

Review: Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism*, Penguin Books, Maduravoyal, Chennai, 2003 (2023 edn.)

Pages: 184

Nation Collapsing on a False Religion

This is a case study of four Hindu nationalists to draw a picture of what Hindutva means. The amazing thing from the outset is nobody can actually define Hinduism, or what a Hindu is!

The theology of each Hindu is contradictory in one way or another, e.g: Hinduism is the mother of all religions and accommodates all, yet it can't accommodate Islam; likewise Christianity is a false and evil religion but still part of Hinduism; the principle of non-violence in Buddhism ruined India (yet it made Japan into a warlike nation?).

Knowledge and understanding of other faiths is very poor: Muhammad is claimed to be a great light of the world and teacher (he was a debauched false prophet); God can't be omniscient since he created Satan (he created Lucifer with free will who chose to do evil); Matthew 4.19 teaches Jesus seeks to malevolently entrap men as a fisherman does fish!

The simple take away is Hinduism is a false religion without a firm scriptural foundation of any kind. Therefore, Hindutva is an equally false movement that must eventually fail, to the prolonged disaster that is India.

Introduction (pp. viii-xxv)

Indian social scientist predicted modernisation would cause religion to decline, as would nationalism with the erosion of ethnic and cultural differences.

Hindutva holds India is only a manifestation of Hindu ideals.

The Puranas are not considered to contain truth; the Vedas and Upanishads are perfect.

Hindus denounce Buddhism as reducing its fighting spirit leading to enslavement.

Hinduism is prefaced on the basis it is the oldest religion, mother of all and so has nothing to learn from anyone

I) Dayananda Saraswati (pp. 1-33)

Sir William Jones is the father of Indology, and believed Indians should be ruled by Hindu laws.

William Wilberforce said Hinduism was so rotten it was beyond reform.

Swami Dayananda believed the Vedas because they are approved in the light of the Vedas [!]: “We believe ... the Vedas alone are the supreme authority ... Therefore, we say that our religion is Vedic.” [p9]

The Yajur Veda claims God is unborn and takes no human form; to admit Krishna as an incarnation would affirm Christ and others, which Dayananda was against.

The first man was created in Trivishtap (Tibet), and men were divided into good Aryas and evil Dasyus.

Dayandana claims Indians are suffering from dissensions, rule of the proud, excessive wealth, and evil customs like eating meat and child marriage [which is Islamic].

He believed Jainism and Buddhism were the same.

The Jains made huge statues of their leaders to worship them.

He commends Guru Nanak for seeking to save Hindus from Islam.

He claims that since God is meant to be omniscient, he is responsible for all of Satan’s deeds, also, that he lied to Adam and Eve that they would die

after eating the fruit: “The Christian God was a flesh-eating trickster”. [p25]. He also quotes Mt 4.19-20, that Jesus seeks to entrap men like a fishermen does fish.

II) Sri Aurobindo (pp. 34-58)

His credo was “beef, biceps, and Bhagavad Gita”.

Aurobindo learnt Latin and Greek in English schools, and became a member of the Indian “Lotus and Dagger” secret society there.

In 1908 he established a bomb factory in Maniktala and was arrested on May 2, jailed for a year, and then took up yoga.

Indians are said to be weak, cowardly, selfish, hypocritical and sentimental, but there saving grace is the Kshatriya class (not the Brahmins who were to stay out of politics).

Arjuna in the Mahabarata is the epitome of the Kshatriya.

Aurobindo compared the Kshatriya to the Japanese samurai.

He claims Hindus have replaced Hindu superstition with superstitions and promises of materialistic science.

Aurobindo: “Unless the Mahomedans learn tolerance I do not think the assimilation is possible”.

III) Swami Vivekananda (pp. 59-113)

Vivekananda worshipped his guru Ramakrishna as God.

“Do not create illusion by helping anyone ... You have no duty”.

On 11 September, 1893, he addressed the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

The Hindu proposition is: “That which exists is One; sages call it by various names”.

He claimed Muhammad was a great messenger of light and a great teacher!

“The Hindus say .. this Atman is absolute ... There cannot be two infinities, for they would limit each other and would become finite ... each individual ... is a part ... of that Universal Soul ... therefore, in injuring his neighbour, the individual ... injures himself ... the basic .. truth underlying all ethical codes.” [p77]

Caste is seen as an ordering by nature.

Vivekananda said the Brahmins sucked the blood of millions of poor people.

The Sudras are the lowest caste since the Hindu scriptures leave them out of the ‘Aryan’ category.

Vivekananda: “You are all Gods. One God is not sufficient. You are all Gods, says the Vedanta” [p101]

Satyayuga is the Golden Age of Truth.

At the Parliament of Religions on 20 September 1893, he Buddha espoused truths of the Hindu religion alone, and that his followers had distorted it.

IV) Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (pp. 114-185)

Vinayak politicised religion becoming the prophet of extremism in India.

He claimed [perhaps with merit] the British only came to India because materialism was more important to them than Jesus.

“Only the sword can save the sage.”

Giuseppe Mazzini became an inspiration for Indians with his teaching that guerrilla insurrection was invincible and indestructible.

“Hindu” is derived from Sindhu , or the Indus lands.