EDITED BY DAVID N. LORENZEN

BHAKTI RELIGION IN NORTH INDIA

Community Identity & Political Action

Bhakti Religion in North India

Community Identity and Political Action

edited by
DAVID N. LORENZEN

STATE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW YORK PRESS

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

© 1995 State University of New York

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

For information, write to the State University of New York Press,
State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246

Production by Bernadine Dawes
Marketing by Nancy Farrell

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bhakti religion in North India : community identity and political
action / edited by David N. Lorenzen.
p. cm. — (SUNY series in religious studies)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-7914-2025-6
1. Hinduism—Social aspects. 2. Sikhism—Social aspects.
3. Bhakti. 4. Religion and politics—India. I. Lorenzen, David N.
II. Series.
BL1151.3.B46 1995
294.5'0954—dc20 93-41538
CIP

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Bhakti Religion
in
North India

SUNY Series in Religious Studies
Harold Coward, editor

此为试读，需要完整PDF请访问：www.ertongbook.com

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Diacritics have been used for all Sanskrit and Hindi words *except* the following: (1) names of places, persons and institutions that have "official" English spellings, (2) names of authors, titles and publishers of books and essays in European languages (even when diacritics appear in the original publication), and (3) words that have been absorbed into English (e.g., Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, yogi, Brahmin, sannyasi, sadhu, Shaivite).

In Hindi words, a final mute *a* appearing after a single consonant has always been dropped. Other cases of mute *a* have been left as the authors of the essays prefer (e.g., Tulsīdās or Tulasīdās, Rāmānand or Rāmānanda). Some words have been written differently in Hindi and Sanskrit (or pan-Indian) contexts (e.g., Rām or Rāma).

A clase nasal *(ṅ, ñ, ṇ, n, m)* has usually been used in place of an *anusvāra (ṃ)* except before *h* and *s* (e.g., *Śaṅkar, siṃha*). Pure nasalized vowels *(anunāsik)* are indicated either by an *anusvāra (yahāṃ)* or by a tilde *(yahā̃)*. The following transliterations are also used: च = *cha;* छ = *chha;* ड = *ḍa;* ड़ = *ṛa;* व = *va* or *wa;* ऋ = *ṛ;* श = *śa;* ष = *ṣa*. In words without diacritics, these last three are usually written as 'ri,' 'sha,' and 'sha' respectively.

PREFACE

The essays in this volume all discuss aspects of medieval and modern Hinduism and Sikhism in North India. All are by scholars working in North American universities. Although this is obviously a vast field of study, the number of scholars working in it in North American universities is still relatively small, even compared to the limited number of scholars working in the related fields of classical and Vedic Hinduism, Tantric religion, and South Indian Hinduism. The scholarly balance between these fields, however, does seem to be gradually coming more into line with their actual historical, religious and social importance.

I was particularly pleased, therefore, when El Colegio de México and the National Council for Science and Technology of the Mexican government agreed to sponsor a symposium on Popular Religion and Sociopolitical Dissidence in North India, held in Mexico City in May, 1991. This symposium brought together a dozen senior scholars working on this field in American, Canadian and Mexican universities, as well as several younger scholars and graduate students. Many of the essays in this book grew out of the papers and discussions of this symposium.

Given the varied nature of the research projects of the scholars working in this field in North America, the topics discussed in this book are necessarily varied. All the essays do, however, address the basic problems of the formation of socioreligious identity and difference in North India and of the nature of the ensuing conflicts between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims that are daily tearing Indian society apart. As a result, the post-independence Indian state has been forced to resort to ever more desperate efforts to save its administrative structure and territorial unity. Insofar as these efforts have led to systematic abuses of human rights by all sides in the conflicts, including the police and armed forces charged with protecting those rights, it is obvious that a fundamental rethinking of the situation and courageous new political decisions are urgently needed.

My thanks for help in putting together this volume are owed first and foremost to the authors of the essays, who wrote and revised their texts with care and punctuality. Also helpful were many of the comments in the anonymous readers' reports solicited by State University of New York Press. My own essays also benefited from critical comments from various colleagues, especially Susana Devalle, John Hawley and Harjot Oberoi. My wife, Barbara Martiny, graciously gave up time from her own professional work at several critical junctures to give me extra time to work on the project.

* * *

How happens it then, said PHILO, if [religion] be so salutary to society, that all history abounds so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs? Factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversions of government, oppression, slavery; these are the dismal consequences which always attend its prevalency over the minds of men. . . .

—David Hume,
Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, 1776

* * *

This reality, which mythologies have represented under so many different forms, but which is the universal and eternal objective cause of these sensations sui generis out of which religious experience is made is society. . . .

It is obviously necessary that the religious life be the eminent form and, as it were, the concentrated expression of the whole collective life. If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion.

—Emile Durkheim,
Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, 1912

CONTENTS

A Note on Transliteration vii

Preface ix

Introduction
The Historical Vicissitudes of Bhakti Religion
David N. Lorenzen 1

PART I: COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The Making of a Religious Paradox: Sikh Khālsā, Sahajdhārī as Modes of Early Sikh Identity
Harjot Oberoi 35

The Social Significance of Radhasoami
Mark Juergensmeyer 67

Sanskritization, Caste Uplift, and Social Dissidence in the Sant Ravidās Panth
Joseph Schaller 94

The Instability of the King: Magical Insanity and the Yogis' Power in the Politics of Jodhpur, 1803–1843
Daniel Gold 120

The Kīnā Rāmī: Augharṣ and Kings in the Age of Cultural Contact
Roxanne Poormon Gupta 133

PART II: THEOLOGY

The Theology of the Locative Case in Sacred Sikh Scripture (Gurabāṇī)
Michael C. Shapiro 145

The *Nirguṇ/Saguṇ* Distinction in Early Manuscript Anthologies of Hindu Devotion
~~John~~ Stratton Hawley 160

The Lives of *Nirguṇī* Saints
David N. Lorenzen 181

Chokhāmeḷā: Piety and Protest
Eleanor Zelliot 212

The Avatar Doctrine in the Kabīr Panth
Uma Thukral 221

The Vitality of the *Nirguṇ* Bhajan: Sampling the Contemporary Tradition
Edward O. Henry 231

PART III: POLITICAL ACTION

Interpreting Rāmrāj: Reflections on the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Bhakti, and Hindu Nationalism
Philip Lutgendorf 253

The Politics of Devotion to Rāma
Peter van der Veer 288

Social Identities, Hindu Fundamentalism, and Politics in India
Susana B. C. Devalle 306

List of Contributors 323

Index 325

此为试读，需要完整PDF请访问：www.ertongbook.com

Hanumān. Fewer persons direct their devotion primarily toward Shiva and the Goddess. Those who do generally worship Shiva in the semi-iconic form of a *liṅga*, while the Goddess is most often worshipped as Durgā or Mahiṣamardinī, the killer of the buffalo demon. On the other hand, followers of *nirguṇī* religion, including the Sikhs, generally reject worship of the avatars of Vishnu or any other anthropomophic gods or forms of God. Although *nirguṇī* literature directs the devotee to worship a formless, universal God, this God does take partial embodiment in the Name of God and in the collective Words *(bāṇī)* and the person of the Guru and the saints. Particularly in the case of the Sikhs, the words of the Guru and the saints take the physical form of a holy Book, the *Ādi Granth* or *Gurū Granth Sāhib.*

In this introduction, I will first discuss the relation between religious and social identities in the context of the growth of religious communalism in modern India. Next, I will review the historical development of the social ideologies associated with the traditions of *saguṇī* and *nirguṇī* bhakti. Finally, I will offer some critical comments on the ideas of Max Weber about the nature of low-class religion.

Community Identity and Communalism

Theological differences are not simply the product of historical accident; they are symptomatic and expressive of differences in social identities. Religions are communities of persons who follow, or claim to follow, common systems of beliefs and practices. Even those beliefs and practices that appear to be sociologically and politically arbitrary serve to express and define the limits of any given religious community. In other words, taken together they define the group's identity, its membership and its ideology. This is true even though other factors such as class and caste, gender, ethnic group, language, region, and race generally play important roles in deciding who is likely to become a member of the group.

The Sikhs provide a good example. The essays of Harjot Oberoi and Michael Shapiro in this book illustrate two aspects of the formation of this religious community. Oberoi concentrates on how ritual differences increasingly served to mark and define Sikh identity, while Shapiro shows how distinctive theological features of Sikh religion were woven even into the grammar of the language used in Sikh scripture.

Many religious beliefs and practices are employed not only to define a given community identity but also to provide a utopian vision for the future of the community and of the society of which it forms a greater or lesser part. In other words, these beliefs and practices are normative both in a descriptive, definitional sense and in an ideal, moral sense. Together they constitute, in short, both the identity and the ideology of the community.

The concept of ideology has been given many senses. I prefer to define it as a form of discourse, primarily verbal but also behavioral, that directly or indirectly claims to describe the structure and functioning of society in such a way as either to justify, or to protest against, an unequal distribution of social status, economic wealth and political power among different groups within the society. Although ideologies inevitably have manipulative aspects, their spokesmen for the most part believe what they say, even if they know, deep down, that it is not the whole story. Ideological discourse is not simply cynical propaganda. Propaganda implies a conscious manipulation of the truth to achieve covert economic, social and political ends that benefit certain groups to the detriment of the society at large. Ideology, on the other hand, functions in much more unconscious, and even altruistic, fashion. For its supporters, an ideology represents the proper, and even the natural, arrangement of society.

The classical Marxist argument that each society has essentially only one ideology, to be identified as the "dominant ideology" of its ruling class, is no longer tenable.[1] Still useful, however, is A. Gramsci's idea that the ideology (or ideologies) of privileged classes may exert, by a combination of persuasion and coercion, a "hegemony" over the ideology (or ideologies) of the nonprivileged classes in the same society (Anderson 1976/77). Indeed, it is precisely the distinction between hegemonic and subordinate or subaltern ideological discourse that underlies the distinction between the *nirguṇī* and *saguṇī* devotional movements, as will be argued below (also Lorenzen 1987a). Furthermore, since ideological discourse always claims that its social prescriptions will benefit the society as a whole—even when in fact they serve as much or more to protect the privileges of an upper-class elite—ideological discourse and discourse that defines community identity are always inextricably linked.

In the context of North India, the term "community identity" inevitably invokes the related concepts of *communal* identity and *communalism*. Communalism, particularly as it relates to devotion to the avatar Rām, is the single most recalcitrant and dangerous source of social and political conflict in India today. In this book the essays of Lutgendorf, van der Veer and Devalle all are directly concerned with this problem. Clearly some discussion of the concept and the phenomenon is in order.

Perhaps the most lucid discussion of the varied meanings that the terms "communal" (or "communalist") and "communalism" have acquired in the speech of imperialists, nationalists, and assorted academics is that found in Gyanendra Pandey's book, *The Construction of Communalism in North India* (1990). According to Pandey (1990, 6):

> In its common Indian usage the word "communalism" refers to a condition of suspicion, fear and hostility between members of different religious communities. In academic investigations, more often than not, the term is applied to organized political movements based on the proclaimed interests of a religious community, usually in response to a real or imagined threat from another religious community (or communities).

For Pandey, however, the true "meaning" of communalism as a concept is not to be located in its contemporary Indian usages, but rather in the history of the "discourses"—imperialist, nationalist and academic—in which the concept arose and developed. His aim is (1990, 5–6) "to explore the history of the 'problem' of communalism through an examination of the discourse that gave it meaning."

What Pandey finds in his examination of the historical "construction" of the concept is that (1990, 6) "communalism . . . is a form of colonialist knowledge" since the concept was first developed in the discourse of imperialist administrators who used it as a catchall label for different sorts of social and political unrest. By calling this unrest "religious," these administrators purposely implied that Indian society was fundamentally imbued with religious bigotry and irrationality.

In Pandey's view, nationalists, and to some extent liberal colonialists, have countered this basically racist or "essentialist" interpretation of communalism with another that was more rational and "economistic," but also basically negative (1990, 11): "The nationalists . . . recognize communalism as a problem of recent origins, as the outcome basically of economic and political inequality and conflict, and as the handiwork of a handful of self-interested elite groups (colonial and native), with the mass of people being essentially 'secular'." For both the colonialists and nationalists, communalism has been regarded as an obstacle to the development of a mature nationalism and ultimate self-government. To the extent to which both have shared this bias in favor of nationalism and secularism and the supposed grounding of these "isms" in rational thought, Pandey claims (1990, 13), "both nationalist and colonialist positions derive from the same liberal ideology."

While Pandey's account of the history of the concept does much to illuminate some of the biases and value judgements inherent in its everyday usages, his suggested solution to the "problem" seems to me to be wrong-headed. Rather than to recommend that we simply try to become more conscious of, and thereby correct or modify, the biases and value judgements inherited from colonialist and nationalist discourse, he apparently thinks that it is possible to virtually "deconstruct" the concept of communalism out of existence. In its place, he would prefer that we regard each historical case of conflict between the major religious communities of India on its own terms. For this reason he rejects, in no uncertain terms, the recent historical trend that emphasizes the "continuities" in Indian history, particularly Christopher Bayly's (1985) attempt to identify "The Pre-History of 'Communalism'" in religious conflicts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For Pandey (1990, 15), "there is really no sense of context here, not a hint that human beings and their actions, the events of history, derive their meaning from the political, economic, social and intellectual circumstances in which they are placed."[2]

One cannot, however, simply deconstruct communalism out of existence in this postmodernist fashion. The "meaning" of the concept of communalism is not exhausted by an analysis of the biases and value judgements inherent in the discourses in which it arose. One can, I think, fairly invoke the well-worn distinction between what a term connotes and what it denotes. Pandey's "meaning" overvalues the connotations of the term at the expense of its denotation, the latter being roughly equivalent to its contemporary everyday usage. Communalism is a concept, but it is a concept that most people employ to refer to and classify a quite specific range of attitudes and actions. Without such classifying terms and concepts, any discourse is of course impossible. In the case of "communalism," I fail to see that Pandey can offer *any* acceptable substitute.

Pandey may well be correct to reject Bayly's extension of the term communalism to include religious conflicts before 1860, but his charge that Bayly's argument lacks any "sense of context" is unfair. As G. Barraclough has noted (1967), the identification and evaluation of the continuities and discontinuities in society over the passage of time is precisely the principal task that historians undertake. Bayly, of all people, is certainly well aware of the historical context of the examples of religious conflict he has discussed. Where he differs with Pandey is in the much less historically specific meaning he assigns to the concept of communalism. This is the reason Bayly sees continuity where Pandey sees discontinuity.

One vital aspect of any analysis of the phenomenon of communalism is an evaluation of the extent to which it is the product of elite manipulation of popular attitudes and actions. There is little doubt, for instance, that the religious and political elite that control the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have shamelessly manipulated for their own ends the popular religious sentiments invoked by the Rām-janmabhūmi and Bābarī-masjid dispute. It is also clear, however, that these elites have been able to draw from a deep well of popular Hindu discontent and antagonism against the Muslim community with roots going back to medieval times. In his essay here, P. Lutgendorf discusses some of this medieval background to communalism, particularly its relation to Tulasīdās's *Rāmacharitamānas*. P. van der Veer concentrates more on the association between communalism and the nationalist movement, and S. Devalle tackles the problem of the relation of communalism to modern political ideologies and communalist concepts such as *Hindutva*.

Secular nationalists, including Marxists such as Bipan Chandra, have often regarded communal discontent and antagonism as the product of elite manipulation and a typical manifestation of "false consciousness." Chandra (1984, 1) defines communalism as "the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political and economic interests." In this view, such concrete interests do underlie communalism, but they are the interests of elite manipulators, not the common people. If this were in fact true, however, the destruction of communalism would be relatively simple, at least in theory. One need only educate the people to see how their communalist sentiments are in fact based on elite manipulation. It is like the position of the Advaitin who compares illumination to the destruction of an illusory serpent by recognizing that it is *really* a rope.

The chief problem with this point of view is that it underestimates the deep historical roots of the self-identities of the religious communities of India, a subject I will return to shortly. The snake in question is far from illusory. Communalism may well be a comparatively modern phenomenon arising in large measure from elite manipulation, but it is also firmly rooted in community identities that cannot be simply wished away. Furthermore, once created, communal ideology (i.e., one that defines the community in excessively negative, oppositional terms) generates its own social, economic and political reality; it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Once the religious Other is radically excluded from the community, he does in fact become a rival in social, political and economic terms as well as religious ones.

Admitting the reality and practical importance of religious communities, however, need not imply that one should abandon the quest for a secular society. Ashis Nandy (1990) tends in this direction when he attempts to promote a more traditional and religious social identity that is at the same time more tolerant and noncommunalist than the "Hindutva" of the more fundamentalist Hindu nationalists of the RSS, VHP, and BJP. As Peter van der Veer points out in his essay, Nandy can be seen as a post-independence heir to the religious nationalism of Mahatma Gandhi. Somewhat surprisingly, both Gyanendra Pandey (1990, 21–22) and Veena Das (1990) openly flirt with the idea of supporting Nandy's "anti-secularist" position.

Nandy's views and those of Bipan Chandra (1984) provide an instructive comparison, particularly with regard to the evaluation of the role of the state in communal conflict. Both agree that the colonial state played a significant role in fomenting the growth of communalism, but disagree about the role of the state since independence. On the whole, Chandra views the independent state as a relatively neutral arbiter in situations of communal conflict and argues that this positive neutrality is closely linked to the espousal of a secular ideology. Nandy on the other hand regards the "secular" state as often being a source of communal conflict and pins his hopes for avoiding such conflict on the traditional religious tolerance of the majority Hindu community. As van der Veer points out, however, this tolerance is grounded on the doctrine of a hierarchy of religious truths wherein different religions

此为试读，需要完整PDF请访问： www.ertongbook.com