- prakṛiti In Sāṅkhya, the primordial, insentient principle of material, changeable being, comprising the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* - the counterpart of *puruṣa*; in Vedānta, *mutatis mutandis*, in essence the same. Non-spiritual cosmogonic principle comprised of the three *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
- Puruṣa (Male) person; spirit. * a man; (also with Nārāyaṇa) the primeval man as the soul and original source of universe (described in *Puruṣa Sūkta*); the personal and animating principle in men and other beings, or Soul of the universe (sometimes with *para*, *param* or *uttam*); Name of the divine or active principles from the minute portions of which the universe was formed.
- puruṣārtha Accredited goal in life.
- saṁpradāya Teaching or hermeneutic tradition/ denomination.
- saṁsāra The round of rebirth. Cycle of existence; flow of life.
- sanātana (sanātānist) Eternal; follower of *sanātana-dharma*.
- śarīra Body.
- śarīrin Ensouling self.

- śāstra (Often religious) authoritative text.
- satya Being; reality; truth.
- śeṣa Accessory.
- śeṣin Principal. (*śeṣin-śeṣa* relationship: 'This is, in all cases, the relation between principal and accessory: the accessory is that whose nature [*svarūpa*] it is to be given over to the tendency to render due glory to another; that other is the principal' [Vedārthasaṁgraha paragraph 121, trans. Lipner JJ in Lipner JJ (1986) p 131].
- smṛti Sacred text, authoritative in so far as it supports or illuminates *śruti*; Tradition; remembrance.
- Śrī * Name of Lakṣmī (as goddess of prosperity or beauty and wife of Viṣṇu, produced at the churning of the ocean.
The word Śrī is often used as an honorific prefix (= 'sacred', 'holy') to the names of deities and may be repeated two, three, or even four times to express excessive devotion, it is also used as a respectful title ('Reverend') to the names of eminent persons as well as of celebrated works and sacred objects.
- śruti Canonical scripture (i.e. the Vedas).
- sukha Pleasure, happiness; see *duḥkha* and *ānanda*.
- sūtra (Authoritative) aphorism or text of aphorisms.
- svabhāva * own condition or state of being natural or state or constitution, innate or inherent disposition, nature, impulse, spontaneity.
- svarūpa Proper form; form belonging to some entity *qua* that entity.
- Upaniṣad * (According to some) the sitting down at the feet of another to listen to his words (and hence secret knowledge given in this manner; but according to native authorities means 'setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit'); esoteric doctrine, secret doctrine, mysterious or mystical meaning, words of mystery; a class of philosophical writings (more than a hundred in number, attached to the Brahmana . . . their aim is the exposition of the secret meaning of the Veda, and they are regarded as the source of the Vedānta.
- Vaiṣṇava * Relating to belonging or devoted to or consecrated to Viṣṇu, worshipping Vishnu . . . the Vaiṣṇavas identify Viṣṇu rather than Brahmā and Śiva - with the supreme Being, and are exclusively devoted to his worship.
- Vallabhācārya * Name of a celebrated Vaiṣṇava teacher, he taught a non-ascetic view of religion and deprecated all self-mortification as dishonouring the body which contained a portion of the supreme Spirit. His followers in Bombay and Gujarat, and their leaders, are Mahā-rājas; they are called the Epicureans of India.
- Veda Canonical scripture (see *śruti*).
* Knowledge, true or sacred knowledge or lore, knowledge of ritual; Name of certain celebrated works which constitute the basis of the first period of Hindu religion (these works were primarily three, viz. 1. the Ṛg-Veda, 2. The Yajur-Veda and 3. Sāma -Veda.

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