

# PUPPETS OF FAITH

theory of communal strife

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BS Murthy

Puppets of Faith: Theory of Communal Strife  
A critical appraisal of Islamic faith, Indian polity 'n more  
BS Murthy

ISBN 81-901911-1-X

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Cover design by E. Rohini Kumar, GDC creative advertising (p) ltd., Hyderabad



F-9, Nandini Mansion,  
1-10-234, Ashok Nagar,  
Hyderabad – 500 020

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**Dedicated to -**

All those men, women and children, who ever suffered at the hands of bigots on account of the dogma of their faith, and to those sacrificial animals that become victims of religious superstition.

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### **Preface of Strife**

The lava of the volcano on which the world sits is the disaffection the *Musalms* nurse towards the *kafirs*. While its chemistry world over is the Islamic religious rigidity, in India it is compounded by the Hindu 'historical' hurt, aggravated by the Muslim-appeasing political ethos of the State. It's thus the Indian landscape is dotted with many of its earlier eruptions, but the one, in the wake of Godhra's 'burning train' in 2002, affected everyone as never before. That a fanatical band of *Musalms* should dare torch their *Ram Sevaks* in a railway coach of that *Sabarmati Express* seemed to the *Sangh Parivar* like Saladin crossing the *Lakshman Rekha*. And that the *dalits* too joined the hysterical Hindu mobs to burn their persons and property was beyond belief to the ghettoed *Musalms* nevermind that many among the rioters were felled by police bullets.

In that setting, the prospect of a new-found Hindu unity spoiling their electoral party was something galling to the pseudo-secular politicians, who have been icing their caste-divisive Hindu electoral cake with the cream of the consolidated Muslim votes. The self-serving fourth estate that meanwhile expanded its 'mass' base, courtesy the *idiot box*, saw in all this a godsend 'breaking news', enabling the Islamapologic columnists (Islamapologia is about condescending to descend to the *Musalms*) as well as Islam-naïve Hindu intellectuals to score a Brownie point or two into the Indian pseudo-secular goal. Not the ones to miss any opportunity for Hindu bashing, the ideologically afflicted left-liberals, as well as the half-read Hindu columnists, who ever shy as ever to stare at the Islamic fundamentalism straight in its face, had joined the anti-Hindutva bandwagon albeit by pushing the ghastly Godhra manifestation of Islamism under the secular carpet. Above all, the politicians of all 'secular' hues, alive as they are to every opportunity that presents itself to consolidate their Islamist constituencies, wouldn't let this pass; so, they were in no hurry to leave the scene, but continued to stoke the communal fires to keep the electorate warm.

But yet to sustain the public interest for the sake of its profitability, even as the media needed to name a villain and focus its spotlight on him, Sonia the Italian, who had long usurped the grand old party of India, invented the one for it in Narendra Damodardas Modi, the Chief Minister of the riot-torn Gujarat and dubbed him *maut ka*

*saudāgar* (merchant of death) unfairly though. It's another matter however, that the media-maligned Modi, after many trials and tribulations, was anointed by Indians as their *mukhiya* (head), after a Hindu *pushkara* (12 years), to become the harbinger of the much need change, overdue by a long shot that is. History is naughty for it first creates chaos and then brings about order.

But the problem with a problem is that until one admits that it exists, one cannot address it, and unless it is addressed, it persists. Make no mistake here is this *Musalman* disaffection for *kafirs* for the world to contend with, and the Hindu-Muslim discord is but its Indian variation. The pseudo-secular sophistry has it that when it comes to the basic tenets, all religions carry a premium on peace and all the believers seek social harmony but for a few misguided fanatical elements on either side of the communal divide.

However, sadly though, the ground reality is that to the average Hindu, it seems as if the *Musalman* suffer from the symptoms of Islamic fever caused by a diseased mind-set afflicted by the *sharia* fervor. The Muslim compliment to the Hindu is the contemptuous *kafir*, destined for hell and all that goes with it. Indeed, it is but owing to the glossing over of these entrenched misgivings by the pseudo-secular politicians, who cater to the Islamic whims of obscurantist *mullahs* and *moulvis* as a means of appeasing the *umma*, that the communal lava erupts periodically to hurt the tenuous Hindu-Muslim coexistence in India, ironically partitioned, based on the Islamic premise that the *umma* cannot coexist with the Hindus.

This book seeks to outline the background of the *Musalman-kafir* animosity on one hand, and the Hindu-Muslim communal divide on the other. It would seem that these are the products of one or more of the scriptural notions, religious dogmas, medieval history, and modern politics, or all put together. As one cannot understand man unless he understands his religion, all must be abreast of the basic religious tenets of the competing or conflicting faiths, more so the sectarian Semitic dispensations. Then, it would be revealing how the religious scriptures *per se* contribute to social discord and communal disaffection, and /or both. In the strife-torn world of ours, it's our grasp of this canvas of conflict that might eventually enable us to paint the picture of peaceful coexistence of the faithful of mutually contradicting belief systems.

Thus, the social evolution as well as the spiritual ethos of Hinduism and Buddhism on one hand and that of the Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the other are sketched here in its rudiments. Also, since man carries the historical deadwood, in spite of himself, the history that connects and disconnects the Abrahamic faiths, and that which divides the Hindu-Muslim emotions is pictured for one to appreciate the background of their unceasing strife.

After all, there is more to religion than that meets the eye, which is the overriding faith and feeling of the believers in its divine inerrancy. Given that the Islamic creed is more so a product of Muhammad's persona, the influence of his character in shaping the ethos of the *umma* has been analyzed. Won't the *Musalman* themselves concede that their endeavor would be to follow the straight path of Islam as earnestly as they could, as others, any way, have strayed onto the satanic path? Since it is this mind-set that makes the *Musalman* apart in the religious sense, how this could possibly govern the Muslim psyche is scanned with "I'm Ok – You're Ok" the famous work of Thomas A. Harris, with their religious creed from Roland E Miller's "Muslim Friends—Their Faith and Feeling" as the probe.

All this might not only enable the 'the others' to appreciate the Muslim constraints but also understand their own aberrations. Likewise, it could be hoped that the *Musalman* too would ponder over the apprehensions of the 'the others' as well as their own afflictions that are behind the *Musalman-kafir* confrontation.

## Chapter 1

### **Advent of Dharma**

As opposed to the purported revelation of the God's 'chosen path' to man through some messiah, which forms the basis of the Semitic faiths, the essence of Hinduism has been for one to adhere to his *dharma*, supposedly sanctified by their gods in communion with the *rishis* of yore. And *dharma*, though varies from man to man, *per se* is the common course for the salvation of the souls. It is this salient feature of its religious character that gives Hinduism its theological variety and philosophical edge, sorely lacking in the Semitic faiths, each moulded in the persona of its prophet, moreso the Mohammedan cult of Islam.

Well, in the Semitic religions, the essence of the faith is the implicit obedience to the All-Knowing Almighty, and strict compliance with the dogma enunciated by the messiah, ostensibly received from the Creator Himself. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the faithful to believe that 'the God' revealed to their prophet the right 'path of life' for them to unquestioningly follow so as to stand them in good stead on the Day of Judgment. Besides, it is the unique feature of the Semitic religious dogma in that the messiah is believed to be endowed with the power of intercession on behalf of the faithful on the Fateful Day. If anything, this precept seems more pronounced in the Christianity and Islam than in the Judaism. This unmistakably led to the Semitic habit of the faithful looking up to the messiah to help them attain salvation, or reach the paradise as the case may be. Intended or otherwise, the messiah became the fulcrum of the faith as well as the icon of the Abrahamic religious ethos. In the process, as it were, the Lord God of the religion got relegated to the background, nevermind the pretence to the contrary.

In such a religious setting, it was only time before the vulgar minds insensibly allowed the prophet to rule their religious space in the practice of the faith, supposedly founded by him at the behest of 'the God'. The Semitic idea of decrying idol-worship, ostensibly to let 'the God' not suffer any rivals, seems to have been diluted by the gentiles who embraced the Christianity in the medieval times. Of course, that was well after Moses' Hebrew herds worshipped that golden cow in the ancient times. At length, in the practice of the faiths, this 'no rival to the God' dogma turned out into an 'accent on the prophet' culture. But in the end, the Christian model insensibly found the savior sharing the ecclesiastical dais with the exalted preachers of his faith enshrined as Saints. And seemingly Islam wanted to avoid that ever happening to its prophet, and designed a mechanism to forever preclude that possibility driven by human proclivity. But in the process, the *Muslimans* came to condition themselves to revere their prophet rendering Islam into Mohammedanism in practice.

However, in the precepts of *sanātana dharma*, aka Hinduism, even as one's religious ethos is to seek God's favour for his *moksha*, in the philosophical sense he perceives Him as his own spiritual self, *aham brahmasmi brahma*. Conceptually thus, such a relationship between man and his maker, without the intermediary of a messiah, enables the worshipper experience a sense of oneness with the One worshipped. Hence, it is no blasphemy for a Hindu to tirade his God, strange though it may seem, when felt let down by Him.

Thus, going by the precept and practice, Hinduism cannot be deemed a dogma in the Semitic religious sense. Naturally, our enquiry should be directed at exploring the causative factors that should've induced this unique Hindu spiritual oneness with God, as against the Semitic religious projection of him as an overseeing 'n overwhelming outside power, to whose Will, believed to be conveyed to their prophet, the faithful should submit themselves regardless. Well, had the Lord 'God' stopped his divine

intervention in man's mundane affairs after bestowing the Ten Commandments to his chosen people through Moses, our worldly things would have been all different. But he not only thought it fit to alter his Will twice but also chose to communicate the contradicting things to his peoples, first through Jesus his Son and later Muhammad his Messenger, but for which the world wouldn't have been as strife-torn as it has been ever since.

It has often been suggested, unfairly though, that Hindus have no sense of history and thus failed to record their journey down the historical lane. However, what is not appreciated is that the grand libraries in Takshasila 'n Nalanda Universities, among their premier seats of learning of yore, which could have held the records of their history from the ancient times, were vandalized by the bigoted *Musalmans*. That Nalanda itself is believed to have housed over nine million books and other literary works, which sustained its arson by Bakhtiyar Khilji's for three months in 1,193 C.E., should give one an idea of the magnitude of the Hindu 'historical' loss.

Thus, bereft of their ancient history and having been fed thereafter with the unpalatable diet prepared for them by *Musalmans* and the Christians, who together ruled them for a millennium, Hindus have no clue about their past moorings. So, needless to say, the 'in vogue' Indian history is the victors' version of it about the vanquished that the Hindu left-liberals and the Islamic supremacists lend credence to, and what is worse; the Hindus are made to believe they were not even their native selves but the hybrids of Aryans who migrated to India from Eurasia in 1,500 B.C.E.

The moot point is whether the Aryans descended upon *Ila Varta* aka *Bharat Varsha* with all four Vedas in their kitty to rechristen it as *Arya Varta*. Had it been the case, then it is reasonable to assume that there would have been claimants for the Vedic legacy in Eurasia as well, but as it is not the case, it can be said without any contradiction that the theory of the Aryan migration is devoid of any base. Moreover, now the growing school of thought, supported by DNA analysis that India's populace is both indigenous as well as homogenous should debunk this theory invented by the Whites, probably to appropriate the 'admired' Hindu philosophical legacy to their race or as a ploy to divide the Hindus, they came to colonize, on racial lines for political ends and / or both. Even if Aryans did indeed migrate to India that would have been in their nomadic state and it was India's evolved environs that would have enabled them to acquire their intellectual sophistication that they displayed in the *Vedas*, *Brahmasutras*, and *Upanishads* in later years. And for the doubters, once out of silvery, haven't the Jews, in due course, transformed themselves into an intellectually formidable race on earth.

Be that as it may, for the final nail in the coffin of the doubtful theory is yet to be hammered home, we may still go along with it for the sake of analyzing the evolution of the Hindu social order, which may hold well even in the non-Aryan setting. So, an enquiry into the origins and the evolution of *sanātana dharma* in *Bharat Varsha* is warranted, however bearing in mind the discovery, of the presence of the Indus Valley Civilization at Mohen jo daro in Sind and Harappa in Punjab way back in 3,500 B.C.E, which is bound to address the question of the Aryan philosophical purity as well.

By the time of the said Aryan arrival, or the more probable emergence of a fair-skinned Indian tribe bearing the same name, or a similar sounding one (*Native namesake*), as the dominant force, even if the glorious ancient civilization were to be extinct by then, yet the remnants of its culture should have been still extant. After all, a civilization is but the cultural ethos of a people, and culture itself is a synthesis of the communal arrangement in a given society. Hence, it can be assumed that a stable polity would have been in existence in the ancient *Bharat Varsha*, probably dating back to 7,500 B.C.E. that is going by the recent discovery of a submerged city in the Gulf of Khambhat, off the coast of Gujarat.

*That being the case, the usage of 'Aryan' in this study should be taken as the generic term referring the people, be it aliens or natives, who came to shape the Hindu social and religious order.*

But, the Aryan cultural hegemony, over the life and times of all others, that anyway is to be expected, left no traces of the old social order for us to divine that is owing to the destruction of its archives by Muslim marauders and others. Thus, for all practical purposes, the prevalent communal code with caste as creed, apparently in vogue from the Vedic times, is the only known social mores of India's ancient past.

Though we might remain clueless about the ancient Indian social arrangement, yet, we may speculate about its probable influence on the evolution of the new way of life, under the aegis of the Aryans, which eventually became the Hindu way of life known as *sanātana dharma* in the times of yore and Hindutva in the current age. Just the same, as they were set to dominate the polity of the land that came into their hand, they could be expected to have been acquainted with the nuances of the cultural ethos of other native tribes.

Hence, it would be interesting to speculate as to how the Aryans should've subdued the native majority, without a fight, only to absorb their culture in the polity they evolved. It seems probable, notwithstanding their mental prowess exemplified by the civilization of Mohenjo daro and Harappa; those people might not have been martial races. Added to that, they should have been either depressed economically or depleted in numbers or even disjointed politically, could be owing to famines, floods or fights among themselves occasioned by petty jealousies of the communes. Whatever, they obviously were unable or unwilling to offer any significant resistance to the incoming Aryans or their Native namesakes, as the case may be; also, the latter's adventurous spirit should have overawed them into surrendering to that emergent force. In support of this presumption, in all of Vedic literature, we have no account of any battle royal fought by them with the other inhabitants. Well, the battle of Mahābhārata was fought some 1,500 years before these newbies are said to have arrived on the scene in the ancient land. Besides, won't the latter-day Indian history – of Islamic invasions and British colonization - vouch for this native characteristic?

Whatever it was, the new lords became the overlords of all they purveyed in the land they took pride in as *Arya Varta*, which they came to believe as their *karma bhōmi*. It goes without saying that these newbies would have needed a social structure in place to dominate the others they subdued. It was thus, the colour of the skin could have played its part in stratifying the society, and it is not without significance that as they would have been fair-skinned, they made the concept of caste as *varna*, which in Sanskrit means colour. The subdued people, probably a mix of brown and black, could not have measured up to their fair skin, and thus in the psychological sense, were unequal to them to start with. Why wouldn't the Whitemen's psychological dominance of the physically far more endowed African blacks in modern times, so much so that they could enslave them, support this proposition? Just the same, on account of the real politick; the newbies could not have afforded to keep the others out of their socio-cultural orbit, and yet, it was imperative for them to preclude any politico-cultural threat from them as well. It was to serve these ends that they might have looked for ways and means for keeping the others in an extended social fold, albeit at arm's length. And the result of this newbie's political compulsion could have been behind the evolution of the caste system, so unique to the human experience.

Needless to say, an organized culture, as the one available to the native tribes, would have had some class structure of its own. The imperative for the newbies would have been to devise a new social order, without disturbing the old, in a way to accommodate all the others at the lower ends; needless to say, placing themselves at the acme of the

new social pyramid they built. Thus, the native brown-skinned would have been 'casted away' as *vaisyas* and *sudras* in that order, depending upon their social status or occupation, and / or both. It's thus; the caste system so devised by them to integrate themselves into the polity, while dividing the others from one another, was brilliant though cynical. With the newbies' social comfort zone thus drawn, the unfortunate blacks amongst the natives were dubbed as *antyaja* only to be eventually relegated as untouchables.

To enforce their caste law as law of the land, the newbies would have earmarked muscle-men amongst them as bouncers, who in time came to be christened as *kshatriyas*. At some length, however, their intellectual class might have wanted to institutionalize their social supremacy for all times to come, and it was towards this end that they posited themselves as Brahmans at the apex of the caste structure, which they helped build over the ruins of the then prevailing social orders. And in order to perpetuate the caste hierarchy thus evolved, the Brahmans envisioned the concept of *swadharma*, which, being caste specific, not only defined the caste ethos but also drew the caste boundaries. It was thus, Brahmans, as a caste, came to be the shepherds of the Hindu philosophy and culture for centuries to come.

So, it were these very Brahmans who gifted Sanskrit to the world, whose incredible beauty makes the Hindus believe that it is the *deva bhasha*, the language of the gods. Hence, it's no wonder that the British Indologist, Sir William Jones, a Greek and Latin scholar, who mastered it as well, should have remarked that, 'Sanskrit is of wonderful structure, more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either'.

Nowhere in the annals of human history that a small group of people, by the privilege of birth or the faculties of mind, and / or both, came to monopolize the soul of a people, the spirit of a culture and the destiny of a society for so long as the Brahmans in Bharat did. Only a unique sense of their destiny, or the arrogance of their perceived superiority, should've enabled the Brahmans to eventually posit themselves as angels on earth, endowed with, lo the power to control the gods themselves, well, with the mantras, composed by them in the language of the gods at that. And that is what *Nārāyana Upanishad* expostulates as follows:

*daiva dēnam jagat sarvam, / mantrā dēnantu daivatam,  
tan mantram brāhmanādēnam, / brāhmano mama dēvata.*

It's on god that hinges all / Mantras rein in that godhood  
Controlled are those by Brahmans / Making them our own angels.

In the end, it was this Brahmanical arrogance that brought about the degeneration of the expansive *sanātana dharma*, evolved by their forebears, into the narrow Brahmanism, exemplified by *swadharma*, to the eternal hurt of Hinduism. However, to be fair to them, it's not that they committed any fraud on the gullible public on that score, for they truly believed that the gods could indeed be appeased with their *mantras*. Besides, they felt it was their destiny to intercede between gods and man for the well-being of the latter, and thus strived to equip themselves to fulfill the unique role their *swadharma* ordained them.

So, for the supposed benefit of mankind, they devised appropriate *mantras* to propitiate the gods for their rewarding man in his every endeavor. To help serve the public cause, they led a spiritually righteous life that involved a high degree of self-discipline as well as self-denial. Besides, for their *mantras* to be effectual on the gods, they strived unremittingly to attain the required chastity in the intonation of their recitation. Be that as it may, whatever could be the effect of the Vedic *mantras* on the



gods; the sheer lyrical beauty of their composition has the power to enthrall all Hindus, nay, every listener for that matter.

Thus, in a unique phenomenon, their intellectual quality and a righteous lifestyle, gave the Brahmans an unmatched spiritual supremacy, which combined with the credulity of the public, enabled them to retain their premier status in the Indian society till very recently. However, their methodology for monopoly over the gods curiously led to a religious system that helped as well as harmed the Hindu society in the end. In the Hindu system of heavenly rewards, the devout can seek them at their own dwellings, of course aided by the Brahmans, who through their *mantras*, strive to invoke gods' blessings on them albeit for a fee. It was thus, in the Brahmanical scheme of worship, there was no felt need for a temple for their gods as such.

However, the temple with its presiding deity in the sanctum sanctorum was a latter-day innovation in the *puranic* period and even then; the periodic visits of the Hindus to temples are but supplementary to their ceremonies in their homes. Thus to this day, every Hindu home, if not a *pooja room* as such, has an earmarked space for private worship that is treated as a 'temple' by the family. And the Brahman *purohits* continue to perform numerous Vedic rituals at individual residences, designed for the benefit of the believers' prosperity on earth and happiness in the heaven. Even in the temples, it is through *mantras* that the Brahman priests seek to invoke the deity's blessings on the thronging devotees.

It is interesting to see how this unique religious model virtually frees the non-priestly classes that include the majority of the Brahmans as well, from the obligation of religious education as well as a prayer regimen. All this enables the rest of the population to improve the productivity of the nation, assured of their own salvation, albeit of a lesser station. On the negative side, it distanced the masses from the nuances of Hindu spirituality, and that kept them ignorant and illiterate, religiously and otherwise too. And it is this shortcoming of the Brahmanical religious model that fails to address the theological grooming of the illiterate masses, which rendered, and still does, the Hindu caste fringes susceptible for religious conversion into the alien faiths of the Christianity and Islam. And the proselytizing zealots from both these faiths fail not to exploit this grand Hindu religious fault line by means fair and foul.

It is one thing for the newbies to have established socio-cultural hegemony over Bharat, and it was another, given their numerical minority, to avoid their social disintegration in the long run. As would be seen later on in this book, it was this very circumstance that compelled Muhammad to shape his creed of Islam the way it was shaped. The newbies too would have been alive to the nature of man to covet other man's spouse, while being possessive about his own mate, and thus wanting to possess the others' women, their men would have been constrained to detain their fair sex from succumbing to the charms of the other male folks. It was thus, they would have come up with a code that served them both ways.

While allowing the union of a higher caste man with a lower caste woman in *anuloma*, through *pratiloma* they strived to ensure that cupid's 'other' arrows wouldn't strike the newbie women. And to deal with the recalcitrant of their stock, motherly sentiment was brought in as a possible hurdle to deter them from opting for *pratiloma*, especially, with the lowly men, in view of which it was decreed that the offspring of a newbie woman through a union with a *sudra* would be jeopardized as *chandāla*, as an outcast. It would have dawned on the Brahmans, sooner than later, that for its effective adherence, it would be imperative to back the social code with divine sanction as well. It is thus, the *Manu Dharma Sāstra*, with its adverse features that are inimical to the good of women as such, should have been the outcome of their compulsion to deter their females from coveting the other males.

It is inconceivable to imagine that a well-evolved ancient civilization, such as the Mohenjo-daro one, should be bereft of a religious custom, if not a theological creed as such. The Brahman intellect would have divined that the dogma or prejudice of the others brooks no abrogation; so it is realistic to assume that in fashioning the Vedic rituals, if not their *mantras*, the Brahmans should have co-opted, or modified, the others' mores to suit their tastes or fancies, and / or both. This could be the reason why the ancient folklores of *Ramayana* and *Mahābhārata* would've been adopted as Hindu *purānās*. In this context, it is relevant to note that both Rama and Krishna, the *puranic* heroes, respectively of those epics, were indeed dark skinned and thus were not from among the ranks of the newbies.

Likewise, the ongoing debate about the much repeated reference to *samudra*, the sea, in the Rig Veda, the first scriptural composition of the newbies, apparently a landlocked people, yet to venture south of the Vindhyas from the Gangetic plains to have reached a beach, would suggest the Indo-Dravidian influence on the newbies' thought-process and religious practices. Hence, they would have co-opted the social mores and the religious symbols of the others, maybe such as the hallowed *Om* and the sacred *Swastika*, for their appeal or as an expedient, and /or both. Sadly though, in the modern times, Adolf Hitler, in pursuit of the Aryan hegemony over the Anglo-Saxon races, made the *swastika* infamous by giving it an artistic turn and a satanic twist.

Nevertheless, having accepted the inferior social status, for their part, the other natives would have had no difficulty in embracing the emerging doctrine of the newbies that accommodated their own religious symbols, if not their dogmas. This probably was the great Brahman religious coup that enabled their dominance of the Indian society for millennia to come.

## [Chapter 2](#)

### ***God's quid pro Quo***

In what could have been the first irony of human history, at the very time when the Aryans / Namesakes were subjugating the free people in Bharat, the Jews, in slavery, were enabled by 'the God' to escape from Egypt, the land that enslaved them, that too by parting the sea to make way for them.

The God, as though in reciprocity, demanded of the Jews to submit to His Will, made explicit in the Torah; and having gained their servitude, as if to massage their ego, He proclaimed them as His Chosen People. Nevertheless, to rein them in, He imposed a code of conduct upon them through the Laws He revealed to Moses, the Prophet chosen for that purpose.

Besides, as an incentive to their compliance with those harsh Laws, 'the God' promised to lead them into Israel, the 'Promised Land' for them. Just the same, the All Knowing God felt all that might not be enough to ensure an everlasting obedience and the abiding gratitude of His Chosen People; and thus, as though to keep the flock all to Himself, he warned them of their destruction if they ever worshipped other gods.

Hence, it is imperative to understand the nature of Jehovah, the Judaic God, and the tone and tenor of the Mosaic Laws to appreciate the life and times of the Semitic people in that distant past.

The Ten Commandments, with the God's preamble, read thus:

I am Jehovah your god who liberated you from your slavery in Egypt.

1. You may worship no other god than me.

2. You shall not make yourselves any idols: no images of animals, birds, or fish. You must never bow or worship it in any way; for I, the Lord your God, am very possessive. I will not share your affection with any other God!

And when I punish people for their sins, the punishment continues upon the children, grand children, and great-grand children of those who hate me; but I lavish my love upon thousands of those who love me and obey my commandments.

3. You shall not use the name of Jehovah your god irreverently, nor use it to swear to a falsehood. You will not escape punishment if you do.

4. Remember to observe the Sabbath as a holy day. Six days a week are for your daily duties and your regular work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest before the Lord your God. On that day you are to do no work of any kind, nor shall your son, daughter, or slaves - whether men or women - or your cattle or your houseguests. For in six days the Lord made the heaven, earth, and sea, and everything in them, and rested the seventh day; so he blessed the Sabbath day and set it aside for rest.

5. Honour your father and mother, that you may have a long, good life in the land the Lord your God will give you.

6. You must not murder.

7. You must not commit adultery.

8. You must not steal.

9. You must not lie.

10. You must not be envious of your neighbour's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or want to own his slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else he has.

In the New Stone Tablets that He gave to Moses, Jehovah further implores the Jews thus:

“Be very, very careful never to compromise with the people there in the land where you are going, for if you do, you will soon be following their evil ways. Instead, you must break down their heathen altars, smash the obelisks they worship, and cut down their shameful idols. For you must worship no other gods, but only Jehovah, for he is a God who claims loyalty and exclusive devotion.

No, do not make a peace treaty of any kind with the people living in the land, for they are spiritual prostitutes, committing adultery against me by sacrificing to their gods. If you become friendly with them and one of them invites you to go with him and worship his idol, you are apt to do it. And you would accept their daughters, who worship other gods, as wives for your sons – and then your sons would commit adultery against me by worshipping their wives' gods. You must have nothing to do with idols.”

Having thus laid the moral code of conduct for His Chosen People, besides revealing the religious regimen of Judaism, Jehovah advanced the enabling provisions of conformity that came to be regarded as the 'Laws of Moses'. Understandably, these Laws lay down the prescriptions and proscriptions intended by 'the God' for man in the journey of his life 'here'. What is more, and inexplicably at that, the Mosaic Laws detail the ordained punishments based on 'eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth' jurisprudence.

As the Mosaic Laws reveal, Jehovah comes out as an Impersonal Being, content Himself at punishing the wrongdoers in a legalistic fashion, rather than concerning Himself with imparting spiritual guidance to the Jews, His Chosen People, for their salvation. Nonetheless, as the following passages from the Torah illustrate, when it comes to His own relationship with them, Jehovah appears to be a very personal and demanding God.

“You must not worship the gods of the neighbouring nations, for Jehovah your God who lives among you is a jealous God, and his anger may rise quickly against you, and wipe you off the face of the earth. You must not provoke him and try his patience as you did when you complained against him at Massah. You must actively obey him in everything he commands. Only then will you be doing what is right and good in the Lord’s eyes. If you obey him, all will go well for you, and you will be able to go in and possess the good land which the Lord promised your ancestors. You will also be able to throw out all the enemies living in your land, as the lord agreed to help you do.’

“In the years to come when your son asks you, ‘What is the purpose of these laws which the Lord our God has given us? you must tell him, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with great power and mighty miracles – with terrible blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. We saw it all with our own eyes. He brought us out of Egypt so that he could give us this land he had promised to our ancestors. And he has commanded us to obey all of these laws and to reverence him so that he can preserve us alive as he has until now. For it always goes well with us when we obey all the laws of the Lord our God.”

The rewards that Jehovah accords to His Chosen People in exchange for their obedience are all materialistic as stipulated in the Torah thus:

“You must obey all the commandments of the Lord your God, following his directions in every detail, going the whole way he has laid out for you; only then will you live and lead prosperous lives in the land you are to enter and possess.”

“If you obey all of my commandments, I will give you regular rains, and the land will yield bumper crops, and the trees will be loaded with fruit long after the normal time! And grapes will still be ripening when sowing time comes again. You shall eat your fill, and live safely in the land, for I will give you peace, and you will go to sleep without fear. I will chase away the dangerous animals. You will chase your enemies; they will die beneath your swords. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you, ten thousand! You will defeat all of your enemies. I will look after you, and multiply you, and fulfill my covenant with you. You will have such a surplus of crops that you won’t know what to do with them when the new harvest is ready! And I will live among you, and not despise you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people. For I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would be slaves no longer; I have broken your chains so that you can walk with dignity.”

“When the Lord brings you into the Promised Land, as he soon will, he will destroy the following seven nations, all greater and mightier than you are: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Cannanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites.”

Equally significantly, the punishments of disregard too are mundane to the core.

“But if you will not listen to me or obey me, but reject my laws, this is what I will do to you: I will punish you with sudden terrors and panic, and with tuberculosis and burning fever; your eyes shall be consumed and your life shall ebb away; you will sow your crops in vain, for your enemies will eat them. I will set my face against you and you will flee before your attackers; those who hate you will rule you; you will even run when no one is chasing you!”

“And if you still disobey me, I will punish you seven times more severely for your sins. I will break your proud power and make your heavens as iron, and your earth as bronze. Your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its crops, nor your trees their fruit.”

“And if even then you will not obey me and listen to me, I will send you seven times

more plagues because of your sins. I will send wild animals to kill your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your numbers so that your roads will be deserted.”

“And if even this will not reform you, but you continue to walk against my wishes, then I will walk against your wishes, and I, even I, will personally smite you seven times for your sin. I will revenge the breaking of my covenant by bringing war against you. You will flee to your cities, and I will send a plague among you there; and you will be conquered by your enemies. I will destroy your food supply so that one oven will be large enough to bake all the bread available for ten entire families; and you will still be hungry after your pittance has been doled out to you.”

“And if you still won’t listen to me or obey me, then I will let loose my great anger and send you seven times greater punishment for your sins. You shall eat your own sons and daughters, and I will destroy the altars on the hills where you worship your idols, and I will cut down your incense altars, leaving your dead bodies to rot among your idols; and I will abhor you. I will make your cities desolate, and destroy your places of worship, and will not respond to your incense offerings. Yes, I will desolate your land; your enemies shall live in it, utterly amazed at what I have done to you.”

“I will scatter you out among the nations, destroying you with war as you go. Your land shall be desolate and your cities destroyed. Then at last the land will rest and make up for the many years you refused to let it lie idle; for it will lie desolate all the years that you are captives in enemy lands. Yes, then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths! It will make up for the rest you didn’t give it every seventh year when you lived upon it.”

“And for those who are left alive, I will cause them to be dragged away to distant lands as prisoners of war, and slaves. There they will live in constant fear. The sound of a leaf driven in the wind will send them fleeing as though chased by a man with a sword; they shall fall when no one is pursuing them. Yes, though none pursue they shall stumble over each other in flight, as though fleeing in battle, with no power to stand before their enemies. You shall perish among the nations and be destroyed among your enemies. Those left shall pine away in enemy lands because of their sins, the same sins as those of their fathers.”

“But at last they shall confess their sins and their fathers’ sins of treachery against me. (Because they were against me, I was against them, and brought them into the land of their enemies.) When at last their evil hearts are humbled and they accept the punishment I send them for their sins, then I will remember again my promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will remember the land (and its desolation). For the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as it lies desolate. But then at last they shall accept their punishment for rejecting my laws and for despising my rule. But despite all they have done, I will not utterly destroy them and my covenant with them, for I am Jehovah their God. For their sakes I will remember my promises to their ancestors, to be their God. For I brought their forefathers out of Egypt as all the nations watched in wonder. I am Jehovah.”

Thus, in essence, it seems that the religion of Judaism emphasizes the duty of the Jews to follow the Will of their God, in gratitude for His benevolence of their deliverance from slavery. It was this remarkable covenant of Jehovah, which made them His Chosen People that should have enabled them to brave the pogroms in alien lands for centuries with unrivalled forbearance. Besides, the underpinnings of reward and punishment regimen that their faith inculcates in their consciousness would have served the Jewish people sustain hope in the face of adversity for millennia.

On the other hand, Jehovah, for His part, kept His word, first by punishing the Jews as he said He would, and then, in the end, gave them the Promised Land, also as promised, though as Golda Meir once quipped “Moses dragged us for 40 years through the desert

to bring us to the one place in the Middle East where there was no oil". Whatever, on the basis of the executed threats and fulfilled promises, and going by the recorded history of religions, the Judaism of Jehovah has a claim for authenticity amongst the faiths of the world. Thus, as Jehovah settled scores with the Jews 'here' itself, won't the proposition be valid that, after all, there could be no Hindu *swarga*, no Christian Paradise and no Islamic Hereafter for man to contend with?

And inexplicably, Jehovah, in His Islamic avatar as Allah, revealed to Muhammad that the 'Hereafter' and not 'here' is all that matters for the new set of believers. And in times to come, the propensity of the zealot *Muslimans* to put their lives on line to make it to the appetizing paradise has become the scourge of mankind 'here'.

### Chapter 3

#### **Pyramids of Wisdom**

It would be interesting to speculate what would have been the religious tenor of the Hinduism and its early derivatives, the Jainism and the Buddhism, if only the tribes of India were equal to the task of thwarting the Aryan domination in their individual domains. Would it not have brought about a confrontation between the Aryan gods and the deities of the others? Wouldn't have Indra, the Aryan spearhead of a god, forced them into a covenant with Him to destroy the alien gods of the rest of the Indian tribes? Fortunately for the Hindu spirituality and the Indian philosophy, that was not the case. Though Indra spared the local deities of his wrath, his wards were less considerate to the souls of the very land they coveted.

As the brawn of the newbies should've successfully relegated all other tribes, save those from the hilly habitats - they were out of reach, and, besides, would have been beyond their interest - into subordinate castes, their Brahman brain got into the act of drafting the *dharma* in the Rig Vedic mould. However, it was only time before the Aryan's political conquest of the *Bharata Khanda* was conceptualized through *aswamedha yāga* of Yajur Veda. At length, when the *kshatriyas* were on the conquering course, the Brahmans went about composing two more Vedas - *sāma* and *adharva* - to define the spiritual tone of *sanātana dharma*, which in latter-days evolved into Hinduism.

In due course, the breadth and depth of the Brahman intellect, nourished in the comfort of the Indian climes, came to shape, first the *Brahmasutras*, and then the *Upanishads*, as adjuncts to the four Vedas. And that fashioned the Hindu Vedanta of yore; but, the culmination of the Brahman thought process and the crowning glory of the Hindu philosophy is the *Bhagvad-Gita*, aka *Gita*. The intellectual achievements of the Brahmans have so fascinated the modern philosophers and scholars of the West that they went eloquent about them.

Jawaharlal Nehru thus compiled the eulogies of Western scholars about the Hindu intellectual achievements, symbolized by the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagvad-Gita* in 'The Discovery of India', published by Oxford University Press.

"Schopenhauer felt that "from every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit.... In the whole world there is no study.... So beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads.... (They) are products of the highest wisdom... It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people." And again: "the study of the Upanishads has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

"Writing on this, Max Mueller says: Schopenhauer was the last man to write at random, or to allow himself to go into ecstasies over so-called mystic and inarticulate thought. And I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say that I share his enthusiasm for the

Vedanta, and feel indebted to it for much that has been helpful to me in my passage through life.”

In another place he says: “The Upanishads are the... sources of ... the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme.”

Max Mueller’s wonderment about the Upanishads seems unending going by what Nehru quoted:

“I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedantic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains - so simple, so true, if once understood.”

“Formulating his admiration for the Hindu thought and culture, he further said that,” Nehru continued, “there is, in fact, an unbroken continuity between the most modern and the most ancient phases of Hindu thought, extending to over more than three thousand years. If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow – in some parts a very paradise on earth – I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant - I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life - again I should point to India”

“Romain Rolland, who followed him, was no less eloquent: “If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.”

“G. W. Russell, the Irish poet, privy to the power of inspiration said about the inspiring value of the ancient Hindu scriptures: “Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau among moderns have something of this vitality and wisdom, but we can find all they have said and much more in the grand sacred books of the East. The Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads contain such godlike fullness of Wisdom on all things that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be sure.”

Given the above, it would be imperative to have a peep, first into the *Upanishads*, and then into the *Gita*, that fascinated so many modern intellectuals of the East and the West alike. It could be said, ironically so, that the Brahman intellectual quest that was exemplified by the *gāyatri mantra* of the Rig Veda, 3.62.10, which forms the Hindu daily prayer was in fact composed by sage Vishvāmitra, the *kshatriya rishi*, and it reads thus:

*Om bhūr bhuvah svaḥ / tatsaviturvareṇyam /  
bhargo devasya dhīmahi / dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt*

“We meditate on the Spiritual Splendor of that supreme and Divine reality, source of the physical, astral and celestial spheres of existence. Allow that divine being supreme to illuminate our intellect, so that we can realize the supreme Truth.”

The following excerpts are from ‘*The Upanisads*’ translated by Valerie J. Roebuck that was published by Penguin Books India, expostulate some of the many facets of Hindu knowledge thus:

“OM. That is full; this is full;  
Fullness comes from fullness:  
When fullness is taken from fullness,  
Fullness remains.  
They who worship ignorance  
Enter blind darkness:  
They who delight in knowledge  
Enter darkness, as it were, yet deeper.  
Whoever knows knowledge and ignorance-  
Both of them, together -  
By ignorance crosses over death  
And by knowledge reaches immortality.  
They who worship non-becoming  
Enter blind darkness:  
They who delight in becoming  
Enter darkness, as it were, yet deeper.  
Whoever knows becoming and destruction -  
Both of them, together -  
By destruction crosses over death  
And by becoming reaches immortality.  
From the unreal lead me to the real.  
From the darkness lead me to light.”

Now, contrast this with the Torah line where the God forbids Adam to eat the fruit from the Tree of Conscience for that would open his eyes, and thus makes him aware of right and wrong, good and bad! And yet, it is the Jews and the Christians, though not the *Muslims*, of the Semitic religious dispensations that have reached the heights of science and technology in modern times! And sadly, the Hindus, who once hovered about the intellectual horizon of the world, have sunk into the depths of collective ignorance and prejudice for reasons not far to seek.

However, the most fascinating aspect of the Upanishads, as expostulated in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, composed around 700 B.C.E, is its theorization that man himself was the creator of the gods in heaven, and the *dharma* on earth, in more ways than one.

The following excerpts from Valerie’s *The Upanisads* elaborate upon this fascinating theory:

“In the beginning this was self (*atman*), in the likeness of a person (*purusa*). Looking round he saw nothing but himself (*atman*). First he said, ‘I am!’ So the name ‘I’ came to be. Even now, when someone is addressed, he first says, ‘it is I’, and then speaks whatever other name he has. Since before (*purva*) all this, he burnt up (*us-*) all the evils from everything, he is *purusa*. Whoever knows this, burns up anyone who wants to be before him.

He was afraid: so when alone one is afraid. Then he realized, “there is nothing else but me, so why am I afraid?” then his fear departed. For why should he be afraid? Fear arises from a second.

He had no pleasure either:

So when alone one has no pleasure. He desired a companion. He became as large as a woman and a man embracing. He made that self split (*pat -*) into two: from that husband (*pati*) and wife (*patni*) came to be. Therefore Yajnavalkya used to say, ‘In this respect we two are each like a half portion.’ So this space is filled by a wife. He coupled with her, and from that human beings were born.



She realized:

“How can he couple with me when he begot me from himself? Ah, I must hide!” She became a cow, the other a bull, and so he coupled with her. From that, cattle were born. She became a mare, the other a stallion; she became a she-donkey, the other a he-donkey: and so he coupled with her. From that, solid-hoofed animals were born. The one became a nanny-goat, the other a billy-goat; the one became an ewe, the other a ram: and so he coupled with her. From that, goats and sheep were born. In that way he created every pair, right down to the ants.

He knew: “I am creation, for I created all this.” So he became creation. Whoever knows this, come to be in this, his creation.”

“When they say, “Sacrifice to that one!”, “Sacrifice to that one!”- some god or other, that is his varied creation, and he himself is all the gods.

Then he created from seed whatever is moist, and that is Soma. All this is just food and the eater of food. Soma is food, and Agni is the eater of food.

This is the higher creation of Brahma, since he created gods who are better than he: and also because, being mortal, he created immortals, it is his higher creation. Whoever knows this, comes to be in this, his higher creation.”

And here is another of the many an Upanishadic creativity.

“In the beginning, *brahman* was all this, just one. Being just one, it was not complete. So it created over itself a better form, royalty (*ksatra*), those who are royalty among the gods: Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrtyu, and Isana. Therefore there is nothing higher than royalty: therefore at a king’s anointing the Brahmana sits below the Ksatriya and he confers this honour on royalty alone.

Brahman is the source (*yonī*) of royalty. So even if a king attains the highest state, in the end he takes refuge in the priesthood (*brahman*) as his own source. So whoever harms the priesthood attacks his own source: he becomes more evil, like one who has harmed a superior.

He still was not complete. So he created the people (*vis*), those kinds of gods who are named in groups: the Vasus, the Rudras, the Adityas, the Visvedevas and the Maruts.

He still was not complete. So he created the Sudra class, Pusan. This earth is Pusan, for it nourishes (*pus*) all this, whatever there is.

He still was not complete. So he created over himself a better form, *dharma*. *Dharma* is the royalty of royalty, so there is nothing higher than *dharma*. Through *dharma* a weaker man overcomes a stronger one, as though through a king. *Dharma* is truth: so they say of one who speaks truth, “He speaks *dharma*”, or of one who speaks *dharma*, “he speaks truth”. Both are the same.

So there were *brahman* (priesthood), *ksatra* (royalty), *vis* (the people) and *sudra* (the labourer). *Brahman* came into being among the gods through Agni; as a Brahmana among human beings; as a Ksatriya through the Ksatriya: as a Vaisya through the Vaisya: and as a Sudra through the Sudra. So folk seek a world among the gods in Agni, and a world among human beings in the Brahmana, for *brahman* came into being through these two forms.”

As against this, the manner in which the God created the world, as propounded by Judaism and subscribed by the Christianity, is narrated in the Torah thus:

“There were no plants or grain sprouting up across the earth at first, for the Lord God hadn’t sent any rain; nor was there anyone to farm the soil. (However, water welled up from the ground at certain places and flowed across the land.)

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