77. Ibid., vol. 6, p. 13.
78. Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 82–3.
79. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 260–1. This was said in 1968.

AJAY SKARIA

‘No Politics without Religion’
Of Secularism and Gandhi

The essence of superstition is that it isn’t amenable to reason.

—COMMANDER DALGLIESH

In both cases (re-legare and re-ligare), what is at issue is indeed a persistent bond that-bonds itself first and foremost to itself. A resistance or a reaction to dis-junction. To absolute alterity.

—JACQUES DERRIDA

Enlightenment is mythic fear turned radical.

—THEODOR ADORNO and MAX HORKHEIMER

If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infiniteness of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field—that is, language and a finite language—excludes totalization. This field is in effect that of play, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field, as in the classical hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions.

—JACQUES DERRIDA

PARADOX

A striking paradox marks Gandhi’s arguments: he insists both that there can be ‘no politics without religion’, and that the post-Independence Indian state should be ‘secular’. In November 1924, for example, Gandhi wrote a piece in Young India announcing that he had ‘[a]fter much prayer, after much heart-searching, and not without fear and trembling’ decided to accept the invitation to preside at the next session of the Indian National Congress. But, he added:
I must not deceive the country. For me there is no politics without religion (dharmaṁ bhinn raajniti)—not the religion of the superstitious [vahem] and the blind [amarthvādhi]. Religion that hates and fights, but the universal [vishwavyaapi] Religion of Toleration [sahisnuta]. Politics without morality [niti] is a thing to be avoided.6

After reviewing the considerable challenges he would face as President, he ended his piece by remarking: ‘May God help us all’. But by the 1940s, Gandhi himself explicitly affirmed a secular vision of the state over and again. In a conversation with a Christian missionary in 1946, Gandhi insisted:

If I were a dictator, religion and State would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it. The State would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody’s personal concern!7

And in a similar vein he argued after Independence:

After all, we have formed the Government for all. It is a ‘secular’ government, that is, it is not a theocratic government, rather, it does not belong to any particular religion. Hence it cannot spend money on the basis of communities. For it, the only thing that matters is that all are Indians. Individuals can follow their own religions. I have my religion and you have yours to follow.8

And in February 1947 he argued in a letter published in the Harijan:

I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from State-aided religion and State Church. A society or a group, which depends partly or wholly on State aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name.9

It is tempting to think that his formulations about secularism and about religion belong to different periods in his life, and that while he insisted till the 1930s or early 1940s that there could be ‘no politics without religion’, he came to affirm secularism as Hindu–Muslim violence spiralled upwards in the 1940s. There is certainly something to this argument, for it is only by the late 1940s that he insists on separating religion and state. Yet, it is not as though there is a significant change in his arguments on this subject. In his earlier writings too, he does on occasion warn against theocratic rule, and he never seems to have suggested that religion and state be melded. In the 1940s, he kept up his insistence on practising a religious politics: one only has to recall the epic fasts that he undertook as a Hindu. So, while by the late 1940s there might have been a sharper emphasis on separating religion and the state, this is not so much a change of perspective as a more explicit elaboration of what had earlier been an implicit argument.

If we resist the temptation of quick chronological explanations, then we can discern three divergent conceptual registers on which Gandhi affirmed a religious politics and secularism. Each of these takes in a different direction his consistent emphasis on ‘the religion which stays in all religions’. In my book under preparation, *Gandhi’s Faithful Rendering: Secularism, Religion and Immeasurable Equality*, I explore each of these registers. The first register on which Gandhi could affirm both a religious politics and secularism was, curiously enough, classical Western secularism itself. Gandhi’s efforts to do so are especially marked in his attempt to translate a book by William Salter titled, *Ethical Religion*. Salter tries simultaneously to affirm a theistic understanding of religion, and to make secularism itself into a religion. In the process, Salter affirms the civilizational hierarchies and historicism that are everywhere the mark of secular and humanist thought. Gandhi too, especially in the early years, was hardly innocent of these hierarchies. Nevertheless, he translated Salter at a time when he was increasingly beginning to challenge these hierarchies. Perhaps because of this, his translation of Salter quite displaces Salter’s arguments, even though they do not develop an alternative perspective.

In this failure, there also emerges Gandhi’s distinctive conceptualization of religion. Gandhi’s book *Hind Swaraj*, for instance, is organized as a ‘dialogue’ between two figures—the Editor and the Reader. Both share a commitment to swaraj—independence or ‘home rule’. But they differ quite radically on what swaraj means, or how it might be achieved. The Reader is a figure who makes the conventional nationalist arguments about why and how the British need to be driven out of India. For the Reader, swaraj involves India securing, as he puts it in Gandhi’s English translation of Chapter 4 (titled ‘What is swaraj?’), the same powers as England or Japan: ‘We must own our navy, our army, and we must have our own splendour, and then will India’s voice ring through the world.’ And to achieve this goal, the Reader is willing to use any means possible. As he puts it in Gandhi’s English translation of Chapter 15: ‘Why should we not obtain our goal, which is good, by any means whatsoever, even by using violence?’
But the Editor, ventriloquizing Gandhi’s explicit positions, argues that such violence would not bring about swaraj or ‘home rule’, Independence. For the Editor, the swaraj that the Reader seeks is only ‘English rule without the Englishman’. He insists not only that swaraj in this sense is not only inappropriate for India, but that it has reduced England to a ‘pitiable’ condition. For this pitiable condition, the Editor blames not the English themselves but ‘modern civilization’. This religion is central to his politics, and here religion is opposed to ‘modern civilization’ itself. That phrase is used for the first time towards the close of Chapter 5 (“The condition of England”), and is Gandhi’s translation of the Gujarati phrase aajkaalma sudhaara. Leaving for another occasion the appropriateness of this translation, what I wish to stress for now is that while the Editor attacks ‘modern civilization’ on several registers, its religiousity is an overwhelming concern. The stress on this irreligiosity emerges in Chapter 6:

In it there is no thought for niti [ethics; ‘morality’] or dharma [‘religion’]. The votaries of sudhaara [‘modern civilization’] say quite clearly that it is not their job to teach people dharma. So many believe that religion is only a false pretense [dhong, ‘superstitious growth’]. Also, so many wear the mantle of dharma; they even talk of niti; nevertheless I tell you after twenty years of experience that aniti is taught in the name of niti.... This sudhaaro is adharma [‘irreligion’], and it has spread to such an extent in Europe that the people there [‘the people who are in it’] appear half-mad.

The Editor again devotes much of Chapter 8 (the first of five Chapters named ‘The condition of India’) to dharma:

Dharma is dear to me, and so my first reason for grief is this that Hindustan is becoming ever more corrupt in dharma [dharmabhraasht; ‘irreligious’]. By dharma I do not here mean Hindu or Mussalman or Zoroastrian religion. But the religion which stays in all these religions has gone. [Here I am not thinking of the Hindu or the Mahomedan or the Zoroastrian religion but of that religion which underlies all religions.] We are turning our faces away from Ishwar [God].

In Gandhi’s argument, then, ‘modern civilization’ was making India ‘irreligious’, much as it had made England ‘irreligious’. This opposition that Gandhi sets up between ‘modern civilization’ and ‘religion’ perhaps explains his insistence that there could be ‘no politics without religion’: for him, only a religious politics could oppose ‘modern civilization’ in any constitutive sense.

Here, religion is no longer thought within the terms of the Enlightenment, but is thought instead as dayadharma, a phrase that can only be quite wrongly if literally translated as the religion of compassion. Dayadharma, I suggest, thinks religion (sticking for the purpose of this essay to Gandhi’s translation of dharma as religion) as the proper practice of finitude. In this essay, I would like to tease out some aspects of Gandhi’s affirmation of dayadharma. Most of all, I would like to argue that his emphasis on dayadharma provided a way of questioning the secular conception of equality, and elaborating on another equality. This other conception of equality is organized around finitude, and is opposed to ‘modern civilization’, which Gandhi elsewhere associates with infinitude. While conservative nationalists also tried to conceptualize a distinctively Indian equality, they did so through an emphasis on constative finitude—a finitude that various groups were inescapably marked by, and of which caste was exemplary. In contrast, Gandhi’s finitude, I shall argue, involved the giving of a very distinctive equality to both self and other. This equality to the other made possible a distinctive secularism that was internal to the concept of religion rather than imposed on it from the outside, or practised by it for contingent reasons.

**DAYADHARMA**

To attend to what is at stake in Gandhi’s concept of dharma or ‘religion,’ and how it might have produced a ‘secularism’, perhaps we can take our cues from Gandhi’s discussions in his never-completed book (which he wrote sometime during his internment in Yeravda jail between 1922 and 1924) on his early interlocutor, the Jain thinker Shrimad Rajchandra, who Gandhi also called Raychandbhai (from his everyday name, Raychandbhai Mehta) or simply Kavi, ‘the Poet’. That book was eventually published in 1926 as Gandhi’s foreword to the book, *Shrimad Rajchandra*. In the additional remarks he made for the foreword, Gandhi gently intimated some of his differences from Raychandbhai. He refused to accept Raychandbhai as his guru. He also disputed the claim made by Raychandbhai’s disciples that the latter had attained moksha or salvation. Nevertheless, Gandhi identified Raychandbhai, along with Tolstoy and Ruskin, as three individuals who ‘have influenced me deeply’. In the book itself, Gandhi mentions that he met Raychandbhai in 1891 in Bombay ‘on the very day on which’ Gandhi returned from England. Gandhi was deeply impressed by him at their first encounter, and the two were soon in regular conversation.

Even after Gandhi left for South Africa, Gandhi appears to have continued to have conversations with Raychandbhai which were central to Gandhi’s developing understanding of Hinduism:
When I began to feel doubts about Hinduism as a religion [Hindu-dharma], it was Raychandbhai who helped me to resolve them. In the year 1893, I developed close relations with some Christian men in South Africa. Their lives were pure, and they were devoted to their religion [dharma-chust]. Their main work in life was to persuade followers of other faiths to embrace Christianity. Though I had come into contact with them in connection with practical affairs, they began to feel solicitude for my spiritual welfare. I could understand one duty I had. Until I had studied the teachings [nāṭayā] of Hinduism and found that they did not satisfy my soul, I should not renounce the faith in which I was born. Therefore, started reading Hindu and other scriptures. I started reading, and I read Christian and Musalmān books ['read books on Christianity and Islam']. I carried on correspondence with some English friends I had made in London. I placed my doubts before them. I entered into correspondence with every person in India in whom I had some trust [aasta]. Raychandbhai being the chief among them. I had already been introduced to him and a close bond had grown between us. I had respect for him, and so I decided to get from him everything he could give. The result was that I gained peace [ṣhaanti pamyo; 'gained peace of mind'] I felt reassured that Hinduism could give me what I needed.  

That a Jain like Raychandbhai should be the figure who reassured Gandhi about Hinduism is all the more striking since Raychandbhai was often quite critical of the Vedas, insisting that the Jain tradition had thought more systematically and better about dharma. If, nevertheless, Gandhi could be reassured about Hinduism by his conversations with Raychandbhai, this probably had to do with the latter’s understanding of dharma. Elaborating on ‘the nature of dharma as explained by him [Raychandbhai], Gandhi remarks: Dharma does not mean various sectarian beliefs [amukh matmatantar; 'any particular creed or dogma']. Nor does it mean reading or learning by rote books known as Shastras or even believing all that they say. Dharma is a quality [gun] of the soul [atmaa] and it resides in humanity [manavajati; ‘every human being’] in visible or invisible form. Through it we know the duty of human life [manushya jivan; kartavya; ‘our duty in human life’]. Through it we can recognize [aksheya] our true relation with and other living things [bejha jivo; ‘other souls’]. It is evident that all this is not possible till we have known the self in us [potane ya aksheya]. Hence dharma is the means [saadhana] by which we can know ourselves. We may accept this means from wherever we get it, whether from India [Bharatvarsha] or Europe or Arabia [Arabistaan]. Anyone who has studied the scriptures of different faiths will say that the general nature of this means as expounded in them is the same.  

Thus, while Raychandbhai ‘believed that the JANAGAMAS [Jain holy books] contained the perfection of spiritual knowledge’, Gandhi further remarks that he...
the way Gandhi takes up these concerns. Gandhi does not seem to use the phrase vyavahara dharma in his writings, but his understanding of dharma is in some ways very close to what he ascribes to Shrimad Rajchandra. This is so on many registers, but we could begin with the observation that the term daya is picked up by him to make an assertion very similar to Raychandbhai’s. In Chapter 17 of Hind Swaraj, for instance, he cites Tulsiidas on daya:

The poet Tulsiidas has said: ‘Of religion, pity, or love [daya], is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.’ This appears to me to be a scientific truth. I believe in it as much as I believe in two and two being four. The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force.

Daya, thus, is constitutive of the universe and of religion. A phrase that recurs in his writings is dayadharma—the religion of love. And the force of satyagraha itself was described in Hind Swaraj as dayabal and atmabāl—terms that are translated as love force and soul-force.

TOLERANCE

Daya—Gandhi’s difficulties with this word are indicated by the hesitation in the English Hind Swaraj, which resorts to two words to translate daya—pity and love. Elsewhere, he also translates it as compassion. Through the word daya, I would like to suggest, Gandhi eschewed the problematic of agency and power, whether that agency takes the form of domination, subordination, or equality. There can be no agency in daya, for in the experience of daya, one gives oneself to the other in ways that one is no longer is control of, where one is neither powerful nor powerless.

And the concept-word dayadharma names an especially audacious move. Through that word, Gandhi does not only attempt to conceptualize a dharma organized around daya. Even more audaciously, he suggests that dharma itself needs to be conceptualized as always the working of daya.

Now, the suggestion that there is anything audacious in this invocation of dayadharma might seem a little puzzling. If we stick with the standard translation of daya as compassion, what Gandhi argues for here seems neither particularly original nor particularly compelling: compassion in closely related forms, after all, has been a staple of world religions, secular religion, and spiritualized secularism. One might also well say of this kind of spiritualized secularism, that it is a good and even laudable sentiment, but what political and philosophical purchase can it give?

All this makes for a compelling question: what is involved in dayadharma?

Perhaps what is most salient for our arguments here is that dayadharma involves a very distinctive equality and pluralism. Secular thought insists that religion cannot allow for equality to other religions (or more broadly to others), that religious rule will result in a theocracy rather than pluralism. As Ashis Nandy has repeatedly pointed out, secularism claims a monopoly on religious and ethnic tolerance and on political rationality. It insists that only it can practice a pluralism that defends the right to diverse religious practices. But to rehearse in a brutally abbreviated form two key elements of the secular concept of tolerance, it rests, first, on a double disengagement, of which the distinction between public and private spheres is symptomatic. In the public sphere, and is what makes for much of its tolerance, the irrationality of the private sphere (the realm to which religion is usually relegated) can be tolerated both because it is being constantly remade in the image of public reason, and because the public sphere dominates the private.

Second, and consequently, this double disengagement (which is also a double domination) inscribes a statist inequality and violence within the very core of secularism. Secularism rests on the premise that the other is inferior to the extent that the other does not conform to public and communicative reason. What is tolerated is thus rarely equal (tolerance is thus a very appropriate word here). Even where secular tolerance extends an abstract equality to the other, this abstract equality is always undercut by the insistence that full equality requires the exercise of reason. Thus it is that secularism can, without contradicting itself in the slightest, always justify colonialism or the expropriation of land from Native Americans, or the treatment of some religions as inferior. There is thus a constitutive violence to secularism and its statist projects.¹⁴

There is absolutely no tolerance in this disengaged sense involved in dayadharma. Indeed, Gandhi is disturbed by the secular concept of tolerance precisely because of these hierarchical implications. He dwells on them explicitly in one amongst his series of letters (later published as the book Mangalprabhat, in Gujarati, and From Yeravda Mandir, in
English) that discussed ashram vows. The letter was devoted to the vow sarva dharma sambbhavna, a phrase which he translated into English as 'equality of all religions':

This [sarva dharma sambhav] is the new name we have given to the Ashram observance which we know as sahissnuta ['tolerance']. 'Sahishnuta' is a translation of the English word 'tolerance'. I did not like that word. But I could not think of another ['a better'] one. Kakasaheb (Kalelkar), too, did not like that word. He suggested 'Respect for all religions' [sarva dharma aadar]. I didn't like that either. In tolerating other religions, they are considered deficient [snapt]. In respect there always enters a sense [bhav] of patronage [maherbaani; Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own and respect suggests a sense of patronizing ...]. Ahimsa teaches us sambhav for other religions [to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own]. Tolerance and respect is not enough from the perspective of ahimsa. In the fundamental principle [moolma] of keep sambhav towards other religions, there is also an acceptance [svikaar] of the incompleteness [apooranata] of one's own religion.¹³

These and other remarks suggest an understanding of sarva dharma sambhavna that is somewhat at odds with the implications usually associated with the phrase. Like many other words in Gandhi's vocabulary, the term has been appropriated in fascinating ways for statist purposes, most notably for a Nehruvian secularism. From a broadly Nehruvian point of view, it might even be said that what sets the secularism of the Indian state apart from its Western counterpart is that while the latter insists on a separation of religion and the state, the Indian state's sarva dharma sambbhavna stresses the equality of religions, or an equal participation by the state in all religions. There is a very important difference between these two formulations. The separation of the state from religion does not mean that the state has nothing to do with religion. That would anyway be impossible (even though many liberal theorists have difficulty recognizing this impossibility). What secularism conceptualizes as the separation of the state from religion is rather an abstract equality of religions, where the state is formally equidistant from all religions. From the point of view of Nehruvian secularism, such an abstract equality of religions smuggles in the presumptions of the dominant religion, and does not recognize the social inequality that prevails amongst various religious formations. The separation of the state from religion in this abstract sense produces a majoritarian secularism. It is this majoritarian secularism, for example, that the BJP seeks to impose in India (and BJP ideologues are in this sense not incorrect in saying that they seek to practice true secularism, for it is their version of secularism that is more consistent with classical European secularism and its genocidal impulses); similarly, it is this majoritarian secularism which enables decisions such as the recent French one to deny citizenship to a woman who wore a veil.

If Nehruvian secularism in contrast affirms sarva dharma sambbhavna, this is because its postcolonial inheritance allows it to see all too acutely (in ways that European liberalism is perhaps only beginning to encounter and conceptualize) the limitations of a secularism based on formal equality. For Nehruvian secularism, true plurality requires substantive equality. Such substantive equality requires certain protections for minority religious formations, rather than simply a formal equality between religious formations. What the statist version of sarva dharma sambbhavna thus practices, is a secularism that seeks a substantive equality between various religious formations. (It is at least in part, though by no means entirely, this Nehruvian attempt at a substantive equality that leads to charges against it of 'minorityism'.) This substantive equality still remains within a humanist or liberal problematic, since it claims an external relation to religion, and seeks primarily to realize more effectively the humanist vision of equality.

SPIRIT

But I do not wish to be sidetracked here into an exploration of the fascinating implications of the Nehruvian reworking of the European humanist or liberal problematic. My point is quite different: it is that while Gandhi would in all likelihood have been quite sympathetic to the statist appropriation of sarva dharma sambhv, his arguments are organized around another notion of equality—an equality that is neither formal nor substantive, one that is constituted by dharma rather than in a break with it. His sarva dharma sambhav is not just about the equality of all religions (the way Gandhi himself translated the phrase) but—if we follow Gandhi in allowing the word religion to translate dharma—an attempt to conceptualize religion itself differently, where religion always gives equality between the self and the other.

In order to make this point, it may be appropriate to very briefly trace the genealogy of Gandhi's almost obsessive concern with equality. The post-facto evidence of his autobiography suggests that Gandhi was from quite early in his youth deeply upset at the subordination involved in colonialism, and sought to redress it through meat-eating and other practices that sought to make him more like the Englishmen with whom he sought equality. At least by the time he was a student in
Britain, he seems to have been convinced that European intellectual and political traditions themselves affirmed equality. In one of his earliest available writings, he remarks on how Indian converts to Christianity had embraced the idea of equality from the Europeans. This conviction that the value of equality was affirmed in European traditions remained central to his thinking. During a tour to the French influenced areas of south India in 1934, for instance, he remarked that it was 'France that first gave the world the three significant words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" ['swatantrata, samaanta, aney bandhuta']. Speaking just a day later in Pondicherry, he again remarked: 'Equality [samaanta] and brotherhood were brought into France several hundred years before people began to realize that there was anything like brotherhood of man. The bravest of them fought and bled for that realization.'

Similarly, when he claimed to be a loyal subject of the British Empire, as he notoriously did on several occasions, he did so through the profoundly subversive claim (made much to chagrin of his imperial protagonists) that the Empire provided for equality to its citizens. In 1895, in one of his earliest petitions to the British, he protested against the injustice of the treatment meted out to Indians in South Africa by pointing out that the Proclamation of 1858 provided for the equality of all 'Her Majesty's subjects' and specifically mentioned that Indians should be treated as equal. In later years too, this insistence on equality remained central and he argued, much to the chagrin of the representatives of the very Empire to which he professed loyalty, that 'equality [samaanta] is the cornerstone of the Imperial edifice'.

Especially suggestive is a Gujarati essay he wrote on the occasion of King George's coronation. The essay became for him an occasion to explore the nature of his loyalty to the British Empire as a colonial subject. Arguing for loyalty to King George, he suggested: Moreover, the British Constitution aims at securing equality of rights [sarkha hake] and equality before the law [sarkha nyaya] for every subject. Those who are not accorded this ['those who do not enjoy such equality'], they are free to fight for justice [nyaya], the only restriction being that the mode of agitation shall not harm others. Not only is every British subject free to fight in this way, but it is his duty [faraj] to do so.

Indeed, he insisted that he could even express loyalty only by claiming equality: 'The loyalty of a slave is no loyalty. He only serves. If a slave can be loyal, that must be due to coercion. The loyalty of a free man [swatantra manas] is willed [marajiyat].' He went on to argue: 'If the British Constitution were to change and lay down that there would be no equality [eksarkhapan], not even in theory, as between whites and blacks [kala, "Coloureds"], we could no longer owe allegiance to such a constitution and would have to oppose it.'

But he identified the French Revolution and the British Constitution with 'legal equality', or what he also often called 'theoretical equality' or 'fictitious equality'. Many of his campaigns in both South Africa and India were concerned with securing this kind of equality. He argued that such fictitious equality was worth fighting for, and was preferable to the inscription of inequality in law. In an early interview, a British interlocutor, Lord Crewe, suggested to him that the inscription of inequality in law in South Africa still granted more than, and was therefore preferable to, a fictitious equality of the Australian kind which was accompanied by the 'Australian policy of excluding by imposing ridiculous tests'. Gandhi responded that while fictitious equality [krutrim samaanta; artificial equality] was 'unsatisfactory', it was still 'the lesser of the two evils'.

And after all, is not the British Constitution itself founded on many fictions [krutrimtao]? I have myself been nurtured in those traditions. As a student I learnt the value of this kind of fiction. Indeed, after mature consideration, I have come to the conclusion that there is a very reasonable basis for these so-called fictions.

Thus, over and again, he claimed and affirmed the equality of the British Empire and the French Revolution (and these two equalities are not as far apart as they might seem).

But he was also ambivalent about fictitious equality, perhaps because it is impossible to think of such equality without reference to the 'modern civilization' that Gandhi attacked. This ambivalence is evident in his attacks on democratic institutions over and again, most notoriously in Hind Swaraj, where he describes the English Parliament as a 'prostitute'. He also insisted that democratic institutions were unsuitable for India. Over and again, he made remarks similar to the ones that he made in his response to the conservative Hindu Central Committee in 1933: '[S]o far as I am concerned there is no desire indiscriminately to import Western ideals of society, civilization [sabhyata] and equality'.

Yet these attacks on democratic institutions were accompanied by a constant affirmation of the 'spirit of democracy'. In 1920, for example, as he campaigned against the British, he insisted:

If we wish to evolve the spirit of democracy [lokshahina bhaavna] out of slavery, we must be scrupulously exact in our dealings with opponents. We may not replace the slavery of the Government by that of the non-co-operationists. We must
concede to our opponents the freedom we claim for ourselves and for which we are fighting.

There was thus a spirit of democracy that he sought to separate from the parliamentary institutions of democracy. Indeed, it was in the spirit of democracy that he attacked parliamentary institutions.

This spirit of democracy that he separated out from the institutions of parliamentary democracy was equality. Gandhi was insistent that it was not only in these European institutions of democracy, with their stress on fictitious equality, that equality was to be found. He discerned the practice of equality also in various dharma, or 'religions'. As early as 1905, in a lecture on Hinduism, he argued that the 'key-note of Islam' was ... its levelling spirit. It offered equality to all that came within its pale, in the manner that no other religion in the world did. When, therefore, about 900 years after Christ, his followers descended upon India, Hinduism stood dazed. It seemed to carry everything before it. "The doctrine of equality could not but appeal to the masses, who were caste-ridden."

Later too, Gandhi was to insist on Islam's spirit of equality and fraternity. In 1926, he wrote:

Someone has said (I do not know where, but only recently) that Europeans in South Africa dread the advent of Islam,—Islam that civilized Spain, Islam that took the torchlight to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of Brotherhood [brathrubhaavna]. The Europeans of South Africa dread the advent of Islam, for they are afraid of the fact that if the Native races embrace Islam they may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it. If brotherhood is a sin, if it is equality [samaanta] of Coloured races that they dread, then that dread is well founded. For I have seen that any Zulu embracing Christianity does not ipso facto come on a level with all Christians, whilst immediately he embraces Islam, he drinks from the same cup and eats from the same dish as a Mussalman.

Elsewhere, Gandhi's arguments about Islam, for example, suggest that what it brought to Hinduism was precisely an awareness of Hinduism's obscuring of equality. Through its encounter with Islam, Hinduism could for Gandhi be infused with equality.

But Gandhi's claim was not only that some social practices associated with some religions instituted equality. If such were the case, it could equally be claimed (and Gandhi himself made the claim on occasion) that other religious practices instituted inequality. Gandhi was acutely aware of the inequality that characterized Hinduism. His remarks about the French Revolution cited above, for instance, went on in the following vein:

Religious practices were thus as capable of promoting equality as inequality. It was thus not at all his argument that religion or dharma involved a greater or more consistent practice of equality than parliamentary democracy. Instead, more interestingly and productively, in the arguments that he makes especially from 1909 onwards, it is possible to discern the claim that religion itself is constituted by a distinctive finitude and equality, and that this finitude and equality sustained a secularism internal to the concept of religion:

CONSTATIVE
The sense that there was alternative Indian or Indic concept of equality was pervasive amongst early twentieth-century nationalists. Indeed, many Indian nationalists perhaps sensed such an equality in the concept-word, dharma. While I have neither the desire nor the competence to provide a history of dharma (that task is one with which scholars of South Asia have long been concerned, and the difficulties of that task are well illustrated by P.V. Kane's monumental classic History of the Dharmasastras), nationalists discerned a certain kind of finitude and plurality in that word, a certain difference from the word religion. For them, across many of its various formulations, the word dharma usually involves not so much a concern with the ontology or theology as the obligation to carry out, to be given to a task. Dharma in this sense is not an object as much as an activity. This activity makes dharma always very concrete and plural, even when the formulation appears to be abstract (as when dharma is declared to be the pursuit of sat—for now, being or truth). Put differently, while on the one hand dharma is universal, there is no abstract.

Many upper-caste nationalists in the early twentieth century picked up on this to argue for the distinctive plurality of Indian civilization. Around the time of Hind Swaraj, the young Aurobindo had defended the boycott of British goods against the criticisms made by 'a poet of sweetness and love' (Tagore, it seems safe to presume). The poet, he remarked, demanded a 'saintliness of spirit' that was impossible. In contrast, he remarked,
Hinduism recognizes human nature and makes no such impossible demand. It sets one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal for all is to bring about varnasankara the confusion of duties, and destroy society and the race. If we are content to be serfs, then indeed boycott is a sin for us, not because it is a violation of love, but because it is a violation of the Sudra's duty of obedience and contentment. Politics is the field of the Kshatriya and the morality of the Kshatriya ought to govern our political actions. To impose on politics the Brahminical duty of saintly sufferance, is to preach varnasankara [the destruction of varna].

Such formulations are framed, whether consciously or not, by the liberal understanding of the task of politics as that of balancing the claims of equality against those of difference. What such formulations suggest is that the caste order of varnadharma achieves that task in a way that is both just and uniquely Indian. For here, each varna is constituted on the one hand by a constative finitude that makes difference possible (every varna has a different role to play, and the roles cannot be mixed up), and on the other hand a functionalist understanding of Indian civilization where various castes complement each other and come together to produce a modern Indian nation-state that would not be significantly different from European nation-states. The word swadharma—one's own dharma, the duty assigned to one by caste—was often invoked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to describe this functionalist organization of constative finitude. For upper-caste nationalists, such a functionalist understanding entailed a distinctive equality, one they thought to be different from Western concepts. For them, swadharma prescribed not the abstract equality of all humans, but rather the equality of different varnas to their dharma—their equality in other words to their difference and finitude, and in this equality their equality to each other.

Thus, nationalists explained caste hierarchies through a distinctive functionalism, which claimed that the oppression of caste was merely a later accretion, and that varnadharma in principle and as concept only instituted a functional hierarchy. Effectively, this functionalist thinking of equality through a constative finitude justified an order where various castes were separate but equal. (An argument on these lines about caste as making for a distinctively Indian modernity occurs even in the writings of such a self-proclaimed modernist as Nehru. But Nehru himself limits this constative finitude to Indian prehistory, treating it simultaneously as a sign of potential and of inadequacy.) It was the monstrous inequality of this formulation that was instituted in the very name of equality that thinkers like Ambedkar were to so brilliantly question.

LIMITS
There can be little doubt that Gandhi participated on many occasions in invocations of swadharma and varnadharma. Like other nationalists, he often discerned this swadharma at work in the Gita. There, Arjuna expresses doubts about the war with the Kauravas, and says that he does not want to go to war. Krishna points out to Arjuna that his dharma as a Kshatriya requires him to fight the Kauravas, and urges Arjuna to perform his swadharma as a Kshatriya. Gandhi returned on many occasions to this section of the Gita, noting for instance in a lecture that occurs as the culmination of a series of discourses given at the Sabarmati Ashram on the Gita:

With this, the Lord concluded the argument: 'Better one's own duty, bereft of merit' [Shreyan swadharma viguna ityadi]. That means that, whatever one's swadharma, even if it be without merit ['seemingly without merit'], and even if the other's seems full of merit [gun-vaalo], even then one's swadharma is better than the other's dharma.

But even where he did so, he also questioned, wittingly or unwittingly, the constative and functionalist reading of finitude propounded by early twentieth century upper-caste nationalists. In order to discern how this happened, we might begin with his obsessive insistence on the observance of limits. For him, such an observance of limits was not a given trait of Indian civilization to be harnessed to create a distinctive Indian modernity. Rather, it was itself a politics, and one with very distinctive entailments. (Indeed, this was the sense in which he was never quite part of the nationalist problematic despite being the most prominent leader of the Indian nationalist movement.) The centrality of limits emerges in his remarks about swadeshi, which for him was necessary if swaraj or self-rule was not to produce an English rule without the Englishman:

After much thinking, I have arrived at a definition [lakshan] of swadeshi that perhaps best illustrates my meaning. Swadeshi is that spirit [bhavana] in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings [paaseymi parishithini] to the exclusion [tyaag, sacrifice or surrender] of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to [vadgi nathw, adhere to] my ancestral religion. That is the use of my immediate religious surroundings. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only
things that are produced by my immediate neighbours [maari pasey vatsnaroey] and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.

Indeed, limits marked dharma itself. Consider Gandhi’s contrast in Chapter 8 of *Hind Swaraj*—between dharma or religion and ‘modern civilization’:

Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and all other religions teach that we should remain passive [masad] about worldly things [duniyavi vastu] and active about religious things [dharmaik vastu], that we should set a limit [hadh] to our worldly ambition and that our religious ambition should be open [mokda, ‘illimitable’]. Our activity should be kept only to that [‘latter channel’].

It is all too easy to read ‘limit’ or hadh privatively, to presume that the call is to limit ‘worldly ambition’ in order to transcend the worldly and reach an illimitable religious ambition. Such a private understanding presumes that the limit involves ascesis, where ascesis is understood as the practice of austerities in order to transcend the physical for something spiritual, infinite, and larger. Here, the limit is not itself the concept of religion; it is merely the requirement for an absorption into the transcendent infinitude that is God. Such an understanding of Gandhi’s argument seems all the more persuasive since Gandhi himself seems over and again to explicitly resort to it.

But such an understanding of Gandhi’s argument in terms of limits misses out on its more far-reaching implications, implications which convert it into a conceptual argument about finitude, and about how an acknowledgement of finitude involves questioning secularism, and about how the distinction between secularism and religion is to be thought.

A recent magisterial reiteration of the certitude by Charles Taylor put it this way:

[We have moved from a world in which the place of fullness was understood as unproblematically outside of or ‘beyond’ human life, to a conflicted age in which this construal is challenged by others which place it (in a wide range of different ways) ‘within’ human life. ... The great invention of the West was that of an immanent order in Nature, whose working could be systematically understood and explained on its own terms, leaving open the question whether this whole order had a deeper significance, and whether, if it did, we should infer a transcendent Creator beyond it. This notion of the ‘immanent’ involved denying—or at least isolating and problematizing—any form of interpenetration between the things of nature on one hand, and ‘the supernatural’ on the other, be this understood in terms of the one transcendent God, or of Gods or spirits, or magic forces, or whatever.]  

And what marks this ethics is a focus on what Taylor calls ‘human flourishing’: ‘a secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of an imaginable life for masses of people’.

Now, this secular contrast between the immanent and transcendent worlds is never (not even in the case of Taylor, who tries exceptionally hard to avoid this) simply a description. It always valorizes the immanent, which is regarded as ethically, politically, and intellectually more compelling. Even where it is not stated in these terms, it is presumed that the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity, or freedom broadly, are best served where a distinction between the immanent and the transcendent is maintained, and where the immanent is privileged and dominant.

Gandhi’s religion however refuses the secular narrative which sees secularism on the side of immanent, and religion on the side of the transcendent. The point I am making is simply that it is not the case that for figures like Gandhi other things are more important than human flourishing—that he suggests abandoning the immanent for the transcendent (though it often seems that way because we operate with the modern secular concept of the human). Rather, Gandhi’s category religion offers a different thinking of the human altogether, which is very ill-served by the secular distinction between the immanent and the transcendent.

The terms that organize Gandhi’s thinking are intimated in a passage in Chapter 8 of *Hind Swaraj* that follows soon after the one above. It adds of the adherents of ‘modern civilization’, those who infinitize themselves: ‘They remain neither of faith nor of the world. They completely forget the real things.’ [Teo nathi raheta din-na ke nathi raheta duniya-na. Teo khari vastu-ne taddan bhooli jaaye chhe.]

This phrase, with its conjoining of din and duniya, is widespread not only in Gujarati but in other related languages too. The conjoining is suggestive of a thinking that does not fit with the secular narrative. The originally Arabic word din, central to Islam, is not quite religion or faith but much more—it is a way of living. Din, in this sense, always already involves an attitude to the world—it is a way of being worldly. Furthermore, here there is no choice between din and duniya. Rather than an oppositional choice between the two, the two terms are paired and work together: To give up on din is thus also to give up on the duniya, and vice-versa. In other words, when Gandhi says that they remain neither of faith nor of the world, he struggles to contest the
familiar secular opposition of the worldly and the religious—the very opposition that he himself succumbs to in his contrast just a little earlier between ‘religious things’ and ‘worldly things’. And the duniya proper to din is not unworldly or otherworldly, as secular thought would have it, but rather a distinctive worlding, a worlding for whom dharma or din involves the real or true [khari] things. Dharma and din are thus never about an asocial relation to an otherworldly or transcendent God: both these terms name a way of being social.

The stakes of this sociality are indicated perhaps also by the difficulty that Gandhi has translating the two sentences above into English. He renders it as: ‘They become utterly irreligious and, in reality, derive little advantage from the world.’ A very suggestive bit of floundering goes on here. Trying to translate his description of the consequences of the infinitizing of modern civilization, he fails, and resorts instead to remarking that ‘they become utterly irreligious’. To stay neither with din nor with duniya—this is to be utterly irreligious. To become irreligious, furthermore, would be to derive little ‘advantage’ from the world. Again, then, what is reiterated is that being religious is about a distinctive sociality. Conjoined with the Gujarati text, the argument is also that it is in this sociality that ‘advantage’ occurs, that ‘real things’ abide.

It is this other sociality that I have tried to point to with the concept-word finitude. Religion, to axiomatically indicate the argument I am making, always involves the practice of finitude. And when Gandhi suggests that dayadharma is the root of dharma, what he argues is that dayadharma is the practice of finitude. And if finitude matters in this way, this is because finitude sustains a sociality that is unrecognizable from a sociological or historical perspective, just as this sociology is incomprehensible from the perspective of dayadharma. Dayadharma must always proceed by setting aside the sociological or historical understanding of things, for the latter understanding must, as I have argued elsewhere, necessarily involve the creation of a world organized around infinitude.

GUESS

But what are the stakes of this emphasis on finitude, of this refusal of the transcendent-immanent distinction? From a secular perspective, Gandhi’s refusal of the distinction seems to lead to the enchanted world that is the stock of secular descriptions of the religious, the world that fails to make the proper distinctions between the transcendent and the immanent. Gandhi’s God is not dead, and indeed intervenes all the time in the world. Notoriously, for instance, he described the 1934 earthquake in Bihar as a ‘divine chastisement [sa’ja] sent by God for our sins’, specifically the sin of untouchability.34

From a secular perspective, such a remark reveals the dangers of a perspective that fails to maintain the distinction between the immanent and the transcendent: not only does such anthropocentrism rest on a complete misunderstanding that mixes up even orders of causality, but it implies an ethics which shifts responsibility away from humans to the divine. One might for example ask in the outraged secular vein (which I for one most certainly cannot not share) that marked many of the letters that Gandhi received: if earthquakes are divine chastisement for sins, why does God punish the innocent? Does this mean that it is presumptuous to save oneself from an earthquake or from other natural processes by learning more about natural causality? Secularism can only consign such remarks to its prehistory, to a time when people had not learnt to think rationally enough.

But this very term enchantment perhaps needs to be deployed cautiously, given how inextricable it is from secular conceptions of the religious. Even where we celebrate and affirm enchanted worlds, we perhaps limit ourselves to opposing secularism in secularism’s own vocabulary; we perhaps remain within a secular problematic. It is worth attending to the way that Gandhi interrogates the secular conceit that allows the distinction between the secular and the superstitious or enchanted:

I share the belief with the whole world—civilized and uncivilized—that calamities such as the Bihar one come to mankind as chastisement for their sins. When that conviction comes from the heart, people pray, repent [pashtaaap] and purify themselves. I regard untouchability [asprishyata] as such a grave sin as to warrant divine chastisement. I am not affected by posers such as ‘why punishment for an age-old sin’ or ‘why punishment to Bihar and not to the South’ or ‘why an earthquake in Bihar as a ‘divine chastisement [sa’ja] sent by God for our sins’, specifically the sin of untouchability.34

Therefore I have but a limited knowledge of His purpose. Such calamities are not a mere caprice of the Deity or Nature. They obey fixed laws as surely as the planets move in obedience to laws governing their movement. Only we do not know the laws governing these events and, therefore, call them calamities or disturbances. Whatever, therefore, may be said about them must be regarded as guess work. But guessing [asnaam] has its definite place in man’s life. It is an ennobling thing for me to guess that the Bihar disturbance is due to the sin of untouchability. It makes me humble [namma], it spurs me to greater effort towards its removal, it encourages me to purify myself, it brings me nearer to my Maker. That my guess may be wrong does not affect the results named by me. For what is guess to the critic or the sceptic
is a living belief (jeetiyaagi shraddha) with me, and I base my future actions on that belief. Such guesses become superstitions [vahem] when they lead to no purification and may even lead to feuds. But such misuse of divine events cannot deter men of faith from interpreting them as a call to them for repentance for their sins. I do not interpret this chastisement as an exclusive punishment for the sin of untouchability. It is open to others to read in it divine wrath against many other sins."

Several disconcerting and even uncomfortable moves occur here. Perhaps we can grope our way through the passage with the word 'superstition': As in the passage above, Gandhi often attacks superstition, vahem, in the name of religion. He opposes religion and 'old traditions' to the superstitions of both modern civilization and those of religion. But what he calls superstition simply cannot be governed by the usual Enlightenment triad of superstition/myth, reason, and religion. In that triad, superstition names those beliefs which fail to maintain the distinction between the orders of the divine and the secular, which presume that the divine intervenes in everyday life through miracles and other wondrous events; conversely, religion names those beliefs which are concerned with the transcendent in a way that sustains the distinction between the immanent and the transcendent. This triad clearly cannot work for Gandhi, for whom miracles and divine intervention are clearly important and constitutive of his religion. To a secularist, Gandhi's religion is not truly religion: it is merely superstition. And even to the critics who might question Enlightenment's perception of itself, who might insist that the Enlightenment is mythic fear turned radical, Gandhi's fear would smack of precisely that mythic fear which they charge the Enlightenment with radicalizing.

So we come to the question: what is Gandhi's concept of religion, and correspondingly of superstition? How does he organize this triad of reason, religion, and superstition, if not in the usual Enlightenment way?

Perhaps we can begin addressing that question by attentiveness to the guess that has its definite place in man's life, but that can become either religious and 'ennobling' or superstitious. Gandhi elaborates on the distinction between the two in terms that are deceptively tautological and simplistic: the guess is religious where it leads to purification and superstitious where it leads to feuding. The guess properly observed 'makes me humble', and leads to faith, belief. There can be (as will be indicated later) disagreement and conflict where there is humility, but there cannot be a feud.

But what is the nature of this anumaan or guess? Gandhi's guess does not belong to the reasonable realm of that which is probable but unprovable; there is nothing reasonable about it. It is just that—a guess. As a guess, it does not have to and does not claim to answer several questions—why here, why now, and how? With the guess, one is in the realm of faith. The guess is centrally thus about a conviction and a belief that cannot be justified by the criteria of causal reason, that will not submit to reason, and will yet intervene in the domains of science and ethics and everyday life that Enlightenment traditions would consider reason's own.

This suggests why humility or namrata should be proper to the guess. Gandhi presents the matter sometimes in somewhat conventional terms, as in the passage above where he says that he cannot know the workings of God. In such a formulation, the humility and finitude of the guess of faith is only understood in a metaphysical manner—privatively, as an acknowledgement of the way that human agency is limited and can always be overcome by 'acts of God' (and it is surely not accidental that the agential understanding of the divine enshrined in this phrase is central to insurance law today); that the finitude of the human glance cannot take account of the infinitude of God. And the infinitude of God is also thought metaphysically here—as that which is too large and too huge for comprehension by the finite human being.

But the guess of faith is also humble in another way here: even where it is absolute (as it must be where it becomes a 'living belief' or faith) such a guess must acknowledge its singular limit—that it is constituted by and constitutes only its own singular relation to God, that it must be both absolute and yet not make any ontological or epistemological claims. As such, there is a finitude and a limit that is constitutive of the guess of faith. In order to be faithful, it must practice this singularity, or observe limits. In this very observing of the limit, the 'living belief' is always already open to the other. For even though Gandhi's faith can never be proven wrong, it remains only his living belief. As such, the rightness or wrongness of either Gandhi's or the other's guesses becomes completely unimportant ('that my guess may be wrong does not affect the results named by me').

This openness to the other is the original equality that 'living belief' must always give to the other. In this openness, we receive an intimation of an equality that is not organized by the abstract epistemological criteria of knowledge. This equality that is always involved in living
believe—is this what Gandhi names in the previous passage as making him humble? If it is an ennobling thing for Gandhi to guess that the earthquake was because of untouchability, is this because the practice of untouchability denies the equality that the faithful guess gives to both itself and the other?  

FAITH

The nature of this equality to the other can be elicited by attentiveness to the word dayadharma. Neither that word nor the word daya occurs in the passage above. But it is intimiated in the word 'purification'. Here, purification involves a hewing to the nature of the guess as faith. And the practice of 'purification' involved the observance of various vows or vrat. Gandhi usually stressed on eleven vows. The vows were modelled on the Jain and Hindu traditions of the major vows (mahavrat). Five of these were the conventional mahavrat of truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsa), celibacy (brahmacharya), non-stealing, and non-possession. He supplemented these, moreover, with six more: fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread labour, equality of religions, humility, and swadeshi. To rehearse, though only in abbreviated form in this essay, his reading of the vows, he always started out with the primary vow of satya or truth. As he put in the first of a series of letters devoted to ashram vows that inmates of Sabarmati Ashram should observe (these letters were later published as a book, Mangalprabhat), and meant to be read out as discourses at Sabarmati Ashram: ‘the word Satya is derived from Sat, which means Being. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God.’

But what was Gandhi’s concept of satya? Whether translated as truth or being (and the two cannot of course be separated in any rigorous accounting), it is after all a notoriously underdetermined term, one of the stakes of the conventional debate between science and religion. What is striking, perhaps, is that Gandhi’s notion of satya does not accord with either (expectedly) the scientific conception of truth and being or (less expectedly) with what is usually regarded in the metaphysical tradition as the religious conception of truth and being. This discordance emerges only gradually. The discussion in Mangalprabhat of the vow of satya strikes a preliminary note. The letter suggests that the ‘devotion [aradhana] to satya is the sole justification for our existence [hasti]’; that it is not merely a matter of speaking the truth but rather that ‘all knowledge is necessarily included in it’. This satya, moreover, does not require consensus:

What may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. ... there is nothing wrong in every man following satya according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone following Truth, it will be automatically set right.

How this will happen is not indicated. Instead; just a few sentences later, the letter says: 'But now we have come to the border-line beyond which lies ahimsa. We will discuss it next week.'

This pattern is repeated. In order to understand the vow of satya, it becomes necessary to turn to its supplementation by ahimsa. In order to understand the vow of ahimsa, it becomes necessary to turn to the vow of brahmacharya, and so on. The various vows that followed satya are thus extraordinarily important because of the way that in them the vow of satya unfolds. This unfolding is most marked in the second vow, ahimsa. For Gandhi, truth was inseparable from ahimsa, which he described as ‘the foundation of the world’.

Indeed, without ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are as inseparable (yorhpreh) as two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse? Nevertheless, ahimsa may be considered [gamiye; 'is'] the means and Truth may be considered ['is'] the end. The means is what is within our reach ['Means to be means must always be within our reach'], and this is why ahimsa is the supreme dharma (paramdharma; 'supreme duty'). Satya becomes God. If we keep attending to the means, we will someday behold [darshan; 'reach'] satya.

But ahimsa could not for him be thought only its privative form, as simply abstention from violence towards others. It was a form of compassion, daya. This emphasis on daya or—to resort to another word that he often deployed—prem or love, was pervasive and constitutive of all his arguments. In a leaflet published in 1919, for instance, he argued: ‘There cannot be hatred [tiraskaar] of any individual in my writings, because it is my belief that this world is founded [nabhi] on love [prem]. Only where there is love is there life. A life without love is like death [mrityu samaan; “is death”]. Love is the reverse of the coin of which the obverse is satya.’ This love and truth, moreover, were constitutive of religion: ‘Only truth is religion [satya ey j dharm] is one axiom. Only love is religion is another axiom. Since there cannot be two religions [“as there can be only one religion”], it follows that truth is love and love is truth.’

In words such as prem or daya, the distinctiveness of the finitude and equality that Gandhi associates with religion emerges. Here, the words
daya and prem point to the practice of ahimsa as the infinite giving of oneself, and such infinite giving can be conceptualized, paradoxically, only as the very practice of finitude. For one cannot give to oneself—that would only be taking. One can only give to that which is constitutively apart from oneself. In order to sustain the other’s constitutive separation from that to which one gives, thus, it is necessary to practice finitude.---

To think of daya in this way is to venture a very distinctive conceptualization of both God and the human. God is the prime practitioner of daya, which is to say that God constantly gives of God’s own self. God, as Gandhi insists on several occasions, is infinite. But Gandhi understood the infinitude of God in a distinctive way. For him, the infinitude of God could not be thought as infinitude in the metaphysical sense—so familiar to us from dominant traditions within Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism—of mastery as power without limits. Rather, God’s infinitude involves a radical finitude. Thus Gandhi argued: ‘God is no dispenser of rewards and punishments [jal], nor is He an active agent [karta]... At no time and in no circumstances do we need a kinglike God [raja jeva]. By thinking that we do, we put a limit to the power of the atman, which is infinite.’ In such an argument, perhaps human freedom is exemplary of the way that God’s infinitude works by making itself finite: such freedom must include freedom from God, and equality with God.

This insistence that God cannot be an agent, that the very concept of God gives an equality with God, leads Gandhi to contemplate an erasure of the word God itself. Thus, the 1930 Mangalprabhat letter about Satya went on: ‘In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or general, the name God is and will remain more current. On deeper thinking, however, it will be realized that sat or satya is the only correct and fully significant name.’ Less than a year before, in December 1929, Gandhi had described this formulation—that Truth is God—as a new and better formulation of his earlier claim that God is Truth. On several occasions in the years after Mangalprabhat, he referred to this transition: I used to say that “God is Truth”. But that did not satisfy me. So I said, “Truth is God.” He did not regard the new formulation as a shift in his perspective, but rather as a better articulation of a perspective that he had articulated inadequately before (and he is not incorrect in this, since he does on several occasions in earlier years state that ‘Truth is God’, though he seems to treat this as interchangeable with the statement ‘God is Truth’.)

What are the stakes of the new formulation? Perhaps we can approach it by turning to an event in 1925 that may have played a role in problematizing for him his formulation ‘God is Truth’. This was the response of a Congressman to Gandhi’s use of the word God. The Congressman objected ‘because “God” has now a place on pledges and vows such as that administered to Congress volunteers, which begins “with God as witness, I...”’. The Congressman suggested that atheists or many Buddhists could not, in good faith, take such a pledge and asked: ‘is it proper to exclude from Congress service any such merely because of their religious faith?’ In his reply, Gandhi acceded that it was not, and said that the ‘mention of God may be removed if required from the Congress pledge of which I am proud to think I was the author. Had such an objection been raised at the time, I would have yielded at once. I was unprepared for the objection in a place like India.’ He went on to argue, in the usual vein, that God was Truth, and was as such even ‘the atheism of the atheist’.

It was his experience—using that word in its strong sense—of this question that seems to have led to the reformulation, ‘Truth is God’. Indeed, in a speech at Lausanne about a year after Mangalprabhat letter where he ventured the distinction, he remarked that ‘it was because of their [atheists’] reasoning that I saw that I was not going to say “God is Truth”, but “Truth is God.”’ By conceptualizing God as satya, he was not simply discarding theological baggage to affirm a secular truth that would remain after the death of God, that secularists too could affirm, that could provide a new truth that secularists too were amenable too. Rather, he was conceptualizing satya itself in a distinctive way, where satya was marked by a giving of itself to the other, and the radical finitude that emerged in such giving. It is this radical finitude which also makes him suspect that the sat or being of satya and satyagraha is not a being that ‘is’ in the metaphysical sense of a constative or eternal being or truth, but rather itself marked by non-being.

Symptomatic of this is his resort on several occasions to the phrase ‘neti, neti’ [‘not this, not that’]: ‘Even God vanishes and we have only neti neti. Here, it would be mistaken to read the emphasis on neti neti as the working of an Indian apophaticism. Rather, neti neti has to be understood in conjunction with the emphasis on daya and prem. Conjoined thus, what the emphasis on neti neti foregrounds is the
insistence that it is the giving involved in daya or prem, rather than even the object of that act, which is the stake. In this giving, there remains no trace of an agential God, or even of some transcendent presence—there is only the transitivity of the giving.

(It might seem as though there is a glaring contradiction here: how can the God who causes earthquakes—a kingly act, if there ever was one!—be reconciled with this other God who is not an actor at all. But we perceive this contradiction primarily because we operate with a metaphysical understanding—and I will not here develop the argument, which nevertheless needs someday to be made, that secularism is the apogee of the metaphysical understanding, and as such equally its moment of greatest danger and greatest opportunity—of miracles, where a miracle is the act of God as agent. But for Gandhi, a miracle is not a constative event. For the faithful, indeed, a miracle can never be a constative event. To understand a miracle as a constative event—this is the conceptual error that he describes as superstition; it is the failure of faith, the pre-eminent mark of inadequate faith. For the Gandhi who makes the distinction between the guess of superstition and the guess of faith, the miracle is an event only for the faithful witness. Even in the belief that God had caused the earthquake, thus, God does not act as a divine sovereign. The proper response of the faithful to the event of the miracle, Gandhi’s earlier argument suggests, can only be purificatory; it can only involve the practice of radical finitude.)

In this rending of God into a satya that is thought through daya and prem (and the neti neti that is always constitutive of them), a distinctive argument about the human also becomes possible. Since the human is the pratibimb (silhouette or reflection) of God, humans too are marked by this paradox: the infinitude that is proper to them can be sustained only by the practice of finitude. In other words, finitude in Gandhi’s argument is organized and made possible by an infinite giving, the giving that gives always freedom and equality to both self and other. The finitude that Gandhi conceptualizes is in this sense perhaps better described as an in/finitude. In this infinite giving, faith provincializes both itself and the other. It provincializes itself by limiting itself, not simply in the negative sense of an ahimsa that abjures the force of arms, but in the more active sense of ahimsa as daya, or the productive giving of oneself to the other. This giving in daya also provincializes the other, for it refuses to accept the other’s claims to domination, and in its combination of finitude and infinitude insists on the other’s singularity.

This worlding in in/finitude is neither transcendent nor immanent if we are to use these words in their conventional secular senses. It is not transcendent because it does not find meaning in a divinity beyond the world; from its perspective, indeed, secular thought’s humanism—its privileging of the human—is transcendent. And it is not immanent because it refuses to accept the world in the sociological or historical sense. Thus, when in Chapter 17 of Hind Swaraj, the Reader asks for examples of the working of atmabal (which he also elsewhere describes as dayabal, or the force of daya), the Editor responds: The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: ‘It so happened’. If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul-force or passive resistance in such history.

I have elsewhere discussed this passage in detail. Here, I wish to only stress that daya or prem (which in this argument always the proper of faith) is resistant to the disciplines of immanent knowledge, of which sociology and history are exemplars. The disciplines are necessarily constituted by measure: they must analyse social relations in terms of determinate and regular relations of power, culture, class, and so on. But the finitude of religious or faithful actors is sustained by an immeasurable and infinite giving. Of this giving, and correspondingly of the finitude of these actors, there can be no disciplinary knowledge.

SUPERSTITION

Now it is possible to turn to the question of what makes a guess into superstition. Perhaps we can take our cue from another word that appears in the passage above—‘feud’. A feud is premised on a conviction in the rightness of one’s guess, or in other words, the conversion of a guess into a matter of ontological and epistemological knowledge. Once a truth is ontological and epistemological, that which does not accord with it is false. The only way such a truth can be tolerant is by being weak. But it obviously cannot be too weak, for it will then no longer be a truth. It must continue to be defined and centred, however surreptitiously and unconsciously, by its truth (this surreptitious persistence of the centre is what many radical critiques of multiculturalism have pointed to). In other words, an ontological and epistemological truth can only feud with other claims to truth. The only equality it can grant to its other is what Gandhi describes on
occurrence as the equality established by the sword, when it is opposed by a truth of equal ontological and epistemological power. Hierarchy, in other words, is central to ontological and epistemological truth. Such a truth does not ‘purify’ itself by establishing its own limits, as faith does; rather, for such a truth to purify itself is precisely to make its ontological and epistemological claims stronger.

It turns out, thus, that what separates faith from superstition is that the former is constituted by the practice of equality with the other, that contrary to secular thought the giving of equality to the other is possible only where there is faith, belief, or religion. Indeed, since secular thought must always draw, however weakly, on an ontological and epistemological truth, the spectre of superstition is internal to the concept of secularism rather than to the concept of faith. And it is precisely where faith models itself after reason, or where reason claims sovereignty, that superstition occurs.

Gandhi pointed in this vein on some occasions to the privileging of reason. Responding on one occasion to a correspondent who had written him a letter suggesting that religious faith was at the root of Hindu-Muslim tensions, and that ‘secular education is the remedy for Hindu-Muslim riots’, he responded thus: But the correspondent has yet another word that holds him in its chains. It is the mighty word ‘rationalism’ [buddhivad]. Well, I had a full dose of it [mein dharai dharaine eno swaad chaakhyo; I have over and again assumed its mantle and tasted its flavors ]. Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the specific limitations [chaakhsa maryauda] of reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy .

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster [rakhkha] when it claims for itself omnipotence .

Works without faith [shraddha] and prayer are like an artificial flower that has no fragrance. I plead [daleel] not for the suppression of reason [buddhi], but for a due recognition [yogya swikar, appropriate acceptance] of that in us which sanctifies [paavan] reason itself.

Involved here is a provincializing of reason, a stress on its ‘distinct limitations’. But to provincialize is never to reject. The move of provincializing operates here on two registers. First, reason is affirmed. Both here and even more emphatically in the years around and after the Mangalprabhat letters, there is the insistence that ‘on matters which can be reasoned out, that which conflicts with Reason must also be rejected’. Also, that which is ‘amenable to rational enquiry’ must be submitted to it. Gandhi stressed the centrality of reason even in conversations between faiths. Thus, when asked in a discussion with a missionary, Dr Crane, what he would do with ‘a man who says he is commanded by God to do violence’, Gandhi insisted: ‘There you would not put another God before him. You need not disturb his religion, but you will disturb his reason. ... You will not put one word of God against another word of God. But you will have to bear down his reason.

Second, the relation between faith and reason is refuged. That faith is not opposed to reason is for Gandhi already given in the Gujarati words he uses for faith and superstition—shraddha and andishraddha. Shraddha, in other words, is by its very nature not blind or unreasonable; when it becomes andishraddha or ‘blind faith’, it is no longer faith but superstition. For Gandhi, ‘faith begins where reason fails. That is to say, faith is beyond reason’. But it is not beyond reason in the sense that it transcends reason (though he says precisely that it does in the English interview with Dr Crane). Rather, faith is ‘that in us which sanctifies reason’, and it does so by supplementing reason. For the word ‘sanctify’ is suggestive, as is its translation by the powerful word paavan.

To sanctify is to make holy. In other words, reason itself is marked by sanctity, but that sanctity comes from faith, and from the work of faith as daya and prem. To sustain reason in accordance with this sanctity is one of the tasks that a religious politics sets itself.

But what is the line between reason and faith, and how is it to be governed? This is the secularist question that Gandhi’s affirmation of faith and religion cannot escape. And the explicit answer he gives is quite anodyne: that the line that determined where reason failed and faith become inescapable was itself rational and clear, that all could agree on where reason had its provenance. But the anodyne answer is misleading, as even a slight consideration suggests. If the answer were indeed so anodyne, there would not have been the tension between faith and reason that he seeks to address. An alternative understanding is suggested by his various positions. Thus, while his faith led him to believe that the Bihar earthquake was divinely ordained, for him the belief that Jesus was ‘the only begotten son of God’ was one of those that ‘conflicts with reason’.

We would be reading too quickly if we simply pounced here on an inconsistency in his different responses to two very similarly structured claims. Rather, this is another of those occasions where his argument has to be produced by rending it from his own rendering. The inconsistency, I would suggest, is quite, consistent with the nature of the faith that
Gandhi affirms. Faith is marked by its singularity. As one essay on the relation between reason and faith remarks, 'the faith of one man is of no use to another man'. It is of the very nature of faith in its singularity that it will on occasion find that it will regard other faiths as unreasonable, that to 'bear down on his reason' does not lead to consensus. This does not mean that they are wrong. Rather, this is the moment at which a faith can encounter another faith as faith, and no longer through the abstract third term of secularism. Faithfully encountering the other faith as faith, this is the moment at which an according of equality to the other faith becomes both possible and necessary. This is the moment at which the equality accorded to the other faith will result simultaneously in another concept of secularism and tolerance and, where faiths clash, in the practice of satyagraha.

SAMBHAV

It is this other concept of secularism and tolerance that he names with the phrase sarva dharma sambhav. Its potentialities can be elicited by considering the way he conceptualized relations with Muslims. He refused to participate in the celebration (which one finds for instance in Nehru's The Discovery of India) of India as a syncretic culture where Hindu and Muslim identities were deeply and on occasion almost indistinguishably intertwined. As I have suggested elsewhere, syncretism is a profoundly secular category. It represents the secular attempt to envision a figure other to itself that can be celebrated. As such, syncretism is the answer to the secular question: how can different religions tolerate each other in the absence of or before secularism, before the third term or neutral meeting ground represented by secularism, civil society, and reason exists. And the answer is syncretism, where different religions or cultures mix together without conflicting. While 'Sambhav' was not hostile to cultural miscibility of Hindus and Muslims, since religion was for him a faith rather than a sociological object, miscibility could not provide a conceptual answer to the problem of the relation between religions in the absence of conventional secularism. I hope that nobody will bring up here the history of the attempts by Guru Nanak and Kabir to unite Hindus and Muslims; for the effort today is not for uniting the religions, but for uniting hearts while maintaining the separateness of religions. The efforts of Guru Nanak and others were towards fusing the two by showing the basic unity of all religions. The effort today is at tolerance (titiksha). The effort is to see how the orthodox Hindu, while remaining staunchly Hindu, can respect and sincerely wish prosperity to an orthodox Muslim. True, this attempt is altogether new, but its spirit is there at the roots of Hindu dharma.

It was from such a perspective that Gandhi could simultaneously affirm religion and secularism. Faith, conceptualized through the emphasis on the limit and on finitude, already had internal to it the daya which allowed it to 'tolerate' other religions. It is this religious capacity to tolerate other religions that Gandhi was to describe as sarva dharma sambhavam—equality of all religions' as Gandhi translated it, or more precisely, the treating of other religions as one's own. In other words, 'equality of all religions' no longer described a secularism that emerged through a transcendence of religion, or through the creation of secular religion that would confine itself the private sphere; rather, it described the secularism that was internal to religion thought properly—which is to say, as dayadharma, as an abiding by the in/finitude that is proper to both God and the human who's is God's pratibimb, and practices religion as a way of being this pratibimb.

It was in this spirit that Gandhi appropriated Gopal Krishnayya's definition of what was involved in the struggle for swaraj: It is not the common political suffering that is to weld together the Hindu and the Muslim like the Greeks of old during the Persian invasions, but the mutual respect, regard and love for each other's dharma... and the necessity for its individuated preservation that can and shall achieve it. Swaraj, therefore, means the preservation of Hindu dharma, Muslim dharma, Christian dharma, Parsi dharma, Sikh dharma, in short swadharma of all and a co-ordinated federation of all.

'Equality of all religions' was in this sense a secularism internal to religion; it was the following of swadharma or one's own dharma which involved each religion preserving both itself and the other religion. Perhaps Gandhi's participation in the Khilafat movement (much before he coined the phrase 'equality of all religions', but in complex ways anticipating that formulation) prefigures what would be involved in such a pursuit of swadharma. For him, the Khilafat movement's call for the restoration of the Khalifa was a religious demand made by Muslims. A religious demand—this is to say, as dayadharma, as an abiding by the in/finitude that is proper to both God and the human who's is God's pratibimb, and practices religion as a way of being this pratibimb.

Furthermore, both religious demand and religious opposition could only proceed through ahimsa, the word that is usually translated as non-violence. To resort to violence was to fail to recognize the in/finitude that was constitutive both of the other who was one's antagonist, and of
one’s own demand as a religious demand. It was to become irreligious. And ‘irreligion cannot be cured by irreligion, but only by religion. There is no room in religion for anything other than daya (compassion).’ 96 But even where a religious demand was pursued irreligiously, even where it became irreligious, Gandhi as a figure who abided by religion had to respond to it religiously, whether that response took the form of opposition or support. It is as such a religious demand that Gandhi supported the Khilafat movement.

I will not go here into how both opposition and support, when conducted in a religious vein in Gandhi’s sense, took the form of satyagraha. I only wish to stress that sarva dharma sambhav envisioned an equality of religions quite unlike that envisioned by what we usually know as the secular tradition. It entailed fighting religiously for the other’s religion; it entailed the giving of oneself or daya to the other who remained absolutely other.

Perhaps this also suggests why Gandhi often resorted almost interchangeably to the terms dharma rajya, which he associated with Yudhishthira, and ramrajya, which he associated with Rama. Both were gestures in the direction of a state that practised the equality internal to religion. Unlike, say, Bruno Bauer, who as the young Marx notes in his ‘On the Jewish question’ regards the Christian state as incapable of emancipating the Jew (and Marx does not disagree with this formulation), what Gandhi seeks to envisage here is a religious state that will as part of its very practice of religion emancipate the Hindu as Hindu and the Muslim as Muslim. What Gandhi seeks to put in place here, in other words, are the protocols for conceptualizing those state forms which are not secular, but which nevertheless recognize the equality of other religions not only as a matter of interest, but conceptually. By describing such a state form as secular, Gandhi pushed in entirely another direction the stress on equality that marked conventional secularism—towards a consideration of what would be involved in religious equality, and what kind of ‘secularism’ came forth in the practice of religious equality.

But what could be the relation between the abstract and measurable equality that conventional secularism involved, and the immeasurable equality involved in religion? This was a question to which Gandhi gave two quite conflicting answers, both of which belong together as conceptual possibilities, and each of which can nevertheless be pursued only by the destruction the other (though Gandhi himself almost never acknowledges this relation between the two). Symptomatic of this is the conflict between the profoundly conservative politics that Gandhi practised on some occasions, and the profoundly radical politics that emerges on other occasions. But an exploration of these two impulses of Gandhi’s affirmation of religion and its immeasurable equality, and of the relation between them, will have to await another occasion.

NOTES AND REFERENCES
1. This paper is the result of ongoing conversations with many of my colleagues and friends at the University of Minnesota, but especially to those with Vinay Gidwani, Qadri Ismail, and Simona Sawhney. I was also very fortunate to be able to discuss the arguments of the paper with Saurabh Dube, Ishita Bannerjee-Dube, David Hardiman, Vinay Lal, and Mninalini Sinha. Writing this essay has been an especially thought-provoking task for somebody like me, who has been brought up as an atheist, and who is not aware of experiencing a desire to give up on his atheism.
7. Harijan, 22 September 1946, in CWMG, vol. 92, p. 190. In these notes, I refer to the language in which Gandhi originally wrote, and where it has proved possible provide a reference to the translation. Whereas Gandhi originally wrote/spoke in Gujarati, I have wherever possible tried to adhere to the official translation. However, I have sometimes modified the official translation. In such cases I have also provided the official translation, wherever necessary. I have provided the official translation in parentheses. Where Gandhi originally wrote/spoke in Hindi, I have depended on the English translation. When citing from Hind Swaraj, I have given the number of editions available, tried to make things easier for the reader by indicating the chapter from which the citation is taken. Since these chapters are fairly short, it will presumably not be a problem to find the citation within the chapter.
13. Ibid, p. 64f.
14. In identifying these two aspects of secularism, I reprise from my book under...
preparation, Gandhi's Faithful Rendering: Secularism, Religion, and Immeasurable Equality. These two aspects emerge when we attend to Gandhi's faithful rendering of William Salter's secularism.


18. Petition submitted to Lord Ripon, Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies by Indians Resident in the South African Republic, [Before] 5 May 1895, CWMG, vol. 1, p. 229. During this period, his commitment was to a very restricted notion that sought to claim 'the Indian's fitness for an equality with the civilized races'. See CWMG, vol. 1, p. 285.


23. 'Social Boycott', Young India, 8 December 1920, in CWMG, vol. 22, p. 66; Aksharadeha, vol. 19, p. 73.

24. 'Hinduism', The Star, 11 March 1905; in CWMG, vol. 4, p. 208. We do not have the text of Gandhi's talk, only a newspaper report of it.


28. See, for instance, Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 245ff.


32. Ibid., p. 19f.

33. I explore Gandhi's criticisms of the secular tradition in Gandhi's Faithful Rendering.


35. 'Bihar and Untouchability', Harijan, 2 February 1934; in CWMG, vol. 63, p. 82; Aksharadeha, vol. 57, p. 90.

36. On another occasion, I will explore a related theme which would take us too far afield from the concerns of this essay—that of how this living belief also conceptualizes one's equality with oneself.

37. Here equality with the other is conceptually prior to the fact that the other too has his or her own guess, and that the possibility that they are as faithful as Gandhi's own living belief is constitutive of such other guesses too. When equality is granted only to those who can guess, the human would merely be redefined as the figure who can guess. Gandhi's insistence on the finitude proper to the guess would strictly speaking not allow for a hierarchical distinction between the animal and the human.


39. Letter to Narandas Gandhi, 18–22 July 1930, Aksharadeha, vol. 44, p. 42; CWMG, vol. 49, p. 384. These letters were written while he was jailed at Yeravda. The Gandhian press Navijivan, collected and published the letters same year under the title Mangalprabhat. Valji Govindji Desai translated the letters into English; Gandhi went over this translation, which was published by 1932 under the title From Yeravda Mandir.


42. Satyagraha Patrika no. 5, 17 April 1919; Aksharadeha, vol. 15, p. 228; CWMG, vol. 17, p. 437.

43. 'What is Satyagraha', Satyagraha Patrika no. 6, 25 April 1919; Aksharadeha, vol. 15, p. 240; CWMG, vol. 17, p. 448.


45. See, for instance, his letter to Prabhudas Gandhi, 2 December 1929, CWMG, vol. 48, p. 48.

46. Discussion with D. Ramaswami, CWMG, vol. 84, p. 266.

47. 'God and Congress', Young India, 5 March 1925, in CWMG, vol. 30, p. 322ff.

48. Speech at a meeting in Lausanne, 8 December 1931, vol. 54, p. 268.

49. 'Gandhijinu Gitashikshan', Aksharadeha, vol. 32, p. 170; 'Discourses on the Gita', CWMG vol. 37, p. 199


53. Interview with Dr Crane, CWMG, vol. 71, p. 2; Aksharadeha, vol. 64, p. 426.

It may come as a surprise to learn that C. Rajagopalachari (1878–1972), a statesman so prominent in the freedom struggle of Madras Presidency that he earned the moniker ‘Gandhi of the South’, and so central to the nationalist movement that many assumed he would be appointed India’s first President, would deem his retellings of Ramayana and Mahabharata ‘the best service I have rendered to my people’. Indeed, he found it ‘a source of great joy’ that these works, written toward the end of his life, had helped readers ‘realise their higher selves’. From 1954 to 1972, there was no time when he was not involved in reading, interpreting, writing, translating, broadcasting, glossing, or writing prefaces to Ramkatha (Rama’s story)—in Tamil or English.

Scholarly studies of Rajagopalachari’s oeuvre have neither taken into account how recursive was his attention to certain episodes in Ramkatha nor examined the complex and ambivalent relations between his three ways of telling the narrative. His biographers have focused mainly on the fortunes of his career in political offices, with only passing attention to his Ramkatha writings. In contrast, Rajagopalachari’s writings on Ramkatha take centre stage in this essay, and are contextualized less in the light of the ebbs and flows of his career as a political leader than in relation to his deepest moral and political concerns during the final decades of his life.

Many people today assume that his widely-distributed English paperback, titled Ramayana, conveys Rajagopalachari’s sole interpretation of...
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