



A thought for today

For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent

BR AMBEDKAR

New Generation

Dalit politics is being reshaped by young leaders like Chandrashekhar Azad and Jignesh Mevani

It's more than the story of victimhood. Caste discrimination remains an everyday reality for many of them but Dalits are also more assertive and organised than ever before.

On May 5 the caste clash in Saharanpur's Shabbirpur village saw a Thakur man killed and Dalit houses set ablaze.

In Saharanpur it is Bhim Army that has built a case that the UP administration is acting in a partisan manner against Dalits.

The quota politics that has traditionally been deployed to appease identity mobilisations will no longer suffice, because the pie is already split thin and such politics will only enhance caste frictions.

The number of private sector jobs in the formal economy.



Mayawati immediately pointed to this as evidence that improving law and order is not BJP's cup of tea.

He too makes the case that even as anger has risen in the community, its established netas like Mayawati, Ram Vilas Paswan and Ramdas Athawale have failed to provide it meaningful political representation.

Countering this argument demands good police work but that's not possible as long as vacancies in the state police stand at a whopping 50%.

Temperate Note

Trump's speech in Riyadh nails terrorism, but fumbles on Iran

In a significant departure from his campaign rhetoric, US President Donald Trump delivered a key speech delinking Islam from terrorism and urged leaders of more than 50 Muslim-majority countries gathered in the Saudi capital of Riyadh to drive out extremism from their lands.

This is welcome as Trump seems to be veering to a pragmatic and rational position that distinguishes between Islamist terrorism and the Islamic faith.

But where Trump fumbled was in calling for isolating Iran for supporting terrorism within a few days of its re-electing reformist President Hassan Rouhani.

Designed by college boys

Triple talaq is exactly how immature men will end any relationship - unreasonably

Radhika Vaz



Triple talaq. Two words more loaded than me at happy hour. Should it stay or should it go? Everyone has an opinion about it and here is mine.

See the problem is that both marriage and triple talaq are man-made, designed by men to serve themselves.

As for triple talaq I actually think it was designed by college boys because that is exactly how immature men will end any relationship - unreasonably.

And this is why triple talaq must go (OK so I changed my mind). In a culture that is skewed to giving men a better deal the fact is they will act like college boys if they aren't being watched.

The writer is a comedian

Gobar Gas And Hot Air

China far surpasses India in biogas plants, exposing hypocrisy of gau rakshaks

Arunabh Ghosh and Rudolf Wagner



One would wonder, how the Chinese were able to install about seven million biogas plants in about four years.

More than 30 years of experience in developing and implementing a gobar gas digester programme coupled with favourable climate and the world's largest cattle population (then estimated at 240 million heads; 3.5 times that of China) had produced a mere 70,000 digesters, one in five of which was no longer operational.

Patel and Moulik's visit to China was part of a trilateral Germany-China-India exchange coordinated by the Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association (BORDA).

Viewed against the contemporary Hindu right's malicious violence against fellow Indians in the name of 'gau raksha', this nearly 40-year-old Sino-Indo-German collaboration is a sobering reminder that we continue to miss our own potential while promoting obscurantism through blind and uncritical reverence for an animal.



Chaitanya

companies set up in recent years to prove and market the health benefits of cow dung and cow urine are but one example.

Patel and Moulik's impressions of biogas development work in 1970s China therefore remain just as relevant today, when fanciful justifications continue to trump simple solutions.

And they gradually improved their technical quality as incomes and technical capabilities rose. The benefits of such an adapted approach were manifold.

In the name of the cow an extremist view is being foisted. This view has little to do with cows and everything to do with singling out 'enemies'

while the lamp significantly expanded the work-day and improved educational levels by making it easier for parents to read and children to study after dark.

At the same time, biogas use reduced the pressure on local wood resources while the digesters transformed agricultural refuse (stalks, leaves, human and animal excrements) into a bug-free nitrogen-rich manure for use in agriculture.

Moreover, customary handling of human waste and pig dung in China had resulted in widespread incidence of intestinal parasitic diseases such as schistosomiasis (bilharzia), which affected both humans and pigs.

ted both humans and pigs. The spread of biogas digesters ensured a much cleaner and sanitary handling of waste as the process killed more than 90% of the parasite eggs.

In the wake of Patel and Moulik's trip to China, a biogas promotion programme was initiated in India in 1981.

And even though an Indian Biogas Association has been set up in the past few years to further promote the adoption of biogas, recent estimates indicate that such expansion proceeds in slipshod fashion.

Why should any of this matter? It matters because the wide scale promotion of biogas, in which gobar would play a central role, can bring many attendant benefits, not least the safe and productive disposal of human and other agricultural refuse.

It also matters because it might help more of us recognise that in the name of the cow an extremist view is being foisted upon the vast majority of India's Hindus and upon all of India's minorities.

And so, the goal is to use those things that distinguish us - religion, caste, diet, clothing, the list goes on - to divide us. The cow is merely a pawn.

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Is One Belt, One Road the Chinese ashwamedha? How China's mythology influences its politics

Devdutt Pattanaik



As Western hegemony wanes in the global village, China envisions the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project.

At the heart of Chinese mythology is belief in the Mandate of Heaven. The Emperor of China has been given the divine authority to mirror heavenly order on earth.

Although communism sees itself as rational, and so anti-religion and anti-mythology, the communist revolution under Mao Zedong effectively marked the shift in the Mandate of Heaven from the old order to the new.

Geography plays a key role in Chinese mythology. At the centre is the Forbidden City (Beijing) around which is China and around which is the peripheral nations who look towards China for guidance to create heavenly order on earth.

whose people are best kept out using projects such as the Great Wall of China.

By contrast, time (kala) plays a key role in Hindu mythology. Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism speak of a world that has no beginning (anadi), no end (ananta) and is always impermanent (anitya).

There is no Beijing equivalent in Hindu mythology, though Delhi is often projected as such in post-Independence textbooks.

In Chinese mythology, there is authority and bureaucracy in heaven too. The gods enable the living to be successful, and successful mortals such as emperors, military commanders and noblemen take the position of immortal gods.



In Chinese worldview, India is seen in two ways. Firstly, it embodies luan, chaos. Secondly, India is Sukhavati, source of great spiritual wisdom

of harmony and flow.

Essentially, the tone is highly materialistic and worldly in contrast to the otherworldly nature of Indian mythologies, where the psychological matters more than the physical.

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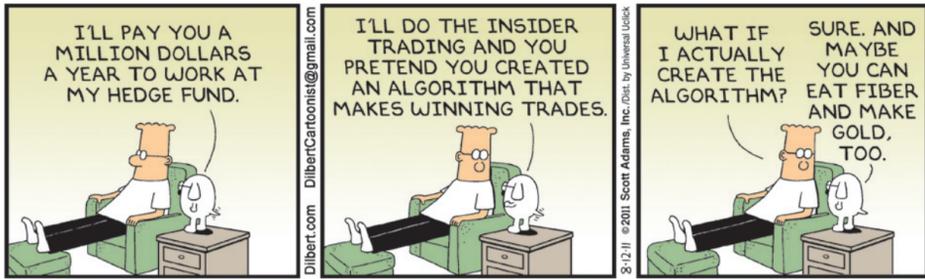
two ways. Firstly, it embodies luan, chaos. This chaos threatens the Chinese sense of order. This makes India a perpetual threat. It makes the Chinese leadership nervous.

Until the arrival of the Europeans, Buddhism was the only foreign idea that has had a dramatic impact on Chinese history.

The Chinese classic, Sun Tzu's Art of War, is about winning while Krishna's Bhagavad Gita is about union with the divine.

The writer ponders the modern meaning of myths

dilbert



Contributing To The Civilisation-Building Process

A Baha'i Approach

Baha'is across the globe, are striving to promote the principle of the oneness of humankind and the convictions underpinning it: that the rational soul has no gender, race, ethnicity or class, a fact that renders intolerable all forms of prejudice.

That science and religion are two complementary systems of knowledge and practice by which human beings come to understand the world around them and through which civilisation advances; that religion without science soon degenerates into superstition and fanaticism, while science without religion becomes the tool of crude materialism; that true prosperity,

the fruit of a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual requirements of life, will recede out of reach as long as consumerism continues to act as opium to the human soul.

That justice, as a faculty of the soul, enables the individual to distinguish truth from falsehood and guides the investigation of reality; that, when appropriately brought to bear on social issues, justice is the single most important instrument for the establishment of unity; that work performed in the spirit of service to one's fellow human beings is a form of prayer, a means of worshipping God.

How to bring people of different back-

grounds together in an environment which, devoid of the constant threat of conflict and distinguished by its devotional character, encourages them to put aside the divisive ways of a partisan mindset, fosters higher degrees of unity of thought and action, and elicits wholehearted participation?

How to administer the affairs of a community in which there is no ruling class with priestly functions that can lay claim to distinction or privilege; how to enable people to break free from the confines of passivity and the chains of oppression in order to engage in activities conducive to their spiritual, social and intellectual development; how to help youth navigate through a crucial stage of their lives and become empowered to direct their energies towards the advancement of civilisation?

How to create dynamics within the

family unit that lead to material and spiritual prosperity without instilling in the rising generations feelings of estrangement towards an illusory "other" or nurturing an instinct to exploit those relegated to this category? How to make it possible for decision making to benefit from a diversity of perspectives through a consultative process which, understood as the collective investigation of reality, promotes detachment from personal views, gives due importance to valid empirical information, does not raise mere opinion to the status of fact or define truth as the compromise between opposing interest groups?

To explore questions such as these and the many others certain to arise, the Baha'i community has adopted a mode of operation characterised by action, reflection, consultation and study - study which involves not only constant reference to the writings of the Faith but also the scientific analysis of patterns unfolding.

(Baha'i Office of Public Affairs)

Sacredspace

Who is Powerful? You come from commitment or complaint? You have to decide that. Invariably we find people who are powerful are those who operate from commitment. And those who are powerless, always operate from complaint.

Swami Sukhabodhananda



the speaking tree