

Religions and Politics I

Rig-Veda X.90

When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? The Brahmin was his mouth, and from both his arms the Kshatriya was made. His thighs became the Vaishya, and from his feet the Shudra was produced. The moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the sun had birth..

Artha Shastra I.4

The scepter conduces to the acquisition of what has not been acquired, the preservation of what has been acquired, the growth of what has been preserved, and the distribution among worthy people of what has been grown. It is on it that the proper functioning of society depends. There is no means for subjugation of beings as the scepter, say the ancient teachers. The king, severe with the scepter, becomes a source of terror to beings. The king, mild with the scepter, is despised.

Manu Smriti I.87-91

But to protect this whole creation, the lustrous one made separate innate activities for those born of his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet. For Brahmins, he ordained teaching and learning, sacrificing for themselves and sacrificing for others, giving and receiving. For the Kshatriya are protecting his subjects, providing, having sacrifices performed, and remaining unaddicted to sensory objects. Protecting his livestock, giving, having sacrifices performed, studying, trading, lending money, and farming the land are for the Vaishya. The Lord assigned only one activity to the Shudra: serving these classes without resentment.

Manu Smriti VII.99-101

The king should try hard to get what he has not and to guard what he has; he should make what he guards grow, and he should deposit in worthy receptacles of charity what he has made to grow. He should realize that these are the four ways of accomplishing human goals; never tiring, he should strive to employ them properly. By means of his army he should seek what he has not; by careful attention he should guard what he has; he should make what he guards grow by means of the pursuit of self-interest; and he should deposit in worthy receptacles of charity what he has made grow.

Mahabharata XII.67

A kingdom in which anarchy prevails becomes weak and is soon afflicted by robbers. In kingdoms torn by anarchy, righteousness cannot dwell. The inhabitants devour one another. Anarchy is the worse possible of states. The sacred texts declare that in crowning a king, it is Indra that is crowned. A person who desires prosperity should worship the king as he should worship Indra. No one should dwell in kingdoms torn by anarchy. Agni does not convey the libations that are poured upon him in kingdoms where anarchy prevails.

Gandhi, writing in *Young India* in 1931

Even in 1888-89, when I first became acquainted with the Gita, I felt that it was not a historical work, but that, under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism*

Dharma is of primary importance, but we should not forget that it is not possible to practice Dharma in the absence of Artha. There is a saying "What sin will not be committed by one who is starving? Those who have lost everything become ruthless." Therefore we are enjoined to see that there is enough wealth created continuously, since wealth also strengthens Dharma. Similarly the government has to maintain law and order and prevent chaos, which definitely destroys Dharma. At the time of Chaos, law of the jungle prevails where the strong feed upon the weak.

Bibliography

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Religion and Politics II

1 Samuel 8:11-18

He said, This will be the judgment of the king who will reign over you: your sons he will take and set them among his chariots and his horsemen, and they will run in front of his chariots; he will also appoint himself chiefs of thousands and chiefs of fifties, and some to plough his fields and to harvest his crop and to make weapons of war and riding gear. And your daughters he will take for perfumers and cooks and bakers. Your choice fields and vineyards and olive groves he will take and give to his servants. He will tithe your seed and vineyard and give it to his officers and servants. Your servants and maids and choice cattle and ass he will take and impress. Your flocks he will tithe and you will be his slaves. And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you chose for yourself, and YHWH will not answer you in that day.

2 Samuel 7:11-16

YHWH declares to you that YHWH will build a house for you. When your days are fulfilled and you lie with your fathers I shall raise up your seed after you that came from your loins and appoint him your kingdom. He will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me. When he does wrong I will punish him with the judgment of men and with the punishments of men. My compassion I shall not remove from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed before you. Your house and your kingdom will be sure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.

Isaiah 45:1-7

So says YHWH to his messiah, to Cyrus - whom I have taken by the right hand to bring nations down before him, loose the loins of kings, and open to him doors and gates that shall not be closed. I shall go before you and level obstacles and break doors of bronze and shatter bars of iron. I will give you treasures of darkness and secret stashes so you will know that I am YHWH, God of Israel, who calls you by name. For my servant Jacob, even Israel my chosen: I call you by name and entitle you, although you do not know me. I am YHWH, and there is no god beside me. I equip you and you do not know me, that it might be known from the rising of the sun and the west that there is nothing apart from me. I am YHWH and there is not another. Forming light and making darkness, doing peace and making evil, and YHWH who does all these things!

1 Maccabees 14:28-30

In a great congregation of priests, people, rulers of the nation, and the elders of the country, it was made known by us: since there have often been wars in our country, Simon, the son of Mattathias, priest of the sons of Jarib, and his brothers, have put themselves in danger, and resisted the adversaries of their nation, in order that their holy places and the law might stand and that they might glorify their nation with great glory. And after Jonathan gathered together their nation, and became high priest to them, he was added to his people. When their enemies desired to invade and to reach with their hands against their holy places, then Simon resisted and fought for his nation, and spent much of his own money, and armed the strong men of his nation, and gave them wages. He fortified the cities of Judea and Bethsura that lies in the borders of Judea, where the warriors' armory of the used to be: he placed there a garrison of Jewish men. And he fortified Joppa by the sea, and Gazara on borders on Azotus, where the warriors used to dwell, and he settled Jews there, and furnished them with all they needed for restoration. The people saw the faith of Simon and to the glory that he meant to bring his nation, made him their leader and high priest, because he had done all these things, and for the justice and faith which he kept towards his nation, and because he sought by all means to exalt his people.

Genesis Rabbah 19.9

Rabbi Abbahu in the name of Rabbi Yosé bar Haninah, It is written, But they are like a man, they have transgressed the covenant. They are like a man - specifically, the first man. In the case of the first man, I brought him into the Garden of Eden, I commanded him, he violated my commandment, I judged him to be sent away and driven out, but I mourned for him... So too in the case of his descendants, I brought them into the land of Israel, I commanded them, they violated my commandment, I judged them to be sent out and driven away but I mourned for them.

Bavli, tractate Yoma 10a

Rabbi Joshua b. Levi said Rabbi said, Rome is destined to fall by the hand of Persia: Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord, that he has taken against Edom; and his purpose, that he has planned against the inhabitants of Teman... (Jeremiah 49:20).

Religions and Politics III

Siddharta Gautama (d. 483 B.C.E.) in the Pali Majjhima Nikaya (first century C.E.)

In all the beauty of my early prime with a wealth of coal-black hair untouched by grey -despite the wishes of my parents, who wept and lamented - I cut off my hair and beard, donned the yellow robe and went out from home to homelessness.... Bear always in mind what it is that I have elucidated, and what it is that I have not elucidated. And what have I not elucidated? I have not elucidated that the world is eternal; I have not elucidated that the world is not eternal; I have not elucidated that the world is finite; I have not elucidated that the world is infinite; I have not elucidated that the soul and the body are identical; I have not elucidated that the arhat exists after death; I have not elucidated that the arhat does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the arhat both exists and does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the arhat neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why have I not elucidated them? Because this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion. For this reason I have not elucidated this. And what have I elucidated? Misery have I elucidated; the origin of misery have I elucidated; the cessation of misery have I elucidated; and the path leading to the cessation of misery have I elucidated. Why have I elucidated this? Because this does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to absence of passion, to knowledge, supreme wisdom, and nirvana.

Ashokan Edicts (262-232 B.C.E.)

Dharma is good. But what does Dharma consist of? It consists of few sins and many good deeds, of kindness, liberality, truthfulness and purity.... One should obey one's father and mother. One should respect the supreme value and sacredness of life. One should speak the truth. One should practice these virtues of Dharma.... My officials of all ranks - high, low, and intermediate - act in accordance with the precepts of my instruction.... For these are the rules: to govern according to Dharma, to administer justice according to Dharma, to advance peoples's happiness according to Dharma, and to protect them according to Dharma.

Ashoka, apoken of and speaking in the Ashokavadana (second century C.E.)

Buddha: A hundred years after my death there will be an emperor named Ashoka in Pataliputra. He will rule one of the four continents and adorn Jambudvipa with my relics, building eighty four thousand stupas for the welfare of

people. He will have them honored by gods and men. His fame will be widespread.

Ashoka: I distributed his reliquaries and beautified the earth everywhere with mountain-like stupas of many colors, with lofty banners and jeweled parasols. My son, myself, my house, my wives, the whole earth, even the royal treasure - there is nothing whatsoever that I have not given up for the teaching of the Dharma King.

Buddhaghosa's account from the Pali Aganna Sutta (c. 430 C.E.):

When stealing, reproof, lying, and violence had sprung up among them, they came together and said, "What if we elect some one of us, who shall get angry with him who merits anger and reproof, and banish him who merits banishment? He was called the Great Elected One, Lord of Fields, and King.

Buddhaghosa, Visuddhimagga 9.124

In order to avoid doing harm to beings they undertake the precepts of virtue. They practice renunciation for the purpose of perfecting their virtue. They cleanse their understanding for the purpose of non-confusion of what is good and bad for beings. They constantly arouse energy, having beings' welfare and happiness at heart. When they have acquired heroic fortitude through supreme energy, they become patient with beings' many kinds of faults.

Pali Jataka 276 (perhaps fifth century C.E.)

Beneath the mild sway of a righteous king
Like shade from sun-stroke sheltering,
His subjects may all dwell in peace,
Rejoicing in their wealth's increase.

Pancaraksha Sutra (fifteenth century C.E.)

Brahmadatta proclaimed, "My dear subjects! It is my duty to safeguard the country and countrymen. You need not be afraid of anything. I will do all that is needed." After saying this, King Brahmadatta bathed and cleansed himself with many kinds of sweet-smelling waters. Purified in body, speech, and mind, the king appended the amulets of the Pratisara dharani to his crown and armor, then went alone to meet the enemy. The men in the army of the enemy kings retreated and ran away in panic.

Religions and Politics IV

The critical rejection of government

Matthew 6:24 (c. 80 C.E.)

No one can serve two lords, because either he will hate the one and love the other, or adhere to one and disdain the other: you cannot serve God and mammon.

The critical toleration of government

1 Corinthians 7:20-21 (c. 55 C.E.)

Every person remain in the calling one was called in. Were you a slave when you were called? What does that matter? (Yet if you are able to become free, take the opportunity.) For the slave called is the Lord's freed person; likewise a free person called is Christ's slave.

The critical support of government

***On First Principles* 1.1.5 (220 CE)**

Having then refuted, to the best of our ability, every interpretation which suggests that we should attribute to God any material characteristics, we assert that he is in truth incomprehensible and immeasurable. For whatever may be the knowledge which we have been able to obtain about God, whether by perception or reflection, we must of necessity believe that he is far and away better than our thoughts about him. For if we see a man who can scarcely look at a glimmer of the light of the smallest lamp, and if we wish to teach such a one, whose eyesight is not strong enough to receive more light than we have said, about the brightness and splendor of the sun, shall we not have to tell him that the splendor of the sun is unspeakably and immeasurably better and more glorious than all this light he can see?

***City of God* 14.28 (426 CE)**

So two loves have constituted two cities -- the earthly is formed by love of self even to contempt of God, the heavenly by love of God even to contempt of self. For the one glories in herself, the other in the Lord. The one seeks glory from man; for the other God, the witness of the conscience, is the greatest glory....

The endorsement of government

Constantine to Elpidius (3 July 321)

Just as we thought it most unfitting that the day of the Sun, with its venerable rites, should be given over to the swearing and counter-swearing of litigants and their unseemly brawls, so it is a pleasant and joyful thing to fulfill petitions of special urgency on that day. Therefore on that festal day let all be allowed to perform manumission and emancipation; and let nothing that concerns this be forbidden.

Praise of Constantine 1.6 (337 C.E.)

Our Emperor, beloved of God, bearing a kind of image of the supreme rule as it were in imitation of the greater, directs the course of all things upon earth.

Epistle 40.8 (388 C.E.)

This, I ask, Emperor: that you turn your vengeance upon me, and, if you consider this act a crime, that you impute it to me. Why order the absent to me punished? I am present here before you, and confess my guilt. I proclaim that I set the synagogue on fire, or at least ordered others to do so, that there might not be left a building in which Christ is denied. If you ask me why I have not burned the synagogue in my neighborhood, I answer that its destruction has already been begun by the judgment of God, and my work was at an end.

Theodosian Code (395 C.E.)

It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation should continue in the profession of that religion that was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition; and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damascus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment, they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches.

Religions and Politics V

Qur'an, Al Saffat 37:84-111

Look: he came to his Master with a whole heart. Look: he said to his father and to his people, "What do you worship? Falsehood -- gods other than Allah that you desire? What is your idea about the Master of the worlds?" Then he looked once at the stars. And said, "I am indeed sick." They turned away from him, and departed. Then he turned to their gods and said, "Don't you eat? What is with you that you don't speak?" Then he turned upon them, striking with the right hand. Then his people advanced towards him in haste. He said, "Do you worship what you have carved? But Allah created you and what you make!" They said, "Build a furnace for him, and throw him in the blazing fire!" They tried a plot against him, but we made them low! He said: "I will truly go to my Master, who will guide me! My Master! Grant me a righteous son!" So we gave him message of a forbearing son. When the son grew to work with him, he said, "My son, indeed I see in vision that I sacrifice you. Look, what do you see?" He said, "My father, Do what you are commanded! You will find me, if Allah wills, among the steadfast." And when they had both submitted their wills and he pushed him forehead down We called out to him "Ibrahim! You have already fulfilled the vision!" So indeed we reward those who do right. This was an obvious trial -- And we redeemed him with an immense sacrifice. And we left for him among generations in later times: "Peace upon Ibrahim!" So we reward those who do right. Indeed he was one of our believing servants.

Ibn Ishaq (eighth century C.E.), on the furnace of Nimrod

When they were ready to throw him into the fire, they lit it in each of the corners of the wood that they gathered so that the fire roared. They came together to push him into it. The heavens and the earth and all that was created in it except the humans and the Jinn screamed to Allah in a single voice: "Our Lord, there is no one on your earth but Abraham who worships you, and he is being burned in the fire. Give us permission to help him." When they said this, Allah said: "If he calls for something from you or asks for something, then help him. I give permission for this. If he does not call out except for me, I am his protector. Leave it between me and him. I will make him secure." So they threw him into the fire, and he said, "Fire, be cold and peaceful for Abraham," and it was as God said.

Al-Shaybani (d. 804 C.E.)

Allah gave the Prophet Muhammad four swords: the first against the polytheists, which Muhammad himself fought with; the second against apostates, which Caliph Abu Bakr fought with; the third against the People of the Book, which Caliph 'Umar fought with; and the fourth against dissenters, which Caliph 'Ali fought with.

Imad ad-Din on Saladin's victory at Tiberias in 1187

This field of battle became a sea of blood; the dust was stained red, rivers of blood ran freely, and the face of the true Faith was revealed, free from those shadowy abominations....the humiliation proper to the men of Saturday was inflicted on the men of Sunday.

Saladin's vow in Jerusalem in 1189

I think that when God grants me victory over the rest of Palestine I shall divide my territories, make a will stating my wishes, then set sail on this sea for their far-off lands and pursue the Franks there so as to free the earth of anyone who does not believe in God, or die in the attempt.

Ibn Taymiyah (1268-1328 C.E.) on *jihad*:

Now, it is in *jihad* that one can live and die in ultimate happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter. Abandoning it means losing entirely or partially both kinds of happiness. There are people who want to perform religious and temporal deeds full of hardship in spite of their lack of benefit, whereas actually *jihad* is religiously and temporally more beneficial than any other deed full of hardship. Other people desire to make things easy for themselves when death meets them, but the death of the martyr is easier than any other form of death. In fact, it is the best of all manners of dying.

Murtaza Mutahhari, himself the victim of assassination in 1979

The *shahid* can be compared to a candle whose job it is to burn out and get extinguished in order to shed light for the benefit of others. The *shuhada'* are the candles of society.... Islam came to reform society and to form a nation and government. Its mandate is the reform of the whole world. Such a religion cannot be indifferent. It cannot be without a law of *jihad*."