

SCRIBES, PHARISEES AND JUDGES

Corpus Delicti

The rate of change in the body politic is so rapid that the contributor of articles to learned journals often finds that his scribblings have been overtaken by events. Thus it was that the chronicler of Aryanam Kshatra found that the mythological was overtaken in strangeness by the concrete. And he was much discomfited by this, though he plunged on nevertheless.

How mundane appeared the actions of the deities, demi-gods and immortals of Aryanam Kshathra in comparison with the activities of the mortals of the world below! The great clashes of the Vaspuhran¹ of Indraprastha were dwarfed by the cosmic forces unleashed by the incantations of the denizens of the mortal domain.

For what profiteth the chronicler if his works do not match the faith of the superstitious? Even the almighty gods must shiver when the multitudes invoke the primitive dravidic forces of the earth. The heavens shake when the wailing invective of the thousands of mortal mothers are directed through the personification of blood, vengeance and the pox, mother Kali. The skies are rent by the counter-curses of thousands of other mothers calling upon Pattini, the mother.² But the chronicler must gird his loins for the unequal struggle and relate the puny doings of the Aryan gods; and so shall he proceed:

It was the Immortal of the King's Party who brought about the great changes. For his pilgrimage to Alexandria released the cosmic power which the Gods themselves hold in awe. Thus were the doings of the Deities of Aryanam Kshathra humbled.

And it came to pass that the Kshayathiyanam Kshayatiya felt it incumbent upon him to bathe in the milk of asses. And attending unto him in that great absolution were

seven handmaidens. And Akhenaton propitiated the cosmic forces with the offerings of capricorn.

Now were the multitudes bewildered. 'Are the powers of the cosmic forces greater than those of mammon itself?' they asked in puzzlement.

And lo! Aryanam Kshatra was visited upon by plagues. Firstly was the plague of virgins, which carried off the maidenfolk and the boyfolk. Then came the plague of tomb robbers. And to cap it all came the direst of plagues, the plague of political tablets.

For it came to pass that there was a clash of eagles, and the eagle was Janus-faced: it appeared as its nemesis in the Berinda Pakshiya, the two headed pseudo-eagle. The frescoes of Bacchanalian apsaras adorned the tablet of the pseudo-eagle, juxtaposed with the image of Mithra. Thus did the God of Shelter do battle with Varuna.

For it was said by wise men that the maw of Varuna was of equal dimension to the aqueduct mouth of Akhenaton himself. Indeed, the jaws of Vayu himself were pitiful in comparison with the gigantic size of the verbal mechanisms of these invective adversaries.

Now, it had come to pass that Vayu had extended the monotheistic heresy of Akhenaton. Not content with his holy coprophiliac vows, he placed himself beyond the position of the messianic prophet.

'I am Anubis' he declared, the incarnation of the dog-headed god, the faithful acolyte of my god emperor'.

'More like a running dog' quoth the infidels, 'truly is it the day of the jackal'

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4. Other Buddhist girl's schools also had foreign principals in Colombo, Ananda Balika Vidyalaya, (the sister school of Ananda College) was started in 1925 with a British Theosophist Hilda Kularatna nee Westbrook as principal; she also began the Maha Maya school in Kandy. Another British Theosophist Elizabeth Preston had come to Colombo in 1918 as a teacher at Museaus College, started Alethea School in Colombo in 1928, which pioneered the Montessori system in local schools; Sujatha Vidyalaya from 1930-1932 and Ananda Balika from 1933-1936 had a British Socialist, Doreen Wickremasinghe, nee Young as Principal. The principal of Sri Sumangala school Panadura for many years was Lu Vinson, a British Theosophist and Cambridge graduate. (See K. Jayawardena, 1991: *Doreen Wickremasinghe - A Western Radical in Sri Lanka*, Womens Education and Research Centre.)

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Now Vayu was sore taxed; the parthenon was assailed on all sides by the scribes of the political tablets which poured scorn upon it and all its works, yea and upon the person and works of Akhenaton himself. And the pantheon was sore vexed; and divine retribution was soon forthcoming.

For Indra, Mithra and Varuna went forth amongst the multitudes, declaring 'we shall cast a curse upon Akhenaton, and the names of the curse shall be as the sand upon the shore.' And lo! The scribes accompanying them were set upon by demons from the paatala world. And the demons stole the very papyrus and stylus from the hand of the scribe. The scribes were sore vexed and went unto the Angels of Dharma, placing their plaint before them and demanding restitution. But Vazgurd Framadar said unto the scribes: 'lo! the multitudes turned upon their tormentors'. And the scribes were even sorer. 'The hand of the scribe is not free on his stylus' they declared.

Now it came to pass in those days that Sohrab slew Rustam. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth among the multitudes of Aryanam Kshastra. And much stoning of the uncircumcised; among the unstoned was Kavir the Smith, for it was rumored that he was of the triad of Indra, Mithra and Varuna.³ And the multitudes rent their garments and rent the garment of the Magus of the Bitten Leg.⁴ The multitude left no stone unturned, yea, they set upon the gods of the pantheon with the very bones of their forefathers. And verily was it the day of the jackal, as the air was filled with hoots of derision. And all of Aryanam Kshathra was in ferment.

Now, the artist of truth, the disciple of Loki, had drawn frescoes of Akhenaton on the truth tablets. And a god of the pantheon was displeased: 'who will rid me of this pestilential beast' he cried. and lo and behold! the demons of the paatala world emerged from the depths and the artist of truth found the black spy upon his doorstep. And the vengeful imps of patala playfully drove their daggers in between his ribs.

There were those of the multitude who bore witness, but the Angels of Dharma said unto them: 'Thy witness, for it is not so written'.

But the scribes were not of good humor. For those that had assailed them that accompanied the Triad were not of their station. And the scribes ascribed the assault on the artist of truth verily to an assault upon all artists and scribes. And the scribes assailed the angels of Dharma, 'Thy protection is like unto a racquet'.

'For did we not write down the tears shed by Nefertiti, the divine consort, at the great festival of Tel-el- Amarna? And did we not bear witness to the words of Akhenaton when he assailed the unbelievers? But are not the scribes faced by the barbs of patala? Are they truly protected by the angels of Dharma?'

Then did it come to pass that the pantheon gathered together the scribes and spoke to them. 'It is not meet that the scribes be assailed by the demons of patala' quoth the scribes. And Kavir, who presided upon this assembly, was sore discomfited. And the scribes asked 'Did not Vayu spread the false word?' And Vayu said 'My words were clouded by Maya, but what I spoke might have been truth in relation to circumstances other than those that prevailed'. But the scribes were sore vexed and did storm out of that assembly.

Now it came to pass that the artist of truth inscribed an epistle to the scribes of the tablet of the isle. And the scribes of the tablet of the isle brought forth a tablet bearing the epistle of the artist of truth. And lo! the scribes of the tablet of the isle had visited upon the attentions of the angels of Dharma, saying "it is not meet that Akhenaton be blasphemed". But the scribes answered unto them that it was not blasphemy, but a mere transcription of the words of the artist of truth.

And all the scribes were sore vexed.

Now, the tablet of the Chronology of Ra⁵ announced to the multitude that the Dastevar of Yama, the immortal judges were to be protected and defended by the angels of Dharma. And the lakeside palace replied that such was not the import of the decision of the Pantheon. And the multitude said unto themselves "Lo! The Judges of Yama have decided! Yea! The decision shall not be to the advantage of Pruthuvi."

It had come to pass in those days that the forces of Pruthuvi were allied with those of Chandra, and opposing them were the forces of Soorya, arrayed with those of the Elamites. And Chandra stood forth and said, 'It is meet that Turya should join with Turya', but the Elamites held otherwise. And Pruthuvi said that the elevation of the Immortal of the King's Party to the high-priesthood of the Holy Family was not to be vouchsafed. And Soorya said that it was not to be considered that a tool of Chandra become the High-priest.

But it came to pas that those of the middling amongst the Holy Family cried 'A plague on both your houses, though it be verily but one house; pray do not bring upon the mortals your sins and the results thereof. And they spoke unto Soorya and Pruthuvi, saying 'behold, the judgement of the Dastevar of Yama is nigh! Withhold your judgement until there is revelation of the judgement of the judges'. And Soorya and Pruthuvi so acquiesced. And there was verily a truce within the Holy Family.

Now, Mammon was stirred to impose upon the Pantheon its conditions for the fulfillment of the promise of Vazgurd Framadar's Pilgrimage to Mammon. And these were that the silver Talent of Mammon be bartered for a full fifty Darics; that the fodder of the kind that drew the carts of the mortals should change hands bushel for



bushel with the fodder of the horses that drew the carriages of the Vaspuhran of Indraprastha; and that mortalization should proceed forthwith.

And Akhenator and Vazgurd Framadar were sore vexed! And they pleaded with Imf and Worlb, the archangels of Mammon, to stay their hand until the judgement of the judges of Yama be forthcoming. And Imf and Worlb gave them that which they asked.

And so, the multitude, the mortals and immortals all, awaited the Judgement of the Dastevar of Yama with baited breath.

Notes:

- 1 Great Houses, inmates thereof.
- 2 The prognostications of the chapati makers of 1857 bore a short-lived fruit. The blood that ran in that red year was more the blood of the chapati makers than that of their accursed enemies. The guns and lances of the God-empress put paid to the chapati. Nonetheless, the chapati did put paid to the Company Bahadur.
- 3 Kavir the Smith, incidently, was the offspring of the immortal scribe himself, he that inscribed the speeches of the great Jackass upon stone.
- 4 The political tablets expressed the joy of the scribes at the disrobing of one of their number, for they said he was no scribe but a jaded individual, a condemned character and a yellow scribe.
- 5 The Tablet of the Chronology of Ra was of the variety of Osiris, for it died and was resurrected, in much the same manner as the second coming of its masters, earlier the major-domos of the Lakeside Palace.

MODERN SCIENCE - WESTERN, PATRIARCHAL MYTH?

Part II

THE GREEN REVOLUTION AS WESTERN, PATRIARCHAL AND ANTI-NATURE AGRICULTURE

Meera Nanda

This part of the essay will examine a typical example of the populist critique of science-based development projects: the much maligned, "western patriarchal myth," the Green Revolution. Given her propensity for a total critique, Vandana Shiva spares nothing. All physical inputs, farming practices and social relations of production associated with the Green Revolution are examined, compared with traditional peasant agriculture and without exception, declared deficient. Even worse, Shiva holds them directly responsible for the sad lot of women, peasants, the animals and the good earth of India.

Shiva's critique of the Green Revolution strategy is replete with some very questionable assumptions that, unfortunately, are widely shared by a cross section of environmentalists and leftist critics of modernization. The emotion and anger that spews out of Shiva's attack on the Green Revolution begin to make sense if read as the lament of a defender of an older, and supposedly more just social order, the so-called "moral economy" of pre-capitalist, pre-industrial peasants.¹ Very briefly, the moral economy argument maintains that pre-capitalist relationships and institutions (based on patron-client bonds between elite landowners and smallholder and landless peasants) protected the peasantry against

hardships and starvation. It is these pre-existing forms of insurance and subsistence guarantees that are destroyed by capitalism. Moral economists and proponents of new social movements, like Chipko, believe that this breakdown of subsistence mobilizes the peasantry (mostly the middle peasantry or the family farmers) against capitalism. But the goal of this mobilization is not socialization of means of production, but simply a restoration of the pre-capitalist order. Since moral economists view the earlier order as "moral" and just, this struggle of the peasants to restore the *status quo ante* is assumed to be "progressive" and worth supporting.

It is amazing how, despite the disasters in Tanzania and China, this faith in traditional peasant societies as communitarian by preference is still adhered to with almost religious zeal by populists like Shiva. She views the modernization of agriculture as an invasion of alien and destructive forces - that of capital and commodity relations - in the wholesome communities of peasants. These good, hardworking peasants worked communally owned resources to produce food and other goods not for sale, but simply for subsistence. They apparently lived in a world without markets; a world where the subsistence needs of all community members, and not the mar-

