

never began or were cut short by his untimely death. A biographical dictionary of freethinkers was never started and a *Dictionary of Modern Anti-Superstitionists* was published in 1826, but got only halfway through the letter A. Hibbert also put his classical education to good use in books like *Plutarchus and Theophrastus on Superstition* (1828).

Hibbert's other important contribution was his financial contributions to Richard Carlile during the latter's years of imprisonment for publishing Thomas PAINE'S *The Age of Reason*. Carlile's courage would not have been sufficient without Hibbert's generous support to keep his publishing business afloat during his incarceration.

Hibbert worked staunchly for freethought throughout his last illness. In 1833 he was subpoenaed to a London COURT, where his ATHEISM was publicly condemned. The magistrates' trial by while the sick man was led away amid hisses and abuse from the crowd. Julian Hibbert died in December 1834. He left generous bequests for his freethought comrades in his will.

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**HINDUISM AND UNBELIEF.** Two qualifiers make this essay difficult. *Hinduism* is a Western concept imposed on a subcontinent whose classic languages have no useful word for *religion*. And those life views that Westerners have called *religions* in India have always been plural, and usually without central authorities who could define "right belief." We will here treat *unbelief* as the rejection of classical traditions in favor of modern, naturalistic, and scientific views (see NATURALISM/RATIONALISM).

Ancient. Unbelief. Northern invaders imposed "Vedic" polytheisms upon local tribal beliefs in the second millennium BCE. Historical writings are skimpy in India, but several alternative ideologies and practices such as Buddhism (see BUDDHISM, UNBELIEF WITHIN) and Jainism emerged around 500 BCE. That will allow us to outline the dominant background of the continent.

These early innovators rejected a highly stratified caste system and an already sizable pantheon of gods. They also rejected a revelational treatment of certain memorized texts (said to have been "seen" whereas lesser texts were simply "heard"). But they continued the downgrading of ordinary realities in favor of a superior mental-spiritual realm being set forth in contemporary *Upanishads*. This bias included a downplaying of family, sexuality, and social order in favor of a solitary discipline that would lead individual men to enlightenment. However, the innovators retained the idea of sam-

sara, the expectation of many rebirths until release from earthly suffering had been achieved. That goal represented not an individual immortality, but an absorption into an "All" or an enlightenment that was a dissolution of all components of any "self." Finally, the innovators retained the idea of karma, the belief that a ledger of the accumulated effects of one's good and evil deeds is somehow retained to influence one's future lives.

The result was a potential Hindu agnosticism, as can be seen in a famous concluding stanza of the *Rig-Veda*:

This world-creation, whence it has arisen,  
Or whether it has been produced or not,  
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,  
He only knows or ev'n he does not know it.

X.129

Later Religious Migrations. Small Jewish and Christian immigrations to India occurred without major impacts on existing worldviews. Later and larger Muslim invasions proved more disruptive. Zoroastrians fleeing Islam in Iran settled in western India (where they would become known as Parsis). Sikhism emerged, blending some Hindu and Muslim strands. French, Portuguese, and particularly British invaders later proved hostile to indigenous religious thought.

The twentieth-century scholar Dale Riepe traced the emergence of naturalism in Indian thought, using the term in its current philosophical sense. His treatment of the Ajivika, CARVAKA and Samkhya schools of thought shows their relationship to Buddhism and Jainism and suggests Hellenistic parallels (without claiming any direct influences). Riepe's method is to compare theories of knowledge, metaphysics, and ethics. The still-standard treatments of Indian thought by Dasgupta and Radhakrishnan also made much of parallelisms, writing sympathetically of ways in which Western philosophical idealism could relate to Hindu schools of thought. As Riepe put it, that idealism "tried to make pleasant an imaginary life when the natural one was frequently intolerable."

On the ethical level, British (and therefore Christian) influences in the nineteenth century generated reform movements such as Brahma Samaj, which rejected caste and widow immolation and welcomed Western science. Ramakrishna claimed to have reached the same goal of enlightenment by a variety of Hindu paths as well as those of Christianity and Islam, and his disciples created a movement that remains both social reformist at home and missionary throughout the world. These and other reform movements, while moving away from temple Hinduism and more polytheistic practices, have retained most of the classical Indian theories of knowledge and the distinctions between an apparent world and a more real spiritual one.

The British Christianity that impinged upon India had already learned to live with renaissances, reformations, and modern science. As Surendra Ajanat viewed it, "The

so-called Dynamic Brahmanism which survived the onslaught of many alien conquests and religious conversions could not withstand the trend of westernization which is exerting an abiding and all round pressure for rationalistic regeneration even to-day."

Subhayu Dasgupta was similarly sharp in describing this impact: "The Hindu personality, that for long remained conformist, submissive and authoritarian, had his baptism in independent thinking and rationalism. The rejection of scholasticism and apriori knowledge inherited from the past in favour of the findings of science, rights of human dignity against the hierarchy of castes and the growth of an enquiring mind which asked for rational explanation for all events, social or natural and refused to be satisfied by the supernatural or the mystic marked the stages of social transition in India."

One response to the challenges of the West was the *Arya Samaj*, emphasizing the superiority of traditional Hindu practices. Sarvarkar's *hindutva* movement in the 1920s made the dividing line whether a group viewed India as "home." Islam was, and remains, the principal intractable "foreigner" in the view of this ideology.

Regional-linguistic differences, caste stratifications, interreligious tensions, and economic grievances formed the backdrop for the nationalist movements of the twentieth century. Whether Indians should support Britain became problematic for independence movements during both the world wars.

Religiously, independence leaders took different paths. Gandhi's education in the West led him to nonviolence, to a rejection of caste, and to a pluralistic view of religious equality. This is illustrated by the fact that his assassin was a Hindu nationalist. Nehru's education instead led him to a scientific humanism. As he put it: "The diversity and fulness of nature stir me and produce a harmony of spirit and I can imagine myself feeling at home in the old Indian or Greek pagan and pantheistic atmosphere, minus the conception of God or Gods that was attached to it."

M. N. Roy became a socialist and a member of the first Comintern. Eventually he broke with Joseph Stalin and moved toward a radical democratic view that allowed him to join the Indian Congress movement, which was then pressing for greater local autonomy under British rule. Roy was an uneasy member of Gandhi's Congress; during World War II his opposition to fascism led him to support the British, a stance many Indian activists found perverse. But Roy's confidence, eventually borne out by events, was that a socialist postwar British government would free India.

In 1940 Roy quit the Gandhi-Nehru Congress to form the Radical Democratic Party. By 1946 he had issued a manifesto stating: "[T]he quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level-Of intelligence and emotion-of the biological struggle for existence. The search for truth is a corollary thereof. Increasing knowledge of nature enables man to be progressively free from the

tyranny of natural phenomena and physical and social environments."

Finally, in 1948, having come to view parliamentary parties as inadequate, Roy created the Radical Humanist Movement.

Traditional Hinduism rooted morality in custom and dharma. Roy rejects that past, saying: "Reason is only sanction for morality, which is an appeal to conscience, and conscience, in its turn, is the instinctive awareness of, and reaction to, environments .... Humanism is cosmopolitan. It does not run after the utopia of internationalism, which presupposes the existence of autonomous National States."

Other important Indian pioneer unbelievers were PERIYAR who founded a Dravidian organization in 1929, and GORA, who founded the Atheist Centre in 1940 (see INDIA, UNBELIEF). While many of their writings have appeared in English, their successes in building movements depended upon their use of regional languages. This is still the case.

Most of the present movements, regional and India-wide, have affiliated with the INTERNATIONAL HUMANIST ANDETHICAL UNION now based in London. Their names and themes typically use words such as rationalist, secular (see SECULARISM), radical humanist (see HUMANISM) and atheist (see ATHEISM).

Typical activities of the unbeliever groups concern rejection of caste divisions and the encouragement of intercaste marriages; the social defense of *dalits* (untouchables); support for birth control; attacks upon traditional dowry killings of brides; and opposition toward child labor. There is also concern for equalizing the status of women (including critique of Muslim divorce customs). In addition, there is a recurrent "no-god" theme and persistent campaigns against "god-men" and gurus who claim magical powers. All of these concerns also revolve around pressing for educational access for both boys and girls.

Emphases such as those just listed remind us that unbelief always emerges within a particular context of beliefs. It should also remind us that human history is seldom a smooth advance from belief to unbelief in which reason and science and rational ethics supplant more "primitive" thinking. A more accurate accounting of history shows us that every success toward secularization stirs up strong resistances, and that the strengthening of religion A not only slows secularization within that context but stimulates strengthening within religions B, C, and the rest. In India, politicized Islam and politicized Hinduism feed on each other, while the officially "secular" constitutional society finds itself threatened by both. Whether unbeliefs within such religions will succeed is never assured-their survival and progress continue to depend upon fresh ideas and fresh leaders.

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**HOBBS, THOMAS** (1588-1679), English philosopher and political scientist. Born the second son of a wayward country vicar, Thomas Hobbes was sustained throughout a long life of many writings by the patronage of the great, mainly by William Cavendish, first earl of Devonshire. The only nearly complete edition of the works of Hobbes was by the philosophical radical Sir William Molesworth. It begins with a translation of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* and ends, when Hobbes was in his late eighties, with translations into English verse of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer.

Like John LOCKE and Immanuel KANT, but unlike George Berkeley and David HUME, Hobbes matured late. His friend John Aubrey tells in his *Brief Lives* how the intellectual awakening of Hobbes occurred in a gentleman's library, when he chanced upon the theorem of Pythagoras in Euclid. That, instantly sweeping him away by its irresistible deductive power, made him fall in love with geometry. This rationalist inspiration, mated with his theoretical concern with politics, enabled him to recognize Thucydides as "the most politic historiographer who ever writ."

The first birth of this union was "a little treatise in English" of which "though not printed, many gentlemen had copies." Since its immediate implications were royalist, in the assembly of the Long Parliament in 1640, "Mr. Hobbes, doubting how they would use him, went over into France, the first of all that fled." There philosopher-mathematician Marin Mersenne immediately persuaded him to write the *Third Set of Objections* to be published with the forthcoming *Meditations* of Rene DESCARTES. The third and most substantial offspring was

*De Cive* (Concerning the Citizen), a treatise Hobbes saw as expounding his new science of the state.

This was specifically not the mere political geography that, since Aristotle founded the subject, had passed as political science. Hobbes was, he believed, onto the real thing, a new science strictly on a par with the work of William Harvey and Galileo GALILEI. It was Galileo who "was the first that opened to us the gate of natural philosophy universal" while "the science of man's body ... was first discovered by our countryman Dr. Harvey." However, "civil philosophy," the political equivalent of the natural philosophy which we now call physics, "is no older than my own book *De Cive*."

That putative new political science was represented, along with the best of what Hobbes had to say about everything else, in his *Leviathan*. That is, by common consent, his masterpiece. Like Descartes, Hobbes believed that the secret of success in investigations was to find out and to use the right methods. For him this was the method Galileo and Harvey learned in the University of Padua. In his preface to *De Cive* Hobbes wrote: "[E]verything is best understood by its constitutive causes. For as in a watch ... the matter, figure and motion of the wheels cannot be well known, except when it is taken insunder [that is, apart] and viewed in parts; to make a more curious search into the rights of states and duties of subjects, it is necessary (I say, not to take them insunder, but yet that) they be so considered as if they were dissolved."

Hobbes therefore proceeded to consider what men are like and, more particularly, what they would be like if all the restraints of law and society were removed. From Galileo Hobbes had caught a vision of a universe in motion. Just as the restless atoms are the sale components of a through-and-through mechanical universe, so we ourselves are the turbulent creatures which alone compose every social machine.

To understand the nature and the function of the state we have to consider what our condition would be if there were no state; what sometimes indeed, when that machinery has collapsed, it actually is. This is the Hobbesist state of nature and, Hobbes insisted, it would be "a war of every man, against every man." This often quoted purple passage ends: "And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

Whereas for Locke the state of nature was a condition in which some of everyone's ancestors once lived, and from which they in fact escaped by making a social contract, for Hobbes the crux was not historical but hypothetical: this is what would happen if ... and what will happen unless .... Security is to be achieved only by concentrating all the powers of a sovereign state into the hands of "one man or assembly of men"; though Hobbes expressed a personal preference for monarchy as opposed to any form of collective despotism.

What has been most studied and valued in Hobbes is his contribution to political thought. But he was also the