CHAPTER – II

HINDU APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

This Chapter is an attempt to analyse Hindu response to ‘Religious Pluralism’. The term ‘Hindu’ or ‘Hinduism’ requires a few words of explanation for the sake of precision and clarity. The term religious pluralism has already been defined. Now let us see how the word ‘Hindu’ or ‘Hinduism’ has emerged and understood.

‘Hinduism’ is a word very loosely used and extremely difficult to define. ‘Hinduism’ primarily is not a religious concept but one of geographical origin, derived from Sanskrit, a variant of the term ‘Hindu’ was used by an ancient Persians, Greeks and Arabs to describe the way of life characteristic of the people of ‘Sindhu’ or dwellers in the land of a river Indus.¹

The term ‘Hindu’ was first used under the foreign domination of the Muhammadan to mean unconverted native Indians.² The term ‘Hinduism’ has been adopted by the English in the early nineteenth century and was traditionally not used by Indians to describe their religious beliefs and practices and introduced into English in 1829.³ Louis Renou, S.R. Roy, Y. Masih etc., think that classical Hinduism is a matter of later growth which has incorporated into it many elements that are opposed to Vedism.⁴ In this context the great Hindu Philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes that ‘Hinduism’ has taken:

So much from the social life of the Dravidians and other native inhabitants of India that is very difficult to disentangle the original Aryan elements from others. The interpenetration has been complex, subtle and continuous with the result... that Hindu civilization neither Aryan nor Dravidian nor aboriginal.⁵
For Radhakrishnan Hinduism is more a civilization than a culture.⁵

According to T.M.P. Mahadevan:

Therefore Hinduism is not to be considered as a single creed or cult but as a league of religions, a fellowship of faiths.⁷

According to Jawaharlal Nehru:

Hinduism as a faith is vague, amorphous, many sided, all things to all men. It is hardly possible to define it or indeed to say precisely whether it is a religion or not in the usual sense of the word. In its present form as well as in the past it embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest, often opposed to or contradicting each other. Its essential spirit seems to be to live and let live.⁸

According to Gandhi:

It is the search for Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe in God, and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth. It is the religion of Truth. Truth is God. Denial of God we have known. Denial of Truth we have not known.⁹

Hence Hinduism comprises within it a number of religious beliefs, practices, Āryan, non-Āryan often mutually contradicting, vague and amorphous. It does not have a monolithic structure nor does it have a theological unity. Thus within Hinduism, there is a sort of pluralism of beliefs and practices. Its essential spirit is to live and let live.

Within Hinduism there are different schools of Philosophies and Sampradāyas (sects).¹⁰ As against Brāhmanism, which stresses Karma or the performance of sacrificial rituals ordained in the Vedic Samhitas and Brahmanas, there arose advaitic emphasis or Jñāna, i.e., the ultimate goal of human life is attained by jñāna or knowledge of the identity of jīva with Brahman. But both the Brahmānic sacrificial ritual and the advaitic philosophy of nirguna Brahman with its emphasis on jñāna were beyond the reach of the
common mass. As a result there arose the theistic Hinduism with its emphasis on *bhakti* or belief in and trust on a loving personal God.

Within the theistic Hinduism there arose different traditions or *sampradayas* or sects. Apart from these *sampradayas* Hinduism hardly had any independent entity. The most important *Sampradayas* are *Vaisnnavism*, *Saivism* and *Saktism*.¹¹

Hinduism undergo remarkable transformation from 19ᵗʰ century onwards due to its contact with Christianity and western ideas of liberalism and rationality, which challenged many of its traditional beliefs and practices. Many renaissant movements arose to defend Hinduism and its culture. Some of them expressed a tendency towards the preservation of the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, while rejecting some social evils. This was vitalized by the different interpretations of Historians.

The Orientalists or Indologists by and large saw the ancient Indians as a people with an idyllic society. They evolved the theory of Indo-European homeland and of the common ancestry of the Greek and Sanskritic cultures. They identified with an idealized culture of Indian antiquity.¹² The writings of such Orientalists influenced not only Indian circles in as much as many of the religious and social reform movements of the 19ᵗʰ century laid stress on *Vedic* culture as the root of the Indian tradition and made it the Ideal. *Āryasamāj* is an example.

Where as the Utilitarians convinced that the coming of the British to India was a god-sent event as British administration would bring political awareness to the Indian people and it would end the backwardness of India.¹³ Among
Utilitarians James Mill's History of British India was that in a sense it laid the foundation for a communal interpretation of Indian History.\textsuperscript{14} Mill's history was severely critical of Hindu culture as backward and inimical to progress.

This led to Orientalists and later to Indian historians, having to defend 'Hindu civilization'. The Indian historians' writings were influenced by the national movement and they relied more heavily on the work of the Orientalists. They glorified the ancient culture of India and frequently referred to as Hindu India. Now they began to re-state, re-define and re-interpret the fundamentals of Hinduism in the newly arisen complex situation of the world. The Ramakrishna mission and its founder Swami Vivekanananda represent this tendency in an organized way. This renaissant re-interpreted Hinduism of modern times which extends roughly from Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) to Radhakrishnan (1908-1975) may be termed as Neo-Hinduism\textsuperscript{15}

'Hindu response to Religious pluralism' is to be considered many things: What do the Hindu scriptures say about the relationship between various religious traditions? How did \textit{Vedic Brāhmanism} respond to various non-\textit{Vedic} religions and cultural traditions in its evolution to Classical Hinduism? How did Hinduism react to heterodox (\textit{nāstika}) religions like Jainism and Buddhism? How did the Philosophical schools and \textit{sampradāyas} within Hinduism view each other? What is its attitude towards non-indigenous religions like Christianity and Islam? Each of these questions deserves careful and detailed study. Since this research is mainly concentrated on the contemporary communalism in India, it is necessary to pay attention in the modern Hindu responses to other religions. But the modern responses are in a sense re-statements or re-interpretations of the past Hindu responses to similar
situations, it gives urgency to look into the past Hindu responses in such contexts.

Since the *Vedic* scriptures enjoy supreme authority in Hinduism, the modern Hindu thinkers seek, ideas from the scriptures to support their respective views. Since the Hindu religious tradition is a conglomeration of many religions, faiths, cultures and traditions with its large and enormous variety of literatures, it is relatively difficult to study all the texts and make definitive statements. But the *Rigveda* and *Bhagavad Gītā* are considered as examples, because the *Rigveda* being the earliest and most important of the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gītā* enjoys immense popularity. Vivekananda says, “It is the crown jewel of all Indian literature.”16 The *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇas* and some other religious texts are made use to understand how different religious traditions within Hinduism responded to each other and how Hinduism reacted in the past to non-*Vedic* indigenous religions especially to Buddhism.

There are many reformers and thinkers in modern Hinduism, who have been responded to religious pluralism. Of those reformers and thinkers only four are selected in this work, viz., Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, V.D. Savarkar and Golwalkar. They are selected as representatives of certain different Models or tendencies in modern Hindus with regard to its attitude towards other faiths. Dayananda Saraswati and Aryasamaj were taken because he was the man who seriously relied as the Orientalist interpretation of Indian History and its importance to *Vedic* culture. More over he was the first man, who propounded the theory of *Śuddhi* and *Sanghatan*, which in response to other religions.
The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) convened a meeting at Pune in January 1994, where Arun Shouri, a renowned Journalist, was invited to speak as the Hindu perception of the work of Christian missionaries in India. Where he quotes continuously from two stalwarts of Indian nationalism, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Swami Vivekananda because the symbol of the religious awakening of India since the Parliament of religions in Chicago in 1893. Vivekananda took Hinduism in America, Europe, and presented Advaita as the only universal religion. Hence, Swami Vivekananda’s approach to other religions discussed in this Chapter.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Nation is another important figure of contemporary Hinduism, and his approach to contemporary communalism is the crucial part of this study, will be discussed separately. V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar have taken because they played a very significant role in the process of revitalization and self-conscientization of Hindu society. The contemporary Hindu organizations of Sanghh Parivar viz., R.S.S. V.H.P, Bajrang Dal etc., are greatly influenced by the teachings of these leaders. V.D. Savarkar’s concept of ‘Hindutva’ and Golwalkar’s books, ‘Bunch of Thoughts, and we or our Nationhood Defined’, immensely influenced these organizations to counter other religions with a spirit of militancy. Hence present study seeks to investigate the response of each of these exponents of Modern Hinduism and the implications of their positions for inter religious relationship in the contemporary India.
A. HINDU SACRED TEXTS AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

This section is not an exhaustive study of the extensive religious literature of Hindus. The purpose is only to trace in brief outline the variant responses to religious diversity as reflected in some of the most important sacred texts.

1. THE RIGVEDA

Towards the middle of the second millennium BC., the nomadic hardy Aryan tribes emerged into the plains of the Indus, defeated the dark skinned, flat nosed towns people, and occupied the country.\(^{18}\) The *Rigveda* provides much information regarding the religion and culture of the Indo-Aryans. They called the natives of India, *Dāsyus* or *Dusas.*\(^{19}\) The hymns of the *Rigveda* reveal their attitude to non-Āryan people. In several hymns of the *Rigveda* the theme is the struggle between the Āryans and the Dāsas. The relationship seams primarily antagonistic in nature. The non-Āryans are called *Piśacas* and *rākaṇas.*\(^{20}\) They consider the non-Āryans as enemies (*amitrāh or sātruh*) (10:84:7; 3:30:16)

Thus we read in (10:22:8)

Against us is the riteless senseless Dāsyā
In human, keeping alien laws;
Do thou, O slayer of the foe,
This Dāsyu’s weapon circumvent.

The hymns clearly depict the Dāsyus as godless, riteless, senseless, inhuman people, keeping some unknown, alien laws. One must not infer from this that the non-Āryan people were irreligious. They had their own gods, rituals and laws, though to the Aryans they appeared “alien laws” (10:22:8). John Marshall has described the non-Āryan god in the following words:
The God, who is three faced, is seated on a low Indian throne in a typical attitude of yoga, with legs bent double beneath him, heel to heel, and toes turned downwards. His hands with thumbs to front, resting on his knees.... The lower limbs are base and the phallus (ūrdhvamedra) seemingly exposed... crowning his head is a pair of horns meeting in a tall head-dress. To either side of the God are four animals, an elephant and tiger on his proper right, a rhinoceros and buffalo on his left...²¹

But the Rigveda describes them as abused and disgraced as Śiṣṇa-devah, which may be interpreted as ‘whose god is Phallus’, that is, Phallus worshippers. Thus we read in (7:21:5).

No Phallus worshippers (sisna-devah) come near our offering.

In (10:99:3) it says that Indra has slain (Śiṣṇa-devah). All these passages clearly show that the Āryans were hostile to Dāsyus on religious grounds.

The Rigveda indicates that Āryans were antagonistic towards the non-Āryan natives of the land. There were conflicts not only between the Āryans and the non-Āryan Dāsyus but also among Āryan tribes themselves. Thus one reads in Rigveda (6:33:3)

Both these our foes, Our Dasa and our Ārya enemies, hast thou, heroic Indra destroyed.

In the Rigveda (4:42) we see the competing claims of Varuṇa and Indra to a position of supremacy.

Varuṇa speaks:

I am king, mine is Lordship. All the gods are subject to me...

Then Indra claims:

I am the mighty one who stirs up the fight and whirs up the dust, in my overwhelming strength.

In Rigveda (6:69:8) we see the rivalry between Indra and Viṣṇu.
Again in (6:69:8) we read of Indra and Viṣṇu:

Both of them enter into rivalry with each other but none has been the victor over the other. Indra and Viṣṇu were rivals to each other, and out of their conflict were produced the three thousand.

*Rigveda* clearly suggests that during these fights, many gods lost their power, position and vitality and receded to the background. At first *Indra* is honoured as the highest of the gods, but slowly *Viṣṇu* takes precedence over him.\(^{22}\)

The quarrel among the gods clearly reflects the conflict of religious cultures among various clans. Elevating the predominance of one God reflects either the subordination of other gods or negation or absorption of other gods in the supreme one.\(^{23}\)

The plurality of gods fighting with each other annoyed the rational minds of the *Vedic* sages. So they ask “To what god shall we offer our oblation” (*Rigveda* 10:21). Which is the real god? Then there emerged the concept of one supreme god, who created the heaven and earth (*Rigveda* 10:81,82). Many places that god is called *Prajāpati* (the Lord of creatures).\(^{24}\) He is also called *Viśvakarman* or *Hiranyagarbha* (*Rigveda* 10:121). But the *Vedic* seers did not negate other gods. Here we use see one of the significant characteristics of *Vedic* religion, i.e. One supreme being with all other subordinate gods. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan affirms:

The gods were ruling in their own respective spheres under the suzerainty of the supreme. Their powers were delegated and their lordship was only a *viceroyalty*, but not sovereignty.\(^{25}\)

This we see in the role of *Viṣṇu*, who received supreme position in the later Hinduism occupies only an unimportant position in the early *Rigveda*. But
later period Ṵiṣṇu becomes the most excellent of gods, victorious and pervades the whole universe.\textsuperscript{26} Thus we see in the \textit{Rigveda} itself a tendency of ‘supercilious inclusion’, where Ṵiṣṇu as the Supreme God and all other gods were only subordinates, partial and imperfect.\textsuperscript{27}

Another aspect is they tried to identify the gods with one another and with the One Supreme.\textsuperscript{28} for example, the poet addressing \textit{Agni}.

Thou art the birth, O Agni, art Varuṇa;
When kindled thou becomest Mitra;
In thee, O Son of Night, all gods are centred;
Thou art \textit{Indra} to the worshipper (5:3:1)

In 2:1 \textit{Agni} is identified with \textit{Indra}, Ṵiṣṇu, \textit{Brahmanspati}, Varuṇa, Mitra, Āryaman, Amśa Tvastri, Rudhra, Maruts, Puṣan, Savitri, Bhaga, Rbhu, Aditi, Sarasvatī, Ādityas etc. (See also 2:7: 1-77). \textit{Varuṇa} is identified with \textit{Indra} (4:42:3) and \textit{Prajāpati} with \textit{Viśvakarman} (10:81:82) and with \textit{Hiranyagarbha} (10:121).

By subordinating all the deities to the Supreme Being, the gods lost their power and positions. They were made inferior to the One supreme whose will they carry out. This is one type of response one can have towards other faiths. i.e., One’s own faith is perfect and superior. Other faiths are regarded as inferior and partial. This view tolerates the other, but does not consider it as equally valid. It tries to subdue and dominate the other. It can accommodate any god of any people but only as a servant or assistant of one’s own who alone is Supreme.

But in the second case i.e., by identifying the gods with one another and with one Supreme, all gods are accepted as different manifestations or forms of
the One and the same Divine Being. This idea is clearly and distinctly stated in (RV 1:164:46)

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni
And he is the Divine, fine-winged Garutmat;
The truth is one, the wise call it by many names;
They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan

The same idea is also expressed in (10:114:5)

According to this principle different gods are but the different names of one Reality (Sat). Since all gods are manifestations of the One and the same divinity “any one of them could be identified with any other or all the rest.”

Here the attitude of one religion to another is not simply an attitude of toleration or acceptance of another’s god, “but acceptance of all gods imagined by all other sages as identical with one’s own, the One Deity without a second.”

This absorption or assimilation into one religion of other faiths proves a threat to the identity of other faiths. Hence this self-centred “inclusivism” is one of the noteworthy features of Vedic religion. Hiriyanna, observes, “this has been a noteworthy feature of Hinduism viz., its absorption of other creeds into itself by explaining the gods worshipped in them as but manifestations of the One Supreme Being.”

Lal Mani Joshi comments, this secret of everlasting persistence and vitality of the Vedic religion lies in its strong tendency to assimilate doctrinal and practical elements from all other races, cultures and religions. This fact is also acknowledged and stressed by the stalwarts of Neo-Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda says:

“...our religion is one of inclusion of every one, exclusion of none.”
The above passages cited from *Rigveda* denote some of the features of *Vedic* religion, which is already rooted in its culture and attitude towards other faiths:

i. Animosity leading to self centred exclusivism, which maintains that only one's own religion is true and all others are false.

ii. Fight for superiority and the tendency to make others subordinate to it and to tolerate them as long as they accept its superiority.

iii. Conflicts in the *Vedic* religion is for the acquisition of power in the society.

iv. The absorption or assimilation principle, i.e., the policy of inclusivism.

Any religion, which constitute the above features in its nature and has a majority in the number of adherents, may not co-exist and co-operate with other faiths, which are a minority. Hence, it creates tension and conflict in the society.

The above values and worldviews precipitated in the *Vedic* period simultaneously run through the history of Hinduism and transform the face of the Indian subcontinent. One should not think that those attitudes solely represent the attitude of all Hindus.

2. THE BHAGAVAD GĪṬĀ

In the relentless movement of *Kālapravāham* many beautiful works of art, architecture and literature have suffered erosion. The Bhagavad Gita however has managed to survive the ravages of time and has won a unique place in the hearts of millions in the *Punya Bhārata Ksetre*. The Gitā systematically analysed different currents of thought prevalent at the time of its composition, competing with each other and tried to synthesis the positive
elements of these teachings. Thus we see in it the ritualistic Brahmanism (Pūrva Mimamsa) views that by fulfilling the Vedic injunctions we attain perfection, the Sāmkhya doctrine that liberation can be obtained by the distinctive knowledge of Puruṣa and Prakriti; the Yoga system of discipline and meditation as a method by which the goal of life can be gained; the Advaitic thought based on Upaniṣads, which held that Jīva, the individual self is non different from Brahman, the Absolute Reality which is impersonal, by the knowledge of which Mokṣa can be obtained. Jainism with its Sramanic virtues, Buddhism with its sramanic virtues and monastic movements, and the Bhāgavata theism, which declares Bhagavan or Isvara, identified with Krisna as the Ultimate Supreme goal.34

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan points out, the Gita attempts "to synthesis the heterogeneous elements and fuse them into a single whole."35 He goes on to say that the Gitākāra refines and reconciles the different currents of thought... He draws all these living elements of Hindu life and thought into an organic unit. He adopts the method, not of denial but of penetration and shows how these different lines of thought converge towards the same end 36

To illustrate this point, the Gitākāra takes the concept of Karma, which was prevalent in the religio-philosophical landscape. The Vedic Karma involved sacrifice (Yajna) to the devas, for the attainment of Svarga and the preservation of the cosmic rūm. The Upaniṣadic concept of Karma on the other hand is no longer concerned with sacrifice, but emphasizes that one’s own birth is decided by desire and past Karma. Here we see the link between Karma and the Punarjanma. Jaina concept of Karma includes actions of mind, and it is a kind of atomic dyestuff infiltrated into Jīva. Thus infecting it with Kārmic
body, *(Karmana kāya)* it conditions its birth and liberations. In Buddhism *triṣṇa* is the basic factor out of which arises *Karma*, eventually *dukhabhāva* and *punarjanma*. The knowledge leads to *nivṛti*, the relinquishing of activity. The Buddhists favoured retirement from society and contemplative inactivity.

The concept of above *karma* analysis so far can be termed horizontal as no vertical element is seen in this concept.

In the age of *Gitakāra*, India witnessed deep tensions and conflicts between *Brāhmanic* way of rituals and *Srāmanic* virtues promulgated by Jainism and Buddhism through their doctrines of *ahimsa*, nonviolence, *Sannyasa* and *naiskarmya* (actionless). So the conflict between *Sanatana dharma* and *Srāmanic dharmas* created utter confusion and confusion in society.  

Hence Gita 4:16 says,

*Kīm karma kīm akarma iti*

*Kāvya 'py, atra mōhitah*

What is action? What is actionless? In this matter even the sages are perplexed.

By the composition of Gita, the *Gitākāra* brings about a synthesis of these conflicts. The genius of the *Gitākāra* takes *Kriṣṇa*-monotheism as the archetype and paradigm of all actions. In the *pramāṇa* of God’s *karma* found the reconciliation of *karma* and *akarma*. So the Gita says human beings must initiate and follow the *karma* of God. The three core passages express the essence of divine activity.
According to the paradigm of God's work human beings must act, and work should be regarded as essentially a sacrifice. But in the Gita 18:3 says

Some learned men declare that action should be given up as evil. While others say that acts of sacrifice (yajña), gift (dāna) and austerity (tapas) should not be given up.

Also in the Gita 18:5 we read

*yajña, dāna, tapas* are obligatory works never to be Abandoned, that purifies the wise.

But these works "ought to be performed giving up attachment and desire for fruits" (18:6). In (16:21) kāma, krōḍha, lōbha are the triple gates of hell. So the Gita advocates renunciation to kill the desire for the fruits of deeds. "Gita teaches not renunciation of action but renunciation in action" In (2:20) the famous yōga of *niskāma-karma*, the activity devoid of desire (kāma) for the fruits of works is formulated, which is the original discovery of the *Gītākāra*. It writes *karma* and *akarma* (3:4) and (2:47). And in 3:25 says:

... detached perform bring about the welfare of the world.

And in 3:19 says:

By doing duty without attachment men verily obtain the supreme.

The *Gītakāra*'s new theory of *niskāmakarma* combined both the ideals of Pravritti of *Vedic* and nivriti of *Sramaṇa* dharmas. Now the question is how to get rid of *Kama* in *Karma*. Here the Gita advocates paying attention to the Supreme (*Param*). At this point the doctrine of *niskāma-karma* is further synthesized with that of *bhakti* or devotion to God. The Gita (8: 5-22) describes the idea of *bhakti* fixing the mind and self upon the *Bhagavān* and this is basically through love. For that we have to practice *Karmāsu kausalam* (wisdom in actions 2:55).
Thus we read (11:55)

Do works for me, make me your highest goal, be loyal in love to me, cut off all (other) attachments, have no hatred for any being at all: For all who do thus shall come to me.

This is how the Gitā synthesizes the antinomic teachings and diverse religious trends of its paths of liberation, viz., Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Dhyāneyoga. Gita does not reject any of these paths as ineffective or useless. Any one can follow any of these paths to attain Supreme. (13: 24-25; 4: 36; 18: 62, 66; 9:33; 12: 7-8). But Gita tries to combine each one without the other as a means. The Dhyāneyoga is seen as means to attain Jñāna (6:8) and Dhyāna is to be practiced with Bhakti (6: 14-15), Karma and Jñāna are not different (5:4), Karma and Bhakti should be practiced together for attaining the goal (18: 56). But there is only one path Catholic, comprehensive and easy that anybody can follow. It is the way of devotion (Bhakti). The Gitā is certain on this point. So in (9: 30-32) it is said:

Even if a man of the most sinful conduct worships Me with undeviating devotion... soon he becomes a man of righteousness and obtains lasting peace. O, Kaunteya, know for certain that my devotee never perishes. For these who take refuge in me, though they be of inferior birth-woman, Vaisyan, and Sūdras – even they attain the supreme god.

So in conclusion the Gita advocates only to worship Krisna (18: 62)

Seek refuge in Him alone with all your being, O, Bharata, by His grace (tat prasādād) you will attain supreme peace and Eternal Abode.

In 18:66 continues

Give up all things of low, turn to Me your only refuge I will deliver you from all evils.

Here 'Mamēkam Šaraṇam vrija' shows a tone of exclusivism.
Thus the attitude of Gitā to divergent faith is not intolerant, but exclusive, accommodating and synthesizing. It has adopted a path to show that other paths are inadequate, incomplete and narrow, since those faiths are centred around the horizontal realm. But Gitākāra reverses the centre to the vertical realm. In De Smet's words "a Copernican reversal has taken place in the Karma theory and claimed the Gita's teachings supreme and superior to other faiths."41

The Gita presented almost a new and perfect God (Puruṣottama) Kṛiṣṇa, by integrating all the extent traditions in the Indian quest for God all of which were seen as imperfect and partial.42 In (7: 23-25) says:

Finite is the reward of men of little knowledge
.... but my worshippers come to Me.

The Gitākāra also tries to present Krisna who is better than and Superior to Buddha and his teachings.43

Thus the author presents Kṛiṣṇa not as one among the many Avatārs but as the one and only avatar of the Supreme God.44 Thus the Gitakāra tries to achieve his aim of establishing Kṛiṣṇa as a superior God, by integrating all the traditional quests for God. Gitākāra does not reject other gods, but they are all subsumed in him and emanate from him. Thus those who worship and offer sacrifices to other gods with devotion and faith are in fact considered to be worshipping Krisna, though they do not know him as he really is (9: 23-24). This attitude is same as the Christian attitude of fulfilment theory, where Christ is presented as the Crown of all gods, and Christ fulfilled all other revelations. A.L. Basham comments on the attitude of Gitākāra:
This is typical of the general inclusive attitude of later Hinduism, where every minor god everywhere has some validity, as an aspect of one divinity filling all space and time.\textsuperscript{45}

In the Gita, the One reality is related to Many, but it is a supercilious mystico-relationalism.\textsuperscript{46} This attitude does recognize the identity, integrity and wholeness of other faiths. In a sense it is a methodology of assimilating other religions in its monotheistic universal canopy – \textit{Kri\'\=na}. In this perspective the attitude of Gita is a kind of supercilious inclusivism.\textsuperscript{47}

The Gita (9:22, 10:7-11) emphasise that “the highest blessings fall only those who recognize \textit{Krisna} directly.” The supercilious inclusive attitude criticises those who disagree with it and the Gita uses words like (\textit{mudhah}) fools, (\textit{dushkritan}), (\textit{naradhama}), the lowest of men to those who do not take refuge in \textit{Krisna} (7:155; 3:32). This tone of the Gita also expressed an element of intolerance in the religious diversity. But this element of intolerance is negligible when we consider the general atmosphere of the Gita, which is tolerant, accommodative and sympathetic of religious diversity, especially within Hindu tradition.

3. **EPICS AND PURANAS**

Brahmanical learning centred on the \textit{Vedas} dominated Indian intellectual and literary life at least until the time of the Buddha. After Mauryan Period the situation changed considerably. Buddhists and Jains began to reject \textit{Vedas}, Br\'\=ahanical writings and \textit{Varn\=a\=rama dharma} system. New forms of writings had emerged from Buddhism and Jainism particularly suited to the mass. After the third century B.C two great epic poems were composed by the Brahmanas as a challenge to the Buddhist and Jain writings. Those poems were the
Mahabharata and Ramayana. Both poems are centred around the *avatāra* or incarnation of *Viṣṇu*.

Of the two, Mahabharata contains the oldest material. After the completion of Mahabharata and Ramayana, a new theistic writing centering on Siva and Visnu was well developed. The most important record of this theistic development is a class of writings called Puranas. These writings became the principal scriptures of theistic Hinduism. This section is a brief overview of some of the passages from Puranas and some of the writings about epic regarding the attitude of Brahmanism towards the indigenous non-Hindu religions especially to Buddhism.

(i) Āstika – Nāstika Rivalry

(a) Conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism.

The struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism was very strong right from the period of the Buddha till the disappearance of Buddhism. Pali texts express the hostile attitude of the Brahmanas towards Buddha and his followers.48

The *Samyutta Nikāya* records that the Buddha was not given even a meal in a village of Brahmanas.49 The *Digha Nikāya* tells of a noted Brahmana who hesitated to pay homage to the Buddha in the presence of other Brahmanas lest his community would excommunicate him.50 The Brahmanas used words like *Vasālaka* (out caste), *Mundaka* (shaven-headed) etc. abusing Buddhists.51

L.M. Joshi observes that the present form of Mahabharata with its ethics and philosophy would have been impossible without Buddhism.52 Inspite of the fact that the Mahabharata was compiled during the period when Buddhism
flourished the most in India (i.e., 400 B.C and 400 A.D) it carefully avoided the name of Buddha. Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra denounced Buddha as asura (demon) and advocated that “the wise should not honour his name”. Kumarila Bhatta accused Buddha as one who “transgressed dharma laid down for Kṣatriyas and he took himself to the profession of a religious teacher”, one who “deceives himself” and act contrary to the Vedas.

Coming to the sacred texts of the Hindus, in the Ayodhya Kanda of Ramayana, the Buddha is reviled as a thief (cōrah) and an atheist (nāstika).

The Laws of Manu ordain that the Pāṇḍins haitukas and such should never be honoured “even by greeting” (4:30)

The puranas and other works branded Jains and Buddhists with contemptuous names such as Paśāndins (heretics), nagnas (naked), atipāpih (wretched sinners) durācārah (those who do forbidden acts) etc. The story of King Sadhanus in Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3:18) reveals the Brahmanic hatred towards them. Satādhanus a true worshipper of Viṣṇu, moved by courtesy said a few words to a heretic on one sacred moment. As a result he was born successively as a dog, a jackal, a wolf, a vulture, a cow and a peacock, until the devotion of his wife Saivya succeeded in securing his rebirth into his royal rank. Having narrated this story the Viṣṇu Purana continues:

Such ...is the sin of conversing with heretic .... Let therefore a man carefully avoid the discourse or contract of an unbeliever (Pāśandibhih) especially at seasons of devotion and when engaged in the performance of religious rites.... Let not a person treat with even the civility of speech, heretics those who do forbidden acts (durācārah)... intercourse with such iniquitous wretches (atipāpih) even at a distance, all association with schismatics, defiles. Let a man therefore carefully avoid them..... These are the persons
called naked (nagnas) ... these are the unrighteous heretics to whom a must not give shelter.57

The *Brahannārādiya Purāṇa*58 (17:20), also warns people against talking to (17:20), looking at, or having any kind of contact with the Buddhists:

One who enters the house of a Boudha, even in great distress has no escape (from sin) even by (Practising) hundreds of Penances... A twice-born man, if he has nay regard for the *Vedas*, must not look at them. (One acquires sin), in case one enters the house of a Boudha knowing or unknowing. There is no escape (from sin if he does so) knowingly. This is the decision of the Śāstras (14:69-71)

*Nārada Purāṇa*59 forbids Brāhmaṇas from entering Buddhist sanctuaries:

A Brahmin who enters the Buddhist temple even in great calamity cannot get rid of the sin by hundreds of expiations since the Buddhists are heretics (*Pāśāndins*) and critics of *Veda* (1:15. 50-52)

*Vayu Purana*: (11:17, 24-25) says, “By touching...a dog, a candāla, a nagna like a digambara Jaina and similar people...one gets polluted. He must take bath along with his clothes and smear clay twelve times on himself. Then he becomes pure.” *Yajñāvalkya Smrithi*, cited from *Brahmānda Purāṇa*, where Buddhists and Jains are considered together with Kapalikas and Sattavatas, prescribes that “on touching Bouddhas, pasupattas, Jainas... a man should (in order to purify himself) bathe with clothes on.”60

In accepting the Brāhmanical traditional attitude to Buddhists, Swami Vivekananda rightly said that; the Hindus, strongly attached to their Brāhmanical tradition, do not acknowledge their debt to Budhist ideas and ideals...that is the Orthodox Hindus, because to them the Buddhists are heretics.61
What we have said so far is sufficient to show how the nāstika religions and its followers were hated and condemned by the exponents of Brahmanic Hinduism. However, a gradual change in the attitude towards the Buddha can be noted. In spite of the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanic Hinduism, an attempt was made among the Purānic authors to assimilate and accommodate the Buddha within the Hindu pantheon.

(b) Brahmanical Assimilation of Buddhism

The Puranic authors stretch out the doctrine to include the heretics also. This helped the development of Vaiṣṇavism. Vivekananda’s observation on the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism is as follows:

Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism are not two different things. During the decline of Buddhism in India, Hinduism took from her a few cardinal tenets of conduct and made them her own, and these have now come to be known as Vaiṣṇavism.62

Brahmanical Hinduism adopted the same methodology, which was used to bring about the synthesis seen in the Gita, i.e., the “Supercilious inclusivism technique, to assimilate and accommodate the Buddha within the Hindu Pantheon.63 They sought scriptural sanction for this from the Gita:

When there is a decay of dharma and rise of adharma ... for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of dharma I (Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa) am incarnated age after age.64

The absorption of Buddha into the Vaiṣṇava creed, in fact was a long process. In the Sānti-Parva (339: 103-104) of Mahābhārata and in many of the Purāṇas, The Buddha is not included in the ten avatārās.65 The Vṛddhaharita Smriti (10: 145-146) mentions ten avatārās, but includes Hayagriva instead of the Buddha and prohibits the worship of the Buddha.
But finally he was accepted as an avatāra. Thus, in one passage of the Matsya Purāṇa (285: 6-7) the name of the Buddha is included.66 The Narasimha Purāṇa (Ch. 36), Agni Purāṇa (Chs. 2-16, and 16: 12-13; 49:8) and Varāha Purāṇa (4:2) also include Buddha among the ten avatāras.

The Dasāvatāra carita of Kṣemendra (C.1066 AD) and the Gitagovinda (1:9) of Jayadeva (C 1180-1200 AD) speak of the Buddha as an avatara of Visnu.67

By the tenth century A.D., Buddha was completely absorbed in the puranic Visnu avatar.68 Even though the Brāhmanical Hinduism accepted Buddha as an avatar, they did not accept Buddha-dharma and Buddhists. Later Brahmanism accepted many of the Buddhist doctrines and assimilated a considerable body of the philosophical, moral ideas of Buddhism.69 The assimilation of Buddhism by Brahmanism has been interpreted as a major cause for the decline of Buddhism in its home land.

Joshi says:

Brahmanism killed Buddhism by a fraternal embrace.70

Swami Vivekananda observes:

Hinduism threw away Buddhism after taking its saps.71

Thus we find a strange and paradoxical attitude in Brahmanism towards Buddhism. At first Brahmanism had a deep-rooted opposition towards Buddhism. Later slowly included Buddha inside its tradition as one among the avatars of Visnu. “One” reality related to “Many”. Finally Brahmanism, applied its methodology of ‘supercilious inclusivism’ and assimilated Buddha and Buddhists in its Purānic garb. Both Radhakrishnan and D.D. Kosambi agreed this methodology as a strategy of Brahmanism adopted all through its
history, calculated to bring under its own control the people who followed different religions. R.C. Mujumdar, the historian, looks at this phenomenon and comments on the policy of Brahmanism:

This well conceived and bold stroke of policy cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism which was already steadily losing ground and the ultimate result was the complete effacement of Buddhism from India as a separate sect.

The ‘Supercilious inclusivism’ technique destroyed the boundary of Buddhism and disrupted its integrity and thereby its identity and then absorbed it into its Pantheon. Arnold Toynbee has observed the modus operandi adopted by Brahmanical Hinduism as that:

Hinduism despoiled a senile Buddhist Philosophy in order to acquire for itself the weapons with which it drove its philosophical rival out of their common homeland in the Indic world.

The modus operandi adopted by the Brahmanical Hinduism succeeded, in part, due to the decline of Buddhism, the later part due to the crusades of Kumarila and Sankara in the second half of the first millennium of the Christian era. Thus the Hindu religious tradition has become a composite culture of non-Vedic, Vedic and Srāmanic cultures. Now quoted from Swami Vivekananda, S.W. Bahkle refers to the Hindu religious tradition in India:

As a composite product in which the impersonal absolutism of Sankara the Bhakti-Mārga of Ramanuja and the humanism of the Buddhists had blended into each other.

Hence T.M.P Mahadevan says:

Hinduism is not a single creed or cult but a league of religions or fellowship of faiths.

From the above textual overview and the analysis of the writers of the texts, the present writer is inclined to say that the ‘supercilious inclusivism’
technique of the Puranic Hinduism has achieved to absorb and assimilate Buddhism (non-Vedic) into the Hindu religious tradition. It has also succeeded in claiming that the Vedic dharma, alone is true. Thus it upholds the spirit of ‘exclusivism’ and ‘inclusivism’, which is against pluralism.

4. EVALUATION

In the hymns of Rigveda, we have noted that the antagonistic attitude of Āryans towards the non-Āryan people in India. In the process of Aryanisation in Vedic period, many gods were amalgamated or absorbed in a Supreme god, and it seems that different gods are only manifestations of One supreme deity Visnu and all gods are subordinate, partial and imperfect. The Āryans called the non-Āryan people pīśacās and rāksāsās and non-Āryan gods as demons (āsuras).

The Gita synthesises divergent views and paths and brings all under Bhakti (devotion) to Krisna, who alone is true and worthy of worship (9:22; 7:14). Those who do not take refuge in Krīṣṇa are fools (7:15). The attitude of Gita towards diverse faiths, we have noted is a kind of ‘supercilious inclusion’. The Brahmanic Hinduism in Purāṇas assimilated Buddha as an avatāra of Viṣṇu and denounced Buddhists and Jains as Cōrah (thief) and Paśandins (heretics). The Purānic Hinduism aims to teach that the Vedic dharma alone is true and effective and those who abandon the Vedas are destined to perish.

The spirit of exclusivism, and supercilious, inclusivism were prevalent among Rigveda. The Bhagavad Gītā and Epics and Purāṇas. This attitude flares up as religious rivalry and animosity. The re-instatement of the Vedic religion and discarding of other religions are main response of Hindu religious traditions. If this tendency is resisted the Hinduism becomes intolerant.
As long as others accept its supremacy then it is tolerant and accommodative. These characteristics of early Hinduism we see in the Modern Hindu militant organizations such as Āryasamāj, Hindu Mahāsabha, Rāṣṭriya Swayam Sevak Saṅgh and Viswa Hindu Parishad etc. This will be discussed in the next section.

B. MODERN HINDU RESPONSES TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

In the textual study we have noted that the ‘Supercilious inclusion’ tactics of Hinduism, accommodates, tolerates and assimilates the religious faiths of Indian origin inside its developing tradition. As long as others accept its supremacy it is tolerant and accommodative. If any religious tradition does not accept it or resists its authority or uniqueness then Hinduism becomes intolerant, which is more a Universal phenomenon to other religions also. However with the coming of Christianity, especially the Christian missionary movement and Islam, the supremacy and ultimacy of Hinduism has been questioned and resisted. On the contrary they began to admit many Hindus to their own fold through conversions.

The Orientalist’s interpretation that the ancient Indian culture as ideal, and Sanskritic, Vedic culture as the root of the Indian tradition influenced the Hindu religious leaders of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Christian policy of conversion, western ideas of liberalism, and rationality and the Orientalist’s interpretation of Indian history created a new religious consciousness among the Hindus and thus the resisting face of Hinduism began to emerge.

The last decade of the 19th century is of prime significance in the emergence of modern Hindu organizations. The 20th century has witnessed to a
great extent two powerful feeling – love for one’s own nation and love for one’s own religion. This has resulted in the interdependent growth of excessive nationalism and religious fundamentalism. This kind of conscious interlocking between religion and territory promoted the idea that India is Hindustan, the land of Hindus. J.N. Farquhar calls this consciousness “religious nationalism”. G.R. Ram of Lucknow University refers to it as “Hindu nationalism” and K.W. Jones calls it “politcized Hinduism.” The nexus between nationalism and Religion in Pre-Independent India directly contributes to the defence and promotion of Hinduism. The seed of religious nationalism was sown in Punjab by the Āryasamāj, in Bengal it was watered by Bankin Chandra Chetterjee, Swami Vivekananda and others. It grew as a mighty tree in Maharashtra by Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vir Savarkar and his Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. K.B. Hedgewar and Golwalkar and Rāṣṭriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and Sangh Parivar have been primarily responsible for the defence and promotion of Hinduism. Among these reformers only four are taken as examples to study their responses to religious pluralism.

1. **Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was a giant figure of his time. His influence over the lives of thousands of people continues to this day through the Arya Samaj movement, which he founded in 1875, and was one of the pioneer movements.

Dayananda was born in 1824 in an orthodox Saiva Brahmin family. He studied under the Punjabi Vedic Scholar Dandi Swami Virjananda Mathura and this made him a missionary of Vedic dharma and a crusader against non-Vedic religions. He was influenced by Rajnarayan Bose’s lecture entitled
“the Superiority of Hinduism” which argued that all other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism were finite and faulty. Dayananda’s magnum opus, Satyarth Prakash was first published in 1875. A revised edition (1884) contained three new chapters, one on Christianity and the other on Islam. One chapter deals with the religions of India (Carvaka, Buddhism & Jainism). This book contain the basic teachings of Dayananda and thus of the Aryasamaj. This book also contains Dayananda’s bitter criticisms of the major non-Vedic religions of Indian Origin. This work is accepted as the authorized edition by the Arya Samaj.

a. Vedic Religion as the Only True Religion

The Āryasamāj teaches that the Vedic religion is the only true religion revealed by God for all. Those who do not believe in the Vedas are atheists and they are “sunk in ignorance and misery.”

Those who do not understand and scoff at the Vedas and the teachings of the Vedic religion are “Scoundrels.” Thus for Dayananda and the Āryasamāj the Vedic religion is exclusively true and is to be followed by all. Dayananda is also against the view that “all religions are good hence it is not good to criticize any one of them”. In maintaining that the Vedic dharma alone is true, Dayananda stresses that all other religions are false. Dayananda uses very strong terms to characterize such religious preachers who do not advocate the Vedic faith. They are ‘hypocrites’, ‘rascals’, ‘rogues’, ‘scoundrels’, ‘imposters’, ‘quacks’, defrauders’, and ‘tricksters’. Dayananda looked for a world in which all the existing religions would vanish and the Vedic religion would reign supreme.
Dayananda Saraswati's attitude to other religions as displayed in *Satyārth Prakāsh* is strongly condemnatory, predominantly negative and positively intolerant and aggressive. Jordens observes, "there is quite a lot of sarcastic bitterness" in the criticism of other religions. Dayananda called Jainism a "most dreadful religion" the founders and followers of which are "in dense ignorance". Their 'tīrthankarās were ignorant'. Dayananda condemned Christianity as a hollow religion, a "barbarous religion and a ‘false religion’ believed only by fools and by the people of in a state of barbarism." Jesus was one who "talked.... nonsense like a savage", "...not a seer, not even an enlightened man". For Dayananda Islam is a “false religion” that “does nothing but harm” and is to be utterly discarded. The Quran is full of terror written by "some ignorant man’ and believed only “by savages and not by enlightened man”. Muhammad was not a “Pious man or Prophet”. But immoral and lascivious. The militant Āryas followed the path of Dayananda and rejected any suggestions to soften Dayananda’s criticism of other faiths or to change in any way the word of their *rsi*.

b. The Ārya Samajists are the ‘Nazis’ of Hindusthan.

The Guardian observes the elevated position of Dayananda and Arya Samaj in the following words:

The Arya Samajists are the Nazis of Hindustan, they anticipated Hitler by almost a century. This striking statement was made by Shri. Shankaracharya of Karvir pith (Dr. Kurtakoti) while opening 61st anniversary celebration meeting of the Arya Samaj at Bombay recently (in 1936). ‘The Aryasamaj he continued has become today a name that means the vanguard of Hindu society.... It was the genius of Shri. Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of
Ārya Samāj discovered the almost forgotten name (Āryans) of the people of 'Āryavarta'.

This clearly reveals the militant attitude and programme of Ārya Samāj toward the faith of other people in India.

C. India is the Land of Āryans: Āryavarta

In Satyārth Prakāśh, Chapter XI one finds the appreciation and admiration of Āryavarta. According to Dayananda Saraswati:

This country is called Āryavarta, because it has been the abode of Āryas from the very dawn of creation. It is bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Vindhayachala mountains, on the west by the Attok (Indus) and on the east by the Brahmaputra. The land included with these limits is Āryavarta and those that have been living in it from time immemorial are also called Āryans.

The rest of the world, including South India for him is mlecchadesa, the land of desyus, the rouges and the wicked. Āryavarta is unique and incomparable. Āryans were the sovereign rulers of the entire world and all other nations were subject to the suzerainty of the Āryavarta. After the Mahabharata war Āryavarta lost its political integrity and political control of the whole world. So the mission of the Ārya Samāj is Krīnāvanto Visvamāryam. “Let the whole world be made Āryan.” Rigveda (9: 63:5).

In order to establish Aryan religion in the world, the Truth must be defended and disseminated while falsehood must be checked, shunned and rejected. Therefore, the Āryans are obliged to defend their religion in the face of opposition and attack from falsehood and dangerous teachings of other religions. This position of Dayananda was a call to the Hindus to acknowledge the essential need of apologetic and polemics as well and to resort to necessary
and appropriate actions. So Ārya Samāj reform was to revive, *rejuvenate* and restore the pure religion of the land. He effected a marriage between religion and politics, which resulted in a politicization of religion and a sacralization of politics.\textsuperscript{99} This paved way for the development and interpretation of Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism. So loyalty to Hindu religion and culture.\textsuperscript{100} All non-Hindu aspects were regarded as contaminating influences.\textsuperscript{101} Even though this resulted in widespread communal riots, it introduced a new sense of elevated identity among the Hindus which successively resulted in the emergence of a spirit of militancy. D.S. Sarma calls this as the “Church Militant” in Hinduism.\textsuperscript{102}

The apologetic and polemic writings of the Ārya Samāj have been intended to enhance the prospect of Hinduism and curb that of the *non-Vedic* and non-Indian religions.

d. The Śuddhi and Sanghathan Movements

The Śuddhi and Sanghathan Movements had specific role in causing a communal resurgence in British India. According to D.S. Sarma, Śuddhi is a means to convert non-Hindus to Hinduism, it is also a means to reclaim or reconvert Hindus now in Islam or Christianity.\textsuperscript{103} Dayananda’s attack on other religions like Christianity and Islam was vigorous. J.F. Seunarine observes that the Śuddhi activity made the Muslim-Arya antagonism its high watermark in the twenties.\textsuperscript{104}

Swami Sharaddhananda played a decisive role in the formation of Sanghathan.\textsuperscript{105} Hindu Sanghathan stands for the consolidation of the Hindu community, whereby Hinduism can attain strength. Its main objective is to
re-convert the former Hindus and convert the non-Hindus to Hinduism, thereby absorbing the whole populace into the main stream of Hindu life. The Ārya Samāj advocated even violence as a legitimate means to defend and promote the cause of Hinduism. In short, the Ārya Samāj wanted to establish a Hindu nation by establishing a common religion and culture in India. Again D.S. Sarma describes the Sanghathan in the following lines:

The word Sanghathan means union. Therefore, it implies the programme of the Ārya Samāj the organization of the Hindus for self defence... The Hindus should cultivate a militant spirit and go and meet the enemy and attack him in his stronghold... This militant spirit of the Samāj has introduced into Hindu society a tone of manliness and a sense of self-respect, which it lost during the centuries of Muslim rule.\(^\text{106}\)

The Sanghathan movement advocates a definite strategy to defend the Hindu community. The Śuddhi movement has a clear recruitment strategy.

The conversions and re-conversions have become a sensitive issue in the contemporary India. The Ārya Samaj policy of śuddhi and Sanghathan had immensely influenced the Sangh Parivar organizations (B.J.P., V.H.P., Bajrangdal and R.S.S.), and they have been pursuing an agenda of reconverting more and more tribals and Hindus, who had embraced Christianity. Mr. Dilip Singh Judeo, two time BJP Rajya Sabha member has formed the Akhil Bhāratīya Vanvāsi Kalyān Āshram which is engaged full time in the re-conversion exercise in Madhya Pradesh.\(^\text{107}\) It is reported that it is Judeo’s “gharvapsi” operation. This has been described by the Madhya Pradesh Christian Association as a “highly co-ercive and unconstitutional exercise.”\(^\text{108}\) Sumit Sarkar says, “the VHP never acknowledge this as conversion, but described by terms like Śuddhi, reconversion or Parivartan, turning back.”\(^\text{109}\)
It has been noted that any religion which claims that it is the only true, supreme absolute and ultimate and condemning other religions as false by using aggressive and vulgar words will generate communal tension. The reasons that Mr. Madanlal Khurana’s exist from the Union Cabinet and National Executive of BJP Government is reported that the Bajrangdal—VHP members are engaged in destroying the nation’s pluralist and democratic traditions by inciting communal passions.\(^{110}\) It seems that Sangh Parivar is perpetuating the policy of Arya Samaj, i.e., “triumph of one religion and destruction of others.”\(^{111}\) This policy never brings forth unity and peace. The only way to unity is peaceful co-existence.

2. Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, the great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was the first missionary and the apostle of Modern Hinduism. He took the message of Hinduism to Europe and America. He not only defended the cause of Hinduism, but also initiated and inspired the attempt to universalize its message. The character and nature of contemporary Hinduism can hardly be grasped without reference to the interpretation of Swami Vivekananda. K.M. Panikkar says that he may rightly be called the ‘new Sankaracharya’, who unified the Hindu ideology through his interpretation of Vedanta.\(^{112}\)

Vivekananda’s approach to religious pluralism seems very complex.\(^{113}\) It is conglomeration of friendly, patronizing, hostile and dogmatic attitude.
i. Harmony of Religions

(a) Religion and Religions

Vivekananda was one of the foremost of modern thinkers who recognized the fact of religious pluralism. After studying the major religions of the world, he repeatedly treated this issue in his writings and speeches.

Though there are differences between religions in doctrines, rituals and myths, which may appear as conflicting and contradicting, Vivekananda finds a unity and harmony underlying all of them. According to Vivekananda, to recognize the eternal harmony that runs in and through all the various religions is "crying necessity of the day." How does, then, Vivekananda explain the unity and harmony of various religions? How do various religions related to each other? Why should there be so many religions?

In answering these questions Vivekananda makes distinction between the One Eternal Religion – the Sanātana Dharma – and particular historical religions. Religion for Vivekananda means realization. Vivekananda defines realization in different terms: as "realizing of God in the Soul," as re-union with God, or ... with divinity which is every man's true nature," as realization of "truth within" which is "oneness" Therefore, for Vivekananda Religion means Truth itself and the Truth to be realized.

This religion is One and Eternal. "There never existed many religions, there is only the One. One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist..." This is the Universal Religion.

Then what about the particular historical religions? How do they relate to this one Sanātana dharma? He holds that the different existent religions are
"the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness." They are further described as different "adaptations", "manifestations", "various phases" of the Eternal Religion. The particular religions are also understood as "the different visions of the same truth from different standpoints" and so many forms only of one underlying Eternal Religion. Thus Vivekananda contents that all religions are related to the Religion, i.e., the source of all religions are one and the same. They therefore need not be considered as contradictory, but supplementary and complementary.

(b) All Religions are One in Essence

Since all religions point beyond themselves to the Religion, to the Truth, to God, Vivekananda argues, "the same fundamental principles are taught in all religions."

While the underlying principle is eternal and infinite, the different expressions or visions of it in various religions are necessarily finite and partial. This means that there is no truth in its totality in any one of the religions. Yet it is the same truth, the same God, the same Religion that all religions express or manifest. This Reality/Truth is the "essence" or "substance" of all religions. It is only that the same truth is expressed in different names and forms in various religions. Therefore, Vivekananda maintains all religions are "One in essence" or "in essentials."

To say that all religions are one in essence is not to deny the differences among religions. But the differences are "One of expressions and not of substance." The differences are only in 'externals' and 'secondary details', but in essence they are all one and the same. Vivekananda was here what
his master Sri. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had taught. Here are the words of Ramakrishna:

Truth is one; only it is called by different names. All people are seeking the same Truth... A lake has so many ghats from one ghat the Hindus take water in jars and call it jala from another ghat the Musalmans take water in leather bags and call it pāni. From a third, the Christians take the same thing and call it ‘water’. Suppose some one says that the thing is not ‘jala’ but ‘pāni’ or that it is not pāni but ‘water’ or that it is not ‘water’ but jala. It would indeed be ridiculous.129

Vivekananda also says that it is God himself who is manifested as Christ, Kriṣṇa, Buddha and “all the great teachers.”130 We are also told that Siva, Viṣṇu, Buddha and Jina, Jehova, Allah and Brahma are the same.”130 Thus Vivekananda argues that all religions are really one, different only in the form of worship.132

(c) All Religions are One in Their Goal

It has been indicated that religions being various expressions point beyond themselves to God whom they express. Religions are, then pointers to God who is the centre and the goal of all religions. Thus Vivekananda arrives at the conclusion that “the aim and the end of all religions is but one.” This goal of all religions is “to realize God” and this realization is what he called Religion distinct from religions.133 As the different rivers, though they are different in names and forms, all run to the same ocean, the various religions aim at the same goal.
(d) **Religions as Means or Paths**

All religions with their various scriptures, forms of worship and rituals, having the same aim or pointing towards the same goal of realizing God, can do nothing but only "to help us to find the goal." Or "They are all helping men towards the real religion." This means, for Vivekananda that they function as helps or 'aids' or 'methods' for the realization of the goal. Hence Vivekananda argues, "all religions from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are many attempts of the human soul" to grasp and realize the same goal.

Therefore, he says:

> Religion means realization, nothing else. It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car or rolling on the ground. The goal is the same.

Vivekananda emphasizes, that one can reach the goal through any of the paths that is religion. Vivekananda seems to suggest that all religions are equal in their efficacy and effectiveness.

(e) **All Religions are True.**

In his first address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 he declared, "We accept all religions are true." As expressions of Truth and as different perceptions of God, "there is a germ of truth in all religions", and therefore, "all the various views of religion are true." Vivekananda further attempts to prove that "holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possession of any Church of the world and every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character." This means that each one of the religions has the same saving power as others and each is capable of transforming and elevating the lives of its adherents, if not all. Vivekananda
also argues that the fact that all the great religions continue to flourish and grow shows that there is truth in all of them and they are all needed for mankind.\textsuperscript{141}

(f) The Need for Many Religions.

If all religions are one in their essence, if it is the same God they all express, if they are all true, and if their goal is one, why should there be so many religions? Will not one religion be sufficient for the whole world?

Since people are different in their nature, tendencies, temperaments and inclinations and each individual has a special nature, particular to himself, all people are distinct from one another, each person sees God/Truth, in his own way according to his own nature and inclinations, results inevitably in various visions or views of God, provide space for different religions.\textsuperscript{142} The diversity of human nature also implies that no single form of expression of truth is sufficient enough to satisfy the needs and aspirations of all people. It becomes meaningful only when it is expressed and adapted according to the different nature of people. The infinite variety of human nature requires different methods or paths in attaining to the ultimate goal of realizing God. Different religions are such different methods and paths. “One religion cannot suit all.”\textsuperscript{143}

Therefore, Vivekananda concludes that “no one religion will do for all” and no single religion is fitted to be the religion of the entire human race.\textsuperscript{144} He also points out, that any attempt to bring all humankind under one religion has been and is doomed to failure.\textsuperscript{145}
The implications of such an understanding of the harmony of religions is of great significance in the context of religious pluralism. He denounced religious exclusivism, which asserts that “only this way” is true and only this way “leads to Salvation, all others are wrong.” Referring to Christianity, for example, he said:

...When you speak of Incarnation, of the Trinity, of Salvation through Jesus Christ, I am with you. I say, “very good, that I also hold true.” But when you go on to say, “There is no other true religion, there is no other revelation of God,” then I say, “Stop, I cannot go with you when you shut out, when you deny.”

Vivekananda believed that such exclusivism is the root cause of religious hostility and intolerance.

He also condemned religious fanaticism. He said this disease is “the most dangerous of all diseases.” Vivekananda believed in acceptance of religions rather than mere tolerance. In the Parliament of Religions he said “Hinduism has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.”

An important point that can be derived from Vivekananda’s concept of the unity and harmony of religions as expounded here is the equality of all religions. He did not say explicitly that all religions are equal, as Mahatma Gandhi has done. But his whole arguments suggest that he regarded all religions are of equal value and efficacy to their respective followers. They all have the “same saving power” but not for the same people, as noted earlier, but for the different people. Moreover he accepted and advocated that the hereditary religion is the one that is best suited to everybody. It rules out religious conversion in the sense of changing a religion for another one as
unnecessary. Vivekananda argues that each person must attain perfection in his own religion. Therefore Vivekananda says:

The Christian is not to become a Hindu or Buddhist, not a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.\textsuperscript{151}

He clarified his view in his final address in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago on Sept. 27, 1893.

...If any body dreams of exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of resistance: “Help and no fight,” “Assimilation and not Destruction,” “Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.”\textsuperscript{152}

In the harmony and unity of religions, Vivekananda rejects both the exclusive truth claim of any religion and the claim of the superiority of any religion over the others. But when we studied his speeches and writings one can find a dominant second view, which is incompatible with the idea of equality of all religions. This view is the Absoluteness of Vedanta.

ii. The Absoluteness of Vedanta

(a) Advaita the Fulfilment of All Religions

According to the second view of Vivekananda all religions are not considered equally true. Vivekananda places various religions in different grades, according to their growth in spirituality. At the top he places Vedantic Hinduism in its Advaita form. Advaita he considers is the final and absolute religion, and no religion can go beyond it. It is not one religion among other religions, but “religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance,”\textsuperscript{153}
Hence Vivekananda approached religions from the standpoint of an advaitin.

What does Vivekananda mean by the Advaita?

The word 'advaita' means non-dualism. Vivekananda follows the advaita tradition of Shankaracharya and says Truth is one, called Brahman. This Truth or Reality is undifferentiated, indivisible, distinctionless and impersonal. It is non different from Ātman, the self, the reality within each individual. The plurality and diversity that is noticed in the world and between persons are, therefore, not ultimately true. It is the non-dual Brahman-Ātman that appears as many characterized by names and forms, nama-rupa. It is the same Reality that exists in and behind all multiplicity. Every thing is only an appearance – Vivarta – of Brahman, the Absolute. Vivekananda says, "This world is nothing. It is at best only a hideous caricature, a shadow of Reality." It is "fictitious" and "mere self-hypnotism." It is the "Projection" or "the reflection of that One Eternal Being, the Ātman." What is real in the individual and in the Universe is the Ātman. This is the Reality which is "the Divinity within" each individual. Therefore, all life is One, the One Reality."

For Vivekananda, this advaitic idea is the Absolute Truth. The goal of humanity, according to him, is to know and realize this Oneness of all beings. This is what he means that religion is realization, that is "realizing God in the Soul" or re-union with God... which is every man’s true nature or realization of truth within which is Oneness. Advaita is the One Eternal Religion in which this truth is realized and it is the goal of all particular religions towards which they all point. It is this religion that is expressed and manifested in every
existent religion. It is "the kernel of all religions."\textsuperscript{157} Whatever truth is there in any religion it is the truth of Advaita.

Since all religions are related to this One Religion, the advaita, one can find harmony among religions. But Daniel says even when Vivekananda interpreted this harmony in terms of equality, it is most important to note that the religions that are equal are differentiated from the Eternal Religion identified with Vedanta which is perfect and Absolute. No religion possesses that perfection of the Absolute Religion and no religion is equal to it.\textsuperscript{158} Vivekananda means all religions are equal among themselves except the Advaita Religion which is the goal of all religions.\textsuperscript{159} Moreover Vivekananda grades those particular religions in an hierarchical order, according to their closeness to Advaita. He also accepts a gradual and progressive developments in the religions from lower religious ideas to higher and higher ones.\textsuperscript{160}

*Dvaita* (dualism), *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified non-dualism) and advaita (non-dualism) are the three main stages in the branches of Vedanta. According to Vivekananda, these three branches of Vedanta represent the three stages in spiritual evolution successively and any religion can be included in one or the other of these three.\textsuperscript{161} He includes not only the Vedanta of Madhava but Christianity and Islam also in the Stage of *Dvaita*.\textsuperscript{162}

Dvaita is the first stage in religious evolution. It is a stage when man sees himself and God eternally separate. When God is a separate entity by Himself and nature is a separate entity by itself... This is the dualism between man and God.\textsuperscript{163}

Vivekananda argues that both dualism (*dvaita*) and *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified dualism) are inadequate to answer many problems, especially the
problem of evil. Hence both these are in adequate and insufficient in the spiritual growth of any man. Vivekananda rejected the existence of any personal God maintained by \textit{Dvaita} and \textit{Viśiṣṭādvaita}. He contents that in \textit{Advaita} man realizes the Oneness and solidarity of all beings and realizes that the diversity and variety are only an appearance of the Reality the Brahman-\textit{Ātman}, which is indivisible, distinctionless and impersonal. \textit{Advaita} “is the last word of religion and thought” and nothing can go beyond it.\textsuperscript{164}

It is Vivekananda’s contention that Hinduism alone recognizes this truth of gradual and progressive spiritual development of humanity through these three stages and that is one reason why Hinduism is truer than or superior to all other religions, because Hinduism contains, \textit{Dvaita}, \textit{Viśiṣṭādvaita} and the last stage \textit{Advaita}. He also says, “The \textit{Vedas} or the \textit{Upaniṣads} begins with dualism, goes through a qualified monism and ends in perfect monism.\textsuperscript{165} Vivekananda accepts every religion as a necessary step for man to reach the Truth.

(b) \textit{Advaita the Exclusively True Religion}

It has been shown that while in maintaining the finality and absoluteness of \textit{Advaita} Vivekananda does not reject other religions as totally false or unnecessary. He admits them as preparation for \textit{Advaita}. Now a third kind of attitude can be discerned from Swami Vivekananda. He does not regard other religions other than \textit{Advaita} as having any use. He totally rejects them as false, unnecessary and useless.\textsuperscript{166} He asserts \textit{Advaita} as the only exclusive Truth.

As Nalini Devadas observes, Vivekananda’s arguments shows ‘a clear break from and a negation of lower truths when the highest Truth is
Though Vivekananda argues that when one realizes the highest Truth of Advaita, one “looks back” to “the preceding steps” that led to it and “knows that they were true”, he admits that these lower steps are “wrongly perceived... wrongly stated and distorted truth.”

According to Vivekananda, Hinduism is the most satisfactory religion in the world, and Advaita is “the crest-jewel of all spiritual thought.” Various reasons Vivekananda gives for the absoluteness of Vedanta and superiority of Hinduism may be examined briefly.

(c) **Advaita alone is Rational and Compatible with Science**

He contents:

“If a man want to be rational and religious at the same time, Advaita is the one system in the world for him.”

He also says:

“Vedanta is the only scientific religion”, incorporating within its teaching the law of evolution and the law of conservation of energy and “it is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people.”

(d) **Advaita alone Provides Foundation for Morality and Ethics**

*Advaita* alone gives the metaphysical explanations for the ethical precept. It says that “man must love others because those others are himself. There is but one.” In other words the real ‘I’ – the self or Atman is non different from Self of all. This awareness of the oneness and solidarity of all beings can be the only basis of all ethics and all practical efforts of loving service. Therefore “in injuring his neighbour, the individual actually injures himself.”
(e) **Vedanta Alone is Based on Eternal Principles, Not on Persons**

All religions “except our religion”, Vivekananda contends depend upon the life or lives of some personal founder or founders. “Our religion is not based upon persons but on principles” and “it teaches principles and not persons.” However, *Vedanta* accepts a number of persons, *avataras*, *gurus*, *risis* etc., for the guidance of man. But their authority is based on their realization of the eternal principles taught in the *Vedas*. Vivekananda says, for example:

The glory of *Krīṣṇa* is not that he was *Krīṣṇa*, but that he was the great teacher of *Vedanta*. If he had not been so, his name would have died out.... Persons are but the embodiments, illustrations of the principles.

(f) **Vedanta alone Inculcates Strength**

The belief in a personal God, other than one’s own self, according to Vivekananda, is ignorance and superstition. On the other hand, *Vedanta* is the religion of the strength and it is knowledge (*Jñāna*). It tells everybody that he himself is God, non-different from the Absolute Reality - *Brahman*. This knowledge makes him not to depend on anyone else. This knowledge will inculcate him strength. This truth will free him from all fear and weakness. The fear and weakness come from the notion of separateness that man is different from the Infinite, from all others.

(g) **Vedanta is All Inclusive and Tolerant, and therefore, Fit to be the only Universal Religion**

*Vedanta* harmonises in itself all other religious aspirations. “All of religion is contained in the *Vedanta*, that is the three stages of *Vedanta* Philosophy”. Therefore, it is non-destructive and tolerant of all religions.
Vivekananda claims that India is the only country where there never has been a religious persecution. It is the glorious land of religious toleration.178 Vivekananda argues:

Our religion is truer than any other religion because it never conquered, because it never shed blood.... It is here and here alone the ideals of toleration was preached.179

The comprehensive and all-inclusive nature of Vedanta, makes it the only universal religion. Only that religion is fitted to be the universal religion which be “broad and large enough to supply food for all,” the people of different temperament. It should thus equally satisfy the philosopher, the mystic, the active and the emotional man.180 Vedanta alone can be universal religion because it alone based on universal principles.

(h) Hinduism is The Mother and Source of All Religions.

Vivekananda says that in religious matters “the Hindus are everythings” and Hindu religion “contains all the ideas in their perfection”.181 Advaita is the crest-jewel of all spiritual thought.”182 All religious thought in every part of the world are derived from the Vedas which is the true source of Hinduism, the true religion.183 According to Vivekananda Christianity is nothing but “a collection of Indian thought” and “a very patchy imitation” or an “offshoot” of “our religion”. Buddhism also is “a rebel child of Hinduism.”184 The argument is that the element of truth in other religions are borrowed from Hinduism. Thus for Vivekananda, Hinduism as “the mother of religions.”185
(i) Vedas, the Source of Hinduism, is the Norm of Truth and the Only True Scripture

In this regard Vivekananda was one with Dayananda Saraswati. Like Dayananda, Vivekananda says, "All that is called knowledge is in the Vedas. Every word is sacred and eternal... without beginning and without end." It is in the Vedas the spiritual knowledge is presented in its fullness. All that is needed for man's perfection is in the Vedas. Hinduism based on the Vedas is the only true religion. Other religions are true only in so far as they conform to the Vedas and the religion of the Vedas that is Hinduism.

Thus Vivekananda says:

You may even believe the most peculiar ideas about the Godhead, but if you deny the authority of the Vedas, you are a nāstika. Therein lies the difference between the scriptures of the Christians or the Buddhists and ours, theirs are all Purānas and not scriptures.... So far as the Bible and the scriptures of other nations agree with the Vedas, they are perfectly good, but when they do not agree, they are no more to be accepted. So with the Koran.

One cannot expect such words from one who believes that all religions are true and therefore, all religions should be equally respected. In this regard he was closer to Dayananda Saraswati. What Vivekananda was saying is: Vedantic Hinduism based on the Vedas is the norm and touchstone of truth. Here Vivekananda was not only trying to establish the superiority and absoluteness of Advaita but also Vedanta or Hinduism as a whole. "I found Hinduism" he concludes, "to the most perfectly satisfying religion in the world."
Evaluation

From the above analysis it has been shown that Vivekananda's response to religious pluralism was not always uniform, constant and consistent. It is very complex and bewildering. His different views and approach to other religions are found in his speech delivered at the Parliament of Religions between eleventh September and twentyseventh, 1893.

In the first view Vivekananda argued for Harmony of religions when he rejects both exclusive and superiority claim of truth in any religion, but one in essence and goal. According to Vivekananda his central teachings were the echo of the ideas and teachings of his Master Sri. Ramakrishna. If God is the centre, religions represent the different radii converging to the same centre. He says Hinduism recognizes the right of each to their on Ista or chosen way. If one religion is true, all others must be true and each religion has the same saving power as the other. He also said that for achieving harmony, different religions will have to make concession. The more the sacrifice the religion undertakes for the sake of harmony, the more it advances in truth. He also said exclusivism is the root cause of religious hostility and intolerance. He criticizes the sectarian creedal view as the 'frog-in-the-well' attitude of exclusivism. All the sectarian religious quarrels, in the view of the Swami Vivekananda, are like the quarrels between the blind persons regarding the shape of an elephant.

While we analyse the teachings of Swami Vivekananda it was further noted that there is a second view. According to this view all religions are not considered equally true. From the year 1895 onwards, he started projecting 'Advaita Vedanta' as the harmoniser of all religions. He places different
religions in different grades, where he placed ‘Advaita’ at the top and claims it is final and absolute, which is the last word of religion. Here he does not reject other religions. It gives them a subordinate position and admits their value as preparation for ‘Advaita’, which is the fulfilment of all religions. According to this theory the truth in other religions are partial and not sufficient for salvation. One’s own religion is complete and sufficient. This generates clash among religions. According to Vivekananda, the different vedantic schools of Davaita, Visistadvaita are incomplete. They are only stepping-stone to the final goal to ‘Advaita’.\(^\text{201}\) There are people by analyzing the above contentions of Vivekananda, considered him as an Inclusivist rather than a Pluralist.\(^\text{202}\)

From the above analysis further we have noticed a third kind of attitude, where he does not regard other religions other than ‘Advaita’ as having any use. It totally rejects them as false, unnecessary and useless.\(^\text{203}\) He sees these religions are positive obstacles in the path of man to realize the truth. Daniel says this is ‘sort of dogmatic exclusivism and militancy, totally rejecting any value in other religions,\(^\text{204}\) except Advaita."

How to explain this ambivalent nature in his view? Why did he was inconsistent and complex in his preaching? Why did he make extraordinary claims for Hinduism?

Vivekananda’s extraordinary claims for Hinduism, incompatible with his own teachings on the harmony of religions, can be understood, when one considers the historical context in which Vivekananda worked. Being a younger contemporary of Swami Dayananda, Vivekananda also had to face a real threat from the missionaries of both Christian and Muslim.\(^\text{205}\) Many Christian missionaries firmly believed and earnestly worked to convert the
whole of India into Christianity.\textsuperscript{206} They presented Christianity as the only true religion, universally valid, perfectly rational and scientific and absolutely moral. They also criticized and condemned Hinduism as an error and was responsible for the pathetic and degrading conditions of India. At this context, more important is to understand Vivekananda as a defender of Hinduism. His apologetic and exclusive statements have to be evaluated on this situation he was facing in India from the Christian missionaries. If we analyse his statement it will reveal that spirit.

"If all India stands up" Swami Vivekananda told the Christians in America about this propaganda\textsuperscript{207} "and takes up all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western countries, it will not be doing any infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us."\textsuperscript{208} He also accused both Christians and Islam for forcible conversions. Thus he challenged the American Christians:

Where has your Christianity succeeded without the Sword? Show me one place in the world. One, I say, throughout the history of the Christian religion—one, I do not want two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be converted or killed, that was all. The spread of Islam was made in the same way.\textsuperscript{209}

It seems that his approach was to defend Hinduism from the attacks of other religions and to rouse the self-respect of the Hindus. Thus he wrote:

I am the one man who dared defend his country and I have given them such ideas, as they never expect from a Hindu.\textsuperscript{210}

Almost all the claims he made for Hinduism and India were clearly the claims the missionaries made for Christianity.\textsuperscript{211} He also criticized the degrading elements in Hinduism. However, at the bottom of his heart, Vivekananda was a
man of Religious Pluralism and his standpoint is harmony of religions. He said “I pity a Hindu who does not see the beauty in Jesus Christ’s character. I pity the Christian who does not reverence the Hindu Christ.” It seems Vivekananda envisages a synthesis of Islam, Vedanta, Christianity and Buddhism. To this point he said:

We must show the spirituality of Hindus, the mercifulness of Buddhists, the activity of Christians, the brotherhood of the Muhammadans, by our practical lives.”

We have seen that, though he often lapsed into exclusivism, generally he appreciated the values of all religions and stands for Religious Harmony, which he maintained even while he was convinced of the superiority of Vedanta. As he said, “we have no quarrel with any religion in the world, whether it teaches man to worship Christ, Buddha or Muhammad or any other prophet.” This attitude is considered K.P. Aleyaz as Pluralistic Inclusivism. Hence K.P. Aleyaz says:

“In each religion there is a universal principle with the help of which one could perceive other religions in positive light through a dynamic growth to relational convergence in terms of Pluralistic Inclusivism. eg., Advaita in Hinduism, Syādvāda in Jainism and Jesus in Christianity. These universal principles can never support Exclusivism or Inclusivism, they can support only Pluralism or Pluralistic Inclusivism.”

3. V.D. Savarkar

This part is intended to discuss Savarkar’s concept of Hindutva and its modern interpretation. It seems it has promoted a cultural nationalism in the contemporary Indian scene. V.D. Savarkar played a very significant role in the process of revitalization and self-conscientization of Hindu society for promoting a cultural exclusivism in Indian subcontinent. V.D. Savarkar, born
in 1883 in a Brahmin family at Nasik in Maharastra, became the president of Hindu Mahasabha in 1937 until 1943. He defensively tried to unite all Hindus in order to safeguard their interest, culture and religion. It seems the Hindu Mahasabha was the enlarged edition of the Aryasamaj. Regarding the link between the Āryasamāj and Hindu Mahasabha, Bhai Parmanand wrote:

The Hindu Mahāsabha itself is in fact but an enlarged and more comprehensive edition of the Āryasamāj.... It is no wonder therefore to find that the Aryasamaj and the Hindu Mahasabha today are almost identified with each other in their activities and more often than not the same set of leaders and missionaries are leading, directing and working the Hindu Sabhas as well as the Aryasamaj’s many local and provincial centers.  

(i) Hindutva

Savarkar was not quite happy with the term ‘Hinduism’ used to denote the religion of Hindus as a system. ‘Hinduism’ he believed is a word of alien origin and is not comprehensive enough to embrace all that is ‘Hindu’. He therefore made a clear distinction between ‘Hinduism’ and Hindutva, through his book, ‘Hindutva’: who is a Hindu? (1923) ‘Hinduism’ for Savarkar meant the various theologies or systems of religion Hindus follow, while Hindutva means ‘Hinduness’ and “embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race.”

Etymologically ‘Hinduta’ is best translated as ‘Hinduness’ or possibly “Hinduhood.” Hindutva is perfectly regular construction formed by the application of a well-known grammatical rule in Sanskrit. According to the rule taught by the magisterial grammarian Panini (5th BCE)? The suffix ‘tva’ is added to the stem to form a neuter, abstract noun (Rule 5.1.119) of the Āṣṭadhyāya. The purpose of the construction is by and large to attribute a
property in the form of a universal, i.e., existing in a certain way, as determined by a certain property. Therefore ‘Hindutva’ is to say, properly, that they exist in a particular way. Hence ‘Hindutva’, a mode of being of the possessor of the property “Hinduness” without simultaneously carrying ontological implications about the property itself. ‘Hindutva’ includes religious, cultural, linguistic, social and political aspects of the life of the Hindus. Savarkar also used another term ‘Hindudom’ in his attempt to explain all that is Hindu. By ‘Hindudom’ he means the Hindu people taken collectively as ‘Christendom’.

(ii) Hindus Alone are the True Sons of the Soil.

Savarkar claimed that the Indian nation has to be necessarily a Hindu nation and the Hindus alone are the true sons of the soil. He considered the majority, that is the Hindus, as the only nation, and the minorities totally different race.

In Savarkar’s definition a ‘Hindu’ is a person who regards the land of Bhāratavarṣa from Indus to seas as his father-land as well as a Holy land – that is the cradle of his religion. He made “Pithrubhūmi – Punyabhūmi” (father land- holy land) equation and thinks that only those who accept the Bhāratavarṣha (India) as Punyabhoomi are the real Hindu or Indian. For Bipin Chandra this is cultural or racial definition. Because the diversity in Hinduism, he tried to define Hindu dharma, Hindutva and Hindu nation in cultural terms. D.N.B. Pandit comments on the ‘Pithrubhūmi – Punyabhūmi’ concept and says:

This theory is exclusive, for it excludes Christians, Muslims, Jews and Parsees, for Hindustan is not their Punyabhūmi even though it may be their
*Pitrubhūmi*, the intention of Savarkar behind this definition was his excessive patriotism of his motherland. So he made the love of land the first criterion and not residence in the land.\(^{227}\)

In short, a person who has loyalty both to the land, and its religion is called a Hindu. Savarkar concluded the definition of Hindu, by drawing on world history and said that:

As Germans in Germany are a nation and the Jews there in are a race; as Turks in Turkey are a nation and the Arabs there are a race, so Hindus in India are a nation, while Muslims, Christians, Jews are races in India.\(^{228}\)

This type of definition on nationhood could only exclude the non-Hindus from the Indian Nationality. Even though in Savarkar’s definition of nationality there are some elements of territorial nationalism in the concept on ‘*Pitrubhūmi*’, he soon shifted to Hindu sentiments and culture by arguing that only for Hindus could have ‘*Pitrubhūmi*’ and ‘*Punyabhūmi*’ identical.\(^{229}\)

Christophe Jeffrelot argues that Savarkar rejects any form of nation state based on abstract social contract, in contrast he emphasizes the ethnic and racial substance of the nation.\(^{230}\) It seems the worldview, the system of values, and the type of community relationship, Savarkar envisaged in his teachings are typical Brahmanical Hinduism, in which the tribals, the dalits, and other ethnic groups have no place.

The Hindu Mahasabha is working for a common nation, a common race, and a common culture. According to Savarkar *Hindutva* is a bond of common territory, common blood and common civilization.\(^{231}\) One of the objectives of Hindu Mahasabha is to promote a martial spirit among Hindus through military schools. They also adopt *Sanghathan* and *Suddhi* to convert former Hindus and
non-Hindus. The Hindu Mahasabha has encouraged militarization of the Hindu youth through akharas and gymnasiums. Savarkar’s slogan was:

To Hinduise all politics and militarize Hindudom.

He pleaded with the Hindus:

"...the crying need of our times is not men of letters, but soldiers... you should abandon your pen in favour of guns..." 

Vir Savarkar’s ideology of ‘Hindutva’ and the definition of ‘Hindu’ divided the people as Hindus and non-Hindus. This in the context of the freedom struggle thus initiated to generate two nationalisms Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism. This helped to promote the communalization of politics in India, which attempted to encourage an inflated identity consciousness to the Hindus and place the non-Hindus under a disturbing cloud of suspicion, hatred and hostility. The spirit which Savarkar had injected to the Hindus ‘that they alone are the true sons of the soil’ enabled the Hindus to unite themselves as one community and to defend their religion, to establish a Hindu rāstra. In the development of modern politicized Hinduism or Hinduized politics, the Hindu Mahasabha also played a great role. The linkage between religion and politics is clearly evident. Savarkar emphatically declares that:

‘every political question in India is either religious or cultural and every religious or cultural question is political.’

Thus the nexus between religion, and politics has become dominant in Indian politics after the emergence of Savarkar’s ideology of Hindutva, which re-invigorates contemporary Hindu Organizations for a cultural nationalism, which is exclusive with other religions.
4. M.S. Golwalkar

After the death of K.B. Hedgewar the founder of the Rāshtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 1940, M.S. Golwalkar (Guruji) became the leader and under his able and dynamic leadership the Sangh took rapid strides towards expansion.

Golwalkar may be called the father of cultural nationalism in India. Golwalkar’s theoretical writings clearly take V.D. Savarkar’s ‘Hindutva’ as the starting point. But he elaborates the idea into a full-fledged conception of what he liked to call ‘cultural nationalism.’ He rejected the elements of territorial nationalism from Savarkar and present a very clear cultural nationalism.

Golwalkar asserts, “That the foremost duty laid upon every Hindu is to build up such a holy benevolent and unconquerable might of our Hindu People in support of the age old truth of our Hindu Nationhood.” The preamble of the R.S.S. constitution states five reasons for the foundation of the Sangh:

a) to eradicate the fissiparous tendencies arising from diversities of sect, faith, caste and creed and from political, economic, linguistic and provincial differences amongst Hindus;

b) to make them realize the greatness of their past;

c) to inculcate in them a spirit of service, sacrifice and selfless devotion to the Hindu Samāj, as a whole;

d) to build up an organized and well disciplined corporate life; and

e) to bring about an all-round regeneration of the Hindu Samāj.

The article 3 states the aims and objects of the Sangh:
The Aims and objects of the Sangh are to weld together the diverse groups within the Hindu Samaj and to re-vitalise and rejuvenate the same on the basis of its Dharma and Sanskrit, that it may achieve all sided development of the Bhāratavarsha.\textsuperscript{241}

Article 4 declares that ‘the Sangh as such has no politics and is devoted to purely cultural work.

But the R.S.S. has supported the Bharatiya Janata Party since the general elections held at the end of 1989.\textsuperscript{242} Now R.S.S., (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh), V.H.P., (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), A.B.V.P. (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad), B.M.S. (Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh), Bajrang Dal, Siv Sena and B.J.P. (Bharatiya Janatha Party), have become a matrix. A.G. Noorani asserts that the B.J.P.’s linkage with these organizations is both ideological and historical and all based on the inspiration from the R.S.S.\textsuperscript{243}

K.R. Malkani the former Vice-President of B.J.P. claims that the R.S.S. V.H.P-B.J.P. linkage never deviated from the path shown by the Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand, Bankin Chandra etc.\textsuperscript{244} The ideology of the Sangh is derived from the ideology of Savarkar and Golwalkar which is the main ideology of B.J.P. and its allies Sangh Parivar.

(i) Hindus : The Enlightened Āryans

According to Golwalkar the Hindus were the enlightened Aryas. He claims:

We the Hindus were the good, the enlightened people, ... we built a great civilization, a great culture and an unique social order... Then the rest of humanity were just bipeds... Sometimes, in trying to distinguish our people from others, we were called the enlightened- the Aryans and the rest Mlechas...\textsuperscript{245}
For him the non-Āryans are miēchas and Hindus are identifiable people with three distinctive traits viz., adherence to Varna to (caste) duty, āśrama (the four stages in human life) dharma, and the doctrine of Karma-Samsāra. Golwalkar contends that Hindus are Hindus even before they emerge from their mother's womb; others are born as simple unnamed human beings and later on, through circumcision or baptism they become either Muslims or Christians. A Hindu is therefore unique, noble and superior to all others.

According to Golwalkar Muslims, Christians and Communists are not true sons of the soil. They are dangerous to Hindu rāstra, because they convert the sons of the soil and make them turn their back on all that is indigenous. He calls them "guests", "traitors", "invaders", "aggressors", "threat", "enemies" and 'potential fifth column' and 'hostiles'.

Golwalkar included all Indian born sects and subsects like Saiva, Vaiṣṇava, Sakta, Vaidika, Buddha, Jain, Sikh, Lingāyat, Ārya Samāj etc. within the elastic frame of Hindu dharma. The supercilious inclusivism is clearly evident here. Golwalkar does not allow other faiths to maintain their identities or establish any boundary to its tradition. The Swayamsevaks also claim that the best seen in other traditions and other cultures is only an echo of the sublime thoughts in the Hindu tradition. So they pledge themselves to safe guard and propagate the noble dharma of the Hindus.

(ii) The Hindu Samaj: The Living Form of God

Golwalkar says, "The Hindu people is the 'Virāt Puruṣa', the Almighty manifesting himself. The Hindu Samāj is the Chosen Deity, the living form of
K. K. Gangadharan an Indian Sociologist says, Golwalkar “makes a deity of Hindus.” Therefore, devotion to the Hindu community is indeed devotion to the ultimate Reality. Service to the Hindu people is service to God.

(iii) Hindu Culture is Superior to All Other Cultures

To Golwalkar Hindu culture means Hindu Sanskriti. It covers every aspect of life in its totality – the sentiments, ideals, aspirations and activities of Hindus in their political, economic, social and religious life. The ultimate aim of the Sangh is to mould society to its religious, Social and Political concepts, so that the entire Indian Society must virtually become the Sangh itself. Hindu culture is superior to all other cultures. Golwalkar says that the Hindu culture “despite the degenerating contact with the debased ‘civilizations’ of the Musalman and the Europeans, for the last ten centuries, is still noblest in the world.” So the Swayamsevaks think that to check and erase the degenerating in-roads made by non-Hindu cultures in the life of the Hindus are their duty.

(iv) Hindustan is for Hindus

Golwalkar says that “Hindustan is for Hindus”. Our concept of Hindu Nation is not a mere bundle of political and economic rights. It is essentially cultural, says Golwalkar. Again Golwalkar declares:

Hindustan is...the land of Hindus, their home, country, hereditary territory, a definite geographical unity... Living in this country since pre-historic times is the ancient Race- the Hindu Race, united together by common tradition... evolving a common culture, common mother language, common customs, common aspirations. This great Hindu Race professes its illustrious Hindu Religion, the only Religion in the world worthy of being so denominated.... Guided by this Religion in all walks of life, individual, Social, Political, The
Race evolved a culture, which despite the generating contact with the debased “civilizations” of the Musalmans and the Europeans for the last ten centuries is still the noblest in the world.\textsuperscript{257}

Golwalkar says, the non-Hindus must respect and revere all that is Hindu and should not entertain any idea but those of its glorification. If they are not willing to be assimilated into the Hindu race, they must be wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing and observing no privileges or preferential treatment or even citizens’ rights.\textsuperscript{258} Hindus should deal with non-Hindus as Nazis did in Germany. The options before non-Hindus are to get assimilated into the Hindu race by losing their own identity or to live wholly subordinated to the Hindu race with no rights or face a ‘holocaust’ - total annihilation.\textsuperscript{259} Golwalkar even advocated a dharma yuddha for the complete independence and unification of the ancient Hindu rāṣṭra.\textsuperscript{260} The ideal is Kṛṇavāntaś Viśvamāryam (let us make the whole world Aryan – noble or enlightened.).\textsuperscript{261} It is not surprising therefore that the Sangh has been able to weld together India and Hinduism to some extent. It has spiritualized patriotism.

It seems the non-Hindus in India cannot claim the status of true sons of the soil. For, it is alleged; they have extra territorial and ideological loyalties. Golwalkar claims that the present secular constitution of independent India has unfortunately equated the sons of the soil with the enemies of the nation. So he wants a re-examination and re-drafting of the present constitution of India.\textsuperscript{262} The debate on re-examination and re-drafting of constitution is very lively in the contemporary India also.
For Golwalkar, the conversion of Hindus to non-Hindu religions is an anti-national activity. Hence he observes that these anti-national activities of the 'aliens' and 'hostiles' should be "put down with a strong hand by all possible means" and that the general law is sufficient to deal with cases of perversity or hostility.²⁶³

(v) The Doctrine of Non-Violence and Satyagraha is Erroneous.

Golwalkar says that strength is virtuous and weakness is sin. For physical survival, strength is the only basis. The doctrine of Non-Violence and Satyagraha is Erroneous because it looks down upon strength as violence and glorifies weakness, non-violence is imbecility.²⁶⁴ The *avatāra(s)* clearly convey the message of war and victory. A *dharma yuddha* (holy war) is right and necessary for the sake of re-establishing *dharma* in its pristine form.²⁶⁵ Killing for the sake of an ideal or *dharma* is not sinful. Golwalkar in his attempt to bring home this argument refers to the story of Sri Ram, one of the greatest Indian ideals of strength and victory. So the clarion call of the Sangh is to consolidate Hindu power and turn this nation into a powerful Hindu nation using any means available or necessary.²⁶⁶

The ideology of Golwalkar, which is in a sense the elaboration of the ideology of Savarkar played a dominant role in Hindu nationalism. Ninan Koshy observes that 'the ideology of BJP has its origin in the writings of Savarkar and Golwalkar'.²⁶⁷ Thus *Hindutva* or cultural nationalism is the basic ideology of the Hindu nationalist today, and are visualizing the concepts into reality. It seems, it achieved a great hegemony over the society by asserting that Hindus alone constitute the Indian nation. The present practices of
Hindutva are aggressive and are terrorizing all depressed sections of the society.

5. Evaluation.

From the above analysis it has seen that the ideological strands of both Dayananda Saraswathy and Vivekananda could generate a religio-cultural renaissance in the Indian subcontinent. The Āryasamāj became one of the first crucibles of Hindu Nationalism. According to Jeffrelot this is the touch-stone of first ethnic nationalism in India. Dayananda equated Indian culture with Hinduism and Hindu culture; all non-Hindu aspects were regarded as contaminating influences (SP p.729). On the basis of its scriptural interpretation J.E. Llewellyn called Āryasamāj as a fundamentalist organization, because religious fundamentalism is an ideology used by the powerful to manipulate and affirm aggressively. It is re-sacralization of the secularized world and politicization of religion.

It has also seen that Swami Vivekananda combined religion and patriotism and identified Mother India with supreme God. He believed that India alone had a spiritual message. He also equated Mother India with ‘Punyabhūmi’. As a result, since Vivekananda, there emerged a national consciousness. Thus there are two predominant nationalism in India: Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism. Indian nationalism is built on the basis of western ideas originating in the ‘Ages’ of Reason, Enlightenment and Liberalism. Hindu nationalism wanted the re-construction to take place on the foundation of ancient Hindu traditions. Thus Hindu nationalism developed as a reaction against Indian nationalism.
The writings and speeches of Savarkar and Golwalkar also gave impetus to the policy of Hinduising the Indian statehood. Though the original meaning of ‘Hindutva’, was “Hinduness” which embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of the Indian race, it seems the modern interpreters of ‘Hindutva’, tried to hijack its original meaning and interpreted it to suit their own political interests. Thus Hindutva has become a political ideology since the 1980s. Now the tone of the rhetoric has become a fascist tone for a monolithic culture imposed on all Indians. It seems the Hindu nationalists fail to realize that the unity they wish to ensure is most threatened when it is pressed on others in provocative manner.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyya, a contemporary of Vivekananda was regarded by most scholars as a crucial force in the making of both a nationalist imagination and a Hindu revivalist polemic. His ‘Bandemātaram’ (Salutation to the Mother) became the most patriotic slogan in the 20th century mass nationalist struggles, as well as the Hindu rallying cry at moments of Hindu-Muslim violence after 1926. For Sangh Parivar, “Bandemātaram” is the authentic national anthem, not the “Jana gana mana”, the official national anthem for the republic of India. When BJP came into power in Delhi during 1993 state elections, it made ‘Bandemātaram’ compulsory in Delhi State Schools. Many criticized their policy and alleged that by the use of ‘Bandemātaram’ they equated Indian nationalism with Hindu chauvinistic communalism.

‘Bandemātaram’ is part of the novel of Ānandamath, which tries to convey the message that “the Hindu community from the very moment of its inception is a people at war, unified by violence against a shared enemy. In the
novel, the mob begins to articulate an agenda that goes beyond simple loot.” Unless we throw these dirty bastards (that is, the Muslims), Hindus will be ruined... when shall we race down to the ground and erect Radhmadhav’s temples in their places? The Hindu nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, V.D. Savarkar, Hedgewar, Golwalkar affirm that patriotism ought to be communal and not merely geographical. Golwalkar makes it crystal clear that India is a Hindu nation. Others like Muslims and Christians, though born in this country, do not feel they are the children of this land, ever since they changed their faith.

Golwalkar reiterates that secularism is not his path for national integration; it should come through Hinduization. According to him, non-Hindus should be wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation. The present promoters of ‘Hindutva’ by BJP and Sangh Parivar seek their roots in the traditions of the nineteenth century Hindu nationalism, based on the assumption that India has a glorious Hindu past. The goal of Hindu nationalism is to reconstruct India with the past culture. To justify this they quoted from Swami Vivekananda. “It is out of past that the future is moulded, it is the past that become the future” (BJP Election Manifesto 1996). Hence, Hindu nationalists demand ‘a nation with one people and one culture’. The Hindu nationalists or the Cultural nationalists demanded the non-Hindus have to accept the Indian (Hindu) culture. First, they would accept the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata as their epics and reject the Arabic and Persian classics. Second, they would have to regard Ramachandra, Shivaji, and Hindu gods Rama and Krisna as their heroes and condemn varios Muslim historical figures as foreign invaders or traitors. Bipan Chandra and K.N. Panikkar were against this kind of
assumption of the Hindu community that Indian culture is Hindu culture and Indian nationalism is Hindu Nationalism and they asserted that glorious past of India is the creation of European Historians and has no historical validity.

The Hindutva hijackers have rejected the composite or synthetic culture and deny the concept of cultural diversity. They are skillfully working for a cultural exclusivism within the confines of their religion. Thus the cultural nationalism in India is communal in nature and against the pluralistic context of India. Hindutva force achieved a great hegemony over the society of asserting that Hindu alone constitutes the Indian nation. Their policy of re-interpreting the History on the line of Orientalist thinking, changing the present education system in Hindu way, using Modern Media to create Hindu cultural consciousness through the propagation of their Hindutva ideology, rejected the secular principles in the parliamentary democracy by mailing that the present secularism as Pseudo-secularism on the basis of minority rights, created suspicion, ill will and antagonistic feeling among the minority communities. Thus the great crisis to secularism is cultural nationalism and cultural exclusivism. This is the crucial problem India facing today.

Notes and References:


10. There are six Orthodox Hindu Philosophies (six *darsanas*), They are *Nyaya-Vaisesika, Sāṃkhya-Yoga & Pūrva mimamsa* and *Uttara mimamsa*. Among these, *Samkhya* and *Purva mimamsa* do not have God concept.

11. In *Vaisnavism, Viṣṇu* is worshiped as the supreme God, where as *Siva* is supreme God for *Saivas, Devi* or *Sakti* or Power is the Supreme Reality of the *Saktism*.


13. Ibid., p.5

14. Ibid., p.4, James Mill divided the Indian History into three periods which he called Hindu civilization, Muslim civilization & British civilization


17. At present Arun Shourie is a Cabinet Minister of India. The lecture and the subsequent discussion in the CBCI meeting has come out as a book. *Missionaries in India – Continuities, Charges, Dilemmas* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 1997)


20. See R.V. 1:133:4; 10:22:10; 1:51:8; 4:16:9; 8:70:11; 10:84:7; 3:30:16. They used illegal words such as *non-Aryans* were riteless, godless, lawless, without devotion,

21. Y. Masih, op.cit.,p.3

22. John B. Chettimattom. op.cit., p.24., also see RV (10:124)


27. P.L. John Panicker, op.cit., p. 13


30. Ibid., p. 36


33. CWSV. Vol. III, p. 325


35. S. Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p. 529


38. The Quotations from the *Bhagavad Gita* Confirm with the translation established by R.C. Zahner.


(i) “... If I were not to do My work these world would fall to ruin.

(ii)... I have no yearning for fruits of work (*Karma phalla*)

(iii) These works neither bind nor limit Me, as one indifferent I sit among these works detached.

40. M. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (London: Geroge Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951), p. 121

41. R.V. De Smet, op.cit., p. 63

42. The *Gitākāra integrates* (i) The non-literal quest for God (10: 19-31) (ii) Aryan Folklore, (10: 21-42), (iii) *Kriṣṇa identifies himself* with the sacrificial Brahmanism, (8:4); (iv) (9:16-17), (v) 9:24; (vi) (17: 23-26). (vii) Upanisadic *Samkhya* with Supreme *Puruṣa, & Prakṛti* as “My own creative Energy”. (14: 3-4) & (4:6). Here *Kriṣṇa* transforms dualistic *Samkhya* into monotheism. *Prakṛti* is here the one God’s almighty power. (viii) In 8:3 an “aksara Puruṣa” is the highest Brahman

44. P.S. Mathai, A Christian Approach to the Bhagavat Gita (Calcutta: YMCA publishing House, 1956), p. 2

45. A.L. Basham, op.cit., p. 93

46. ‘Supercilious Mystico-relationalism, means the “One Krisna’ is superior and absolute to ‘all gods’ and there is a mystic relationship between Krisna and ‘many gods’. See the Gita (14: 3,4); (4:6) and (7:25), “I am not revealed to all; this world deluded knows Me not.”

47. Ishanand Vempeny, Krisna and Christ (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1988), p.346. There is no statement in the Gita which makes Krisnism the One and only path in the totally exclusive sense. However a sort of inclusivism is upheld that the genuine worshippers of other gods, implicitly, anonymously worship Lord Krisna himself. (9:23)

According to (7:22) the benefits derived from such devotion to other gods are in accordance with the decree of Lord Krisna. However (7:23 & 9:25) speak of the relativity of these benefits. The worshippers of these gods are assimilated into them gradually, but they not being the ultimate, these worshippers will not obtain final liberation through these gods. Worship of them certainly lead to Lord Krisna eventually.


51. L.M. Joshi, op.cit., p. 27

52. Ibid., p. 20

53. See Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. p. 481

54. Baudhayana Dharma Sutra, II. 6. 29-31, and also Gautama Dharma Sutra, 3:1 and 35:36
56. Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya Kanda, 109:34
58. Brahannaradiya Purana, edited by Pancanana Tarkaratna (Calcutta: Vangavasi Press, 1316), B.S.
60. Yajanavalkya-Smriti with the commentary of Apararka edited by Hari Narayana Apte (Poona: Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, 1903-1904), p. 143
61. Lal Mani Joshi, op. cit., p. 209
63. John Panicker, op. cit., p.29. In the Gita, the author took the figure *Krisna* revered among the *Vrsnis* and elevated him to the position of Supreme Bhagavan. In the same manner the Puranic authors elevated the Buddha to the rank of an *avatara* of Visnu.
64. The Gita, (4:7-8)
65. For example, *Markandeya Purana* 47:7; 4:53-56 and *Matsya Purana* 47:39-45
66. *Matsya Kūrmo Varāhasca Narasimhoata Vāmanāh: Rāmo Rāmasca Krisṇasca Buddah Kalki eti ca Karmāt*
69. L.M. Joshi, op. cit., p. 215
70. Ibid
71. CWSV, Vol. VI. p. 104
75. L.M. Joshi, op.cit.,p. 220
77. T.M.P. Mahadevan, op.cit., p. 21
82. P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 68
83. Satyarth Prakash, Unless otherwise indicated is from its English translation Light of Truth, by Dr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja (New Delhi: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1984 (edn.), p. 237 Here after S.P.
84. S.P., pp. 417, 446
85. S.P., p. 506
86. S.P., pp. 170-172
89. J.F.T. Jordens, *Dayananda Saraswati, His Life and Ideas* (Delhi: OUP, 1978), p 267
90. S.P., pp. 343, 536 & 539-541, 545, 548 f
91. S.P. pp 603, 606, 628, 630, 635, 643, 698, 725
92. S.P. pp. 671, 674, 679, 681, 684, 691, 693, 713 f
95. S.P. p. 729
96. S.P. p. 329
97. S.P. pp. 320—334: The Arya Samaj Stresses the following:
   (a) Vedic religion is the true Salvific religion.
   (b) Vedas are the holy books.
   (c) Hindi as a national language
   (d) They emphasize the racial (Aryan) consciousness and territorial consciousness (Aryavarta)
   (e) One supreme political authority, Sri Aurobindo made remarkable statement about the attempt of Dayananda, that “It is a remarkable attempt by Swami Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj to re-establish the Vedas as a living religious scripture”

98. In Rigveda the context is of Soma libation of Arya.
99. This Dayananda did in order to arouse the Hindu religion and the Indian nation.
100. V.P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought* (Agra: Lakshmi Naraian Agarwal, 1980), pp. 43-56


106. D.S. Sarma, op.cit., p. 96


108. Ibid


111. Ibid


113. P.S. Daniel, op. ct., pp. 120—173. This is indebted to the insights of P.S. Daniel.

114. CWSV Vol. IV. p. 181

115. Ibid., IV, 180, 187; I, 468; VI, 82f; VII, 96

116. Ibid., I, 324; VI, 82; V, 219; VII, 85; VI, 415f

117. Ibid., V, 191

118. Ibid., IV, 180; VIII, 138; I, 438; VI, 82.

119. Ibid., II, 379.

120. Ibid., VI, 416

121. Ibid., VII, 96; IV, 180-182

122. Ibid., IV, 181; III, 383

124. CWSV, II, 365
125. Ibid., I, 318
126. Ibid., II, 318, I, 326
127. Ibid., VI, 46
128. Ibid., I, 124, 318, 326
130. CWSV, I, 444; IV, 31; II, 473
131. Ibid., II, 231; III, 154, VIII, 179
132. Ibid., III, 357; VI, 46
133. Ibid., V, 292; I, 324
134. Ibid., VII, 85; I, 325
135. Ibid., I, 4; II, 383; VII, 286; IV, 332
136. Ibid., I, 468
137. Ibid., I, 3
138. Ibid., IV, 191; II, 384
139. Ibid., I, 24; See also VIII, 210; III, 359f
140. Ibid., IV, 182
141. Ibid., II, 361-363; II, 371
142. Ibid., II, 385; II, 369; VIII, 6 and II, 381
143. Ibid., IV, 51; VI, 16; III, 359, Perhaps Vivekananda is following his master Sri Ramakrishna, he says: "That is a glorious thing, that there should be so many paths, because if there were only one path, perhaps it would suit only an individual man. The more the number of paths, the more the chance for every one of us to know the truth." CWSV, VIII, 79,
144. Ibid., VI, 82; IV, 375; VI, 382; II, 386
145. Ibid., II, 363, 384; I, 24; III, 182-184
146. Ibid., VIII, 24, 210
147. Ibid., VI, 138
It ought to be remembered that quarrels about religion arise from thinking that one alone has the truth and whoever does not believe as one does is a fool, while another thinks that the other is a hypocrite, ...


CWSV, II, 174, II, 276, 248, 246, 249

Ibid., II, 248

P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 136

CWSV, V. 190

P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 136

Ibid

CWSV, II, 346

Ibid., I, 17, 32, 331

Ibid., II, 352, 241; V, 81-82

Ibid., II, 429; II, 420

Ibid., II, 249; VI, 415

Ibid., II, 252; III, 233f, 281, 398. Vivekananda often uses the word 'monism' as an equivalent of Advaita, although the correct translation of which is non-dualism.

P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 145


C.W.S.V., III, 422

Ibid., III, 432

Ibid., III, 404
171. Ibid., III, 424; II, 139
172. Ibid., I, 384f; VI, 96; II, 286; II, 237
173. Ibid., III, 249f
174. Ibid., III, 280; III, 182-184, 412
175. Ibid., II, 201
176. Ibid., II, 415
177. Ibid., I, 348; III, 186
178. Ibid., I, 348; III, 186f
179. Ibid., III, 273f; 286f.
180. Ibid., II, 277-282, 385-387
181. Ibid., VI, 105; I, 120
182. Ibid., II, 247; III, 432
183. Ibid., III, 175; V, 315, 454ff
184. Ibid., III, 275; VI, 105
185. Ibid., I, 3
186. Ibid., II, 169
187. Ibid., III, 269, 249 f
188. Ibid., I, 329
189. Ibid., VI, 393 f
190. Ibid., III, 333
191. Ibid., III, 209-213
192. Ibid., VIII, 79, 267; VII, 24, 85, 207, 210; VI, 183, 184, 462-63, 480, 483-84; IV, 174, 178, 180, 187; V, 53, 414
193. Ibid., II, 384-85; IV, 53-54; VII 458, IV, 54-57
194. Ibid., V, 301; III, 131-32, 359, 382, 501; IV, 54-57
195. Ibid., IV, 182; II, 373-74; I, 318
196. Ibid., I, 385; II, 366, 383; IV, 54, 55
197. Ibid., III, 359
198. Ibid., III, 483-84; I, 438; VII., 286, 290
199. Ibid., VII, 415; III, 422-23. This analogy is used not only in Hinduism but also in Jainism, Sri Ramakrishna also used this analogy. See K.P. Aleaz, Jesus in Neo-Vedanta (Delhi: Kant Publications, 1995), p. 30

200. Ibid., VII, 6, 341, 347; V, 81-82, 118; II, 240-53, 268, 430, 431

201. Ibid., III, 230, 324, 397, 438-39; I, 357, 400-404, II, 106, 125


203. Ibid., p. 145, also Nalini Devadas, op.cit., pp. 18-22

204. Ibid., p. 163


206. P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 164

207. Vivekananda is making a strong case against Christian Missionaries, “that every Christian Child is taught to call the Hindus ‘vile’ and ‘wretches’ and the most horrible devil on earth”


209. Ibid., VIII, 212

210. Ibid., V, 79-81

211. Ibid., III, 182

212. Ibid., VIII, 2

213. Ibid., VIII, 89f

214. P.S. Daniel, op.cit., p. 171

215. CWSV, Vol. III, p. 132

216. K.P. Aleaz, op.cit., p. 26


221. Ibid

222. Swami Shraddhananda, *Hindu Sangathan – Saviour of the Dying Race* (Delhi: Jan – Gyan Prakashan, 1926), p. 120


224. DNB Pandit, ‘Hindutva as a Political Ideology’ in *Fundamentalism and Securalism: The Indian Predicament* (Madras: Gurukul Summer Institute, 1924), p. 162


227. D.N.B. Pandit, op.cit., p. 163

228. Ibid

229. Tapan Basu and Others, op.cit., p. 26


231. V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva*, pp. 94-95

232. Hindu Mahasabha Constitution (Revised and recommended by the Hindu Mahasabha at the twentieth session held in Nagpur in December 1938), pp. 1-2


235. John Panicker, op.cit., p. 68

237. Tapan Basu and others, op.cit., p. 26

238. Ibid


240. After Gandhiji’s Assasination, the RSS movement fell into disrepute and the Government outlawed it on 4th February, 1948. The ban was lifted on 12th July 1949. The Sangh submitted a written constitution to the Government. This was the first time the Sangh Possessed a written constitution. The main sources for the ideology of the Sangh we get from the constitution (1949) and from the Guruji’s Bunch of Thoughts (1966), p. 208

241. Golwalkar, op.cit., p. 208


246. In Hinduism *Varna* is decided according to the *guna*, i.e., (*satva, rajas & tama*)

247. The four stages are, *Brahmacarya, Grhastasrma, Vanaprasta & Sannyasa*


249. Ibid., p.156

250. Ibid., pp. 176-198

251. Ibid., pp. 166, 182, 184, 187, 194, 196, 203, 256

252. Ibid., pp. 47-50, 158, 279

254. Golwalkar, op.cit., p. 188

255. Golwalkar, We or Our Nationhood Defined (4th edition) (Nagpur: Bharat Prakasham, 1947), p.49. See also Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, p.188, We or our Nationhood Defined, is known as the ‘RSS’ Bible.

256. Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, p. 45, pp. 182-183

257. Golwalkar, We or Our Nationhood Defined, pp. 48-49

258. Ibid., pp. 43, 51-58

259. Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, pp. 162, 165, 167, 173-175, 182, 184, 203, 229-230, 256

260. Ibid., 123


262. Ibid., pp. 224, 299, 230

263. Ibid., p.230

264. Ibid., pp. 363-364

265. Ibid., pp. 340-379

266. Ibid., pp. 75-76


CHAPTER – III

CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM