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The Relevance of Veer Savarkar's Philosophy on Hindutva in Today's Society

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Abstract

Savarkar released a number of works about Hindutva in the year 1922. The ideologies of Hindutva and Hinduism are often mixed up in our minds. Many of us believe that Savarkar coined the word Hindutva in order to spread and encourage the practice of Hinduism. This Paper tries to bring out the Savarkar's real view on Hindutva. Essentials of Hindutva, 1923, the book he was working on at the time was written here. Because much of Savarkar's work has been deleted from public areas, this book is often used, and most of the time it is misquoted, to create the idea of violent Hindutva. This myth blames Savarkar and the Hindu religion for a fanaticism that does not exist. This paper will attempt to demonstrate why Veer Savarkar's philosophy of Hindutva is still relevant in today's society and this paper also tries to elaborate on and understand his views on Hindutva.

Keywords- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Hindutva, Hinduism, Philosophy and Society.

Introduction:

21 Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, often known as Veer Savarkar, was a notable figure in Indian politics, activism, and literature. Savarkar was born on May 28, 1883, into a Chitpavan Brahmin family in the hamlet of Bhagur, which is situated in the Nasik district of the state of Maharashtra today. Savarkar was the first person in his family to attend school. It is possible that his older brother Ganesh (Babarao), who is rumoured to have been greatly inspired by the activities of Lokmanya Tilak, the Chapekar Brothers, and other revolutionary figures, was the one who introduced him at a young age to the political activities of the Maharashtrian elite who were opposed to British rule. These activities took place during the time when Maharashtra was under British rule. The Savarkar brothers were very active members of the Mitra Mela, a clandestine organization that was founded with the intention of freeing India from British domination by the use of military force. Fergusson College in Pune was where Veer Savarkar received his education. His biographer, Dhananjay Keer, writes that Savarkar assembled around him a group of students who debated European political classics, pondered revolution, and championed swadeshi/self-reliance (Lal,2023.).

When Savarkar was a student at Fergusson College in Pune, he became involved in political activities for the first time. These activities led to Savarkar's early political career. After completing his high school education, he continued his participation in these activities. It was known by the name Abhinav Bharat Society, and he and his brother were the ones who first formed it. When he travelled to the United Kingdom to study law, he quickly got involved with a wide variety of organisations while he was there. Two of these organisations, India House and the Free India Society, were among those he joined. In addition to this, he penned articles in which he argued for the complete and utter independence of India by revolutionary means. His book "The Indian War of Independence," which was about the Indian Rebellion of 1857, was one of the books that were censored by the government in the British colonies. This book's subject matter was the Indian Independence Movement (Visana, 2021).

Savarkar was given a sentence of 50 years in prison, which included 11 years of incarceration in a cellular jail and conditional confinement for another 17 years at Ratnagiri. As a result of the constraints imposed by this sentence, Savarkar's life was cut short by about 27 years. This consumed a significant portion of his life. However, both his vision and his philosophy were crystal clear and unambiguous, and they acted as a guiding light for the masses of people who were living in political darkness as a result of their captivity by the British.

Savarkar was one of the individuals who proclaimed the year 1857 to be the beginning of the first war of the liberation struggle. In his view, there was no room for equivocation when discussing independence from the British. Moplah Rebellion and My Transportation of Life - Poetry and Plays are two of the novels written by Veer Savarkar. He is responsible for the publication of as many as 38 books in English and Marathi. His most famous essay, "The Indian War of Independence 1857 and Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?" is now taught in many institutions and is widely considered to be his greatest achievement. He was talented as a poet and produced a number of poems during his life.

He was a real revolutionary who also happened to be the first political thinker to have proclaimed total Independence from the British in the year 1900, and he was also the first to put on the first Bonfire of foreign fabric in the year 1905. Both of these accomplishments occurred in 1905. When he planned an armed assault on a British Collector in 1909 at Nasik in opposition to the 1909 Minto Morley agreement, he took the initiative and led from the front. The British were worried by his capacity to rapidly gather a large group of people, lead them, and carry out his plan. His non-negotiable view that the British were an alien occupier and that they could never be beneficial to the Indian populace remained unshaken throughout his life (Bhardwaj, 2021).

Savarkar's Philosophy on Hindutva:

How far off all of this is from the definition of a Hindu offered by V D Savarkar in his 1923 book Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? in terms of one's pitru bhumi (motherland) as well as one's punya bhumi! Arvind Sharma, a Hindu professor who is deeply dedicated to the religion, has the opinion that "the primary problem Hinduism has in our days is to guarantee that all Hindus have an equal chance in determine what Hinduism should be for our times." But first, Hindus will have to question the validity of the self-appointed arbiters of their religion. Their beliefs may very well be Jyotirmaya Sharma's reaction to the Hindutva ideology. In reaction to Hindutva, Jyotirmaya Sharma said, "Every Hindu chooses what constitutes Hinduism. The area should be off-limits to everyone at all times. It is a place that is worth living for and dying for at the same time (Heredia, 2009).

Gopal Guru is a political scientist who hails from India. He oversees editorial content for the publication known as Economic and Political Weekly. He makes some critical remarks on the efforts of "Hindu communal forces" to "Hinduism" Ambedkar in order to "subsequently assimilate Dalits into the Hindu fold." The explanation that Guru presents is founded on a basic

misunderstanding about the meanings of the words “Hinduism” and “Hindutva” (Guru, 1991). The term “Hinduism” refers to the religion of the Hindu people or more accurately, the Vedic or “Sanatana dharma.” On the other hand, the term “Hindutva” refers to the quality or property of being a Hindu, specifically, one who adheres to any of the numerous theological or philosophical sects that originated in India. As a result, the term “Hindutva” refers to those who are followers of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and any other indigenous religious or philosophical tradition. Savarkar is without a doubt the person who is most responsible for the development of contemporary “Hindutva wadi” philosophy, and it is to him that commentators need to go in order to get an insight into this matter. Both the main body of Guru’s paper and the annotations that were appended to it makes it very clear that he does not exhibit any signs of having carried out the aforementioned action, as is only to be expected. If he had merely looked at the first four pages of Savarkar’s book *Hindutva* (1923), he would have discovered the following information: The concept of Hindutva is more accurately described as a history than a phrase. Not simply the religious or spiritual history of our people, as it is often misunderstood to be by being confused with the other cognate word *Hinduism*. The term “Hinduism” is nothing more than an offshoot, a portion, or a component of Hindutva. The failure to make a clear distinction between these two ideas has led to a great deal of confusion. In this context, it is sufficient to point out that Hindutva is not similar to what is only obliquely implied by the name *Hinduism* (Deshpande, 1991).

By the term “ism,” one usually refers to a philosophy or code that is more or less founded on the dogma or system of a spiritual or religious tradition. However, when we try to study the fundamental importance of Hinduism, we do not principally and by no means primarily concern ourselves with any specific theocratic or religious ideology or creed. Savarkar was well aware of the likelihood of people conflating the term Hindutva with the terms “Hinduism” or “Hindu Dharma,” and he would have chosen a phrase that was less likely to be misconstrued. However, had no language use stood in our way, then ‘Hinduness’ would have been a better term than ‘Hinduism’ as a close analogue to Hindutva. This is because ‘Hinduism’ has become synonymous with Hindutva (Deshpande, 1991).

How far off all of this is from V. D. Savarkar’s definition of a Hindu from his 1923 book *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* in terms of one’s ‘fatherland,’ or *pitru bhumi*, as well as one’s “motherland,” or *punya bhumi*! Arvind Sharma, a Hindu professor who has a genuine commitment to the religion, has the opinion that “the main difficulty Hinduism has in our days is to secure for all Hindus an equal chance in establishing what Hinduism should be for our

times.” However, the first thing that Hindus will have to do is question the authority of those inside their religion who have self-appointed themselves as arbiters. The following statement by Jyotirmaya Sharma in reaction to Hindutva may very well become their shibboleth: Every Hindu chooses what constitutes Hinduism. It is imperative that this area be kept off-limits at all times. It is a place that is worthy of sacrificing both one’s life and one’s death (Sharma, 2003).

Despite the fact that Savarkar professes to reverently venerate the Buddha, he repeats the negative emotions expressed in anti-Buddhist Puranas. According to him, he was one who arrived before his time, too soon to be of any benefit to India or to humanity in general. He saw him as someone who came before his time. He laments the weakening of Hinduism that was caused by the pacifism of Buddhism. “The centre of gravity of Buddhism was nowhere,” according to Savarkar.

The religious issue was unable to be sidestepped throughout the national independence fight on the Indian subcontinent. In his presidential speech²⁰ to the Hindu Mahasabha in Ahmedabad in 1937, Savarkar was the first person to make an appeal to the² two-nation idea. He remarked, “There are two hostile nations living side by side in India.” However, at that time, the majority of Hindus were aligned with the Indian National Congress, hence there was no significant response to this idea from the Hindu community. Gandhi strongly disapproved of such a hypothesis and never entertained the idea. Even when he made an appeal to Indian nationalism, he was wary of the chauvinist tendencies that could be present in the audience. In spite of the fact that he openly purported to be a very pious and devoted Hindu, he never once made any appeals to religion or Hindu nationalist sentiment.

The ideology of Hindu nationalism is not deeply rooted in religious practice. In its current guise, it calls itself “cultural nationalism” (McKean, 1996). Savarkar, the man who is credited with creating the organisation, was a rationalist and an atheist in his own right. When he passed away, he requested that his corpse be cremated without any religious rites being performed over it. Despite this, he was a zealot for Hindutva, also known as Hinduism, which he conceptualised for the first time in 1923. He purposefully positioned Hinduism in contrast to⁹ other religious traditions that did not originate in India, such as Christianity and Islam. During the time that Savarkar was detained in the Andamans from 1911 to 1921, the early projection that Savarkar had made of¹⁴ Hindu-Muslim unity in his book “War of Independence 1857,” which was released in 1909, was utterly overturned. His articulation of Hindutva⁹ as a political

philosophy of ethno-religious nationalism to incorporate culture and race was the beginning of the movement known as Hindutva. It was devised with the intention of bringing together under a communal flag the inegalitarian classes and hierarchical castes that are found in Hinduism and mobilising members of those groups. His birthday desire, which was reflected in the phrase “Hinduism all politics and militarises all Hindudom,” was granted in the year 1941 (Heredia, 2009).

Conclusion:

Hindutva is being promoted as Bhartiya, or Indianness, which Savarkar disputed. The term "Hindu" cannot be equivalent to Bhartiya or Hindi and at the same time convey an Indian identity. The rationale for the recommended name change is only to make it more accessible to individuals who are ignorant of its actual nature. The fundamental ideas, the foundational premises, and the overarching conclusions of Hindutva, which may be seen as an ideology of religious nationalism, have not changed throughout time. Since its early beginnings, the objective of Hindu nationalism has been to organise Hindus into a politicised ethnic group and then to create this group into a dominating majority. This goal has been present throughout the whole history of Hindu nationalism. In the event that non-Hindus do not pose a danger to the Hindu majority, they will be relegated to the position of subservient minority or sub-nationalities. Nevertheless, the manner that it solely equates “Hindu” with “India” is by no means the most important interpretation, nor is it the most prevalent representation of Hindu cultural and religious traditions. There is room for Hindutva to develop, broaden its reach, and include a society with many dimensions into its fold. According to Savarkar, the concept of Hinduness, rather than Hinduism, is more closely aligned with the Hindutva ideology. To get closer to his concept of Hindutva, Savarkar refers to a verse from the Vishnu Purana that identifies the region between the Himalayas and the seas as Bharat and the people whose ancestors sprang from Bharat as a single country. According to what Savarkar writes in his book, Hinduism is just a derivation, a portion, or a component of Hindutva. The idea that Hinduism is a philosophy of faith, like Leninism and Marxism, seems to be the one that Savarkar is attempting to convey here, and he appears to be having some difficulty doing so. On the other side, Hindutva is the way people in this region go about their daily lives; it permeates every aspect of their being and serves as the guiding principle of their ethos.

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