

Some notes on religion, science and the process of globalization.

The concept of religion is more or less always "bound", or "tied" to – as *per definition, ipso facto or sui generis* - religious *beliefs* and *religiosity*. Judaism, Islamism, Catholicism, Protestantism as well as Hinduism (note the notes below), are all looked upon as monotheistic religions, whose interpreters - bear a *striking* resemblance with each other, like the very God they, as it were, represent. The concept of science? The same! And these concepts are very much linked to the concepts of the process of globalization.

Let me start by introducing a comprehensive summary and elaborationⁱ of an article that was published at this so interesting site some years ago: The concepts of religion and social sciences seem to be very ambiguous. When I ask my Swedish students to define religion I invariably get the same kind of answers: "Religion is a concept which gives us answers to all questions of our existence in the world." I never get any answers in terms of all the other aspects and perspectives of religion that are prevalent in the global world today (and, for that matter yesterday, as well as the day before yesterday...). And when I ask them about science? Well, the answers are always of the same kind of character: Science is rationality. Sciences give us the *true* answers to the questions we put.

Why is that?

I Religions – all religions – seem to give us all the answers to all the questions *in terms of existence* that we have: What is the meaning of life? Why do we live? *Do* we live? Why do we die? *Do* we die? Is there a life after this? What/Who is God? What does the "Almighty theme" (so present in all religions) really mean? Where are the answers?

Well, and again, *all* religions seem to give all, and almost, surprisingly enough, the same, answers: *The meaning of life is to serve God and to obey him,ⁱⁱ and – as it were, follow His (or as in Hinduism, Its) path. We live for this, and we die for this. Nothing else really matters.* But is this really enough? Can this really explain why religions have had such an important impact on our lives all over the world? No, of course not. When I first came to India in the 1980s I started to – the hard way – realize that religions play a most significant role *apart* from the existential issues. I was always asked the question: "And what religion do you have?" And my answer was: "I don't have any!" And I couldn't help noticing that people reacted in a way I couldn't understand. Some shrugged, some took a step backwards, some looked stunned, and some even looked scared... And when I finally (being quite annoyed and frustrated) asked a friend of mine about the meaning of this he looked at me with some kind of amusement/bewilderment and said something like this: "Bapu, they don't ask you about God, they ask you about your values, norms, ethics, aesthetics, yes, even your food habits...!" And when I started *studying* religions I also found another astounding thing. In all the books I read and all the discussions, seminars and classes in which I participated it became very clear that there were

as many interpretations of religions as there were writers, philosophers, gurus, imams, rabbis...but *one* thing was constantly present: “You can be a Muslim, a Hindu, a Jew, a Christian, and be an Atheist at the same time.”ⁱⁱⁱ In the beginning I couldn’t fathom this, but now...Well, it is quite logical! Simply because religions do not basically answer the existential questions. They answer *all* questions! So let’s continue:

II *The second – and maybe more important – ingredient in all our religions consists of all of this: Values, moral codes, ways of life, ethics, aesthetics, clothes, food, how to behave in terms of class, gender and ethnicity, and etcetera* (no wonder that people shrugged at me, stating that I didn’t obey/bide by *any* rules...!). And here, in this segment, we, hence, will find such things as the *transcendent laws, the overall rules of behaviour, the transcending collectivism, modes of production, etcetera*...And again we find that all religions have all the answers – in terms of similar modes of production – to all our questions and problems. All religions – e.g. – say *Thou Shall Not Kill – God is One and the only One – Honour Thy Mother and Thy Father – Do not...* etcetera. It is also a stated fact – whether you like it or not – that all religions have all the answers to all your questions in terms of the above mentioned values etcetera. Hence you will find it possible to wager war with i) The Quran in one hand, ii) The Bible in the other hand, and iii) the Gita in your 3rd ☺ hand. And – of course – iv) a Kalashnikov in your right *as well as* your left hand!

How? Why? Well, my friends, all our scriptures seem to give us a kind of “all-time-high”. Do not kill, they tell us, but at the same time they all *also* tell us: “...*Unless it is absolutely necessary...*!” Hence, we can, all of us, regardless of religion, start killing each other with perfectly legitimate reasons! In this segment we furthermore find gender and ethnic “discussions”. In the Bible, as well as in the Quran, we find – just to give you one or two examples – the stories of creation. In the Bible God (Jahve) is in the Book of Genesis supposed to have i) created human beings to his own liking (which of course implies that man and woman are equals). and later on, in the very same book, ii) to have created Man/Adam to his liking, but finding that Adam was having a bad time being all alone ☺ God put him to sleep and took a rib from his body from which he created Woman/Eve. And this, methinks, is quite ingenious! Patriarchy is manifesting itself by stating that God created The Man out of nothing but his own omnipotence, and then created The Woman *out of The Man!* Hence women must be less worth than men. Hence, again, – since they are made as a part of men – women must obey men, etcetera. The Books also claim that you should honour your mother and father – *that your family is more important than you.*^{iv} And this has been kind of “prescribed” to so call monotheistic religions. And it should be noted here that Hinduism is supposedly a polytheistic religion *which it is not*. The so called *Gods* in Hinduism are nothing but *incarnations* of the *wills* and *intentions* in terms of the meaning of life itself (see above in terms of values etcetera...), or, if you like, God.^v

III *Religions also seem to give answers in terms of power.* I have actually – in Sweden – listened to Swedish Priests stating that all power emanates from God. Hence those holding power, and the ideologists telling me what to do and what “not-to-do” are *always* kind of right (even when they are

left☺). Another way of talking about this is the following excerpt from an article:

“Some thoughts on Mohammed and the freedom of speech.

There seems to be a somewhat general opinion in “my” part of the world that what we call freedom, democracy, the freedom of speech, etcetera, are values only prevalent, in e.g. Sweden (let alone Denmark!). Maybe we should take this into consideration in a more serious way. It is a fact, whether we like it or not, that freedom of opinion as well as freedom of speech also exist in countries with a Muslim profile. I have been brought up with a sentence that is supposed to originate from The French (pre-) Revolution: *I may hate all that you say, but I will fight to death for your right to say/express/print/publish it*. As an *individualistic* individual I support this, at the same time that I am fully aware of the fact that I am *also* a historical, social, and cultural individual. Hence I definitely know that I am a product of the processes of the new form of power in terms of “modernity”, capitalism, democracy, liberalism, urbanisation, individualisation...etcetera. It is as simple as this: The concept of freedom obviously – and always - must be understood in the context of history, sociality, as well as culture. Hence we do not talk about freedom *to*, but rather freedom *from*. Freedom *from* the bonds of feudalism and collectivism via the bourgeois revolutions into the (new kind of loss of freedom) in terms of industrialised/individualistic societies. From feudalism to capitalism. From one set of powers to another set of powers. And this is what we say in the Swedish Constitution: “The freedom of the press is understood to mean the right of every Swedish citizen to publish written matter, without prior hindrance by a public authority or other public body, and not to be prosecuted thereafter on grounds of its content other than before a lawful court, or punished therefore other *than because the content contravenes an express provision of law, enacted to preserve public order without suppressing information to the public*. /My italics, AJ/ In accordance with the principles set out in paragraph one concerning freedom of the press for all, and to secure the free exchange of opinion and availability of comprehensive information, every Swedish citizen shall be free, subject to the rules contained in this Act for the protection of private rights and public safety, to express his thoughts and opinions in print, to publish official documents and to communicate information and intelligence on any subject whatsoever.” OK? Well, this could actually be looked upon – together with our quaint royalties – as some kind of reminder, or resting products if you like, of feudalism now codified into the power structures of liberalism as well as social-liberalism. Print, by all means, whatever you like, and then produce it and publish it. If you i) have access to mass-media through your *big* wallet, ii) have access to the net (it is a vulnerable fact that the overwhelming population of the world still haven’t made their first telephone call!), iii) have access to the liberal media and/or are a power-holder! Freedom and opinion of speech? Sure! Think whatever you like, but to print your thoughts – be bloody rich!

And another thing: “...*than because the content contravenes an express provision of law, enacted to preserve public order without suppressing information to the public...*” But, dear friends, isn’t that *exactly* what has been going on in my part of the world? Isn’t that *exactly* the limitations of the

limitations? Isn't that *exactly* the limitations that e.g. Israel just now is implementing? Isn't that *exactly* what we have decided – here in terms of the power-holders in terms of a national perspective, here in terms of an international perspective, here in terms of a universalistic – global perspective? So, Dear Al Jazeera or IPS: By all means have any opinion you like, but, for heaven's sake don't ever believe that "we" will print it! Well, after having participated for many years in the global discussion about the exploiting as well as the impoverished parts of the world I find the discussion just now as somewhat naïve and imperialistic. It is a historical fact that global archeology, ethnology, social-anthropology, cultural geography, sociology and so on and so forth, have stated as an ipso facto that human kind as a race has been very much global for thousands of years. And, furthermore: The so called Mohammad cartoons are – of course – not images of our Prophet. Instead they are intentional and deliberate products. *Grossly generalizing images* of the Great Danger, the Ultimate Enemy, and the swarthy, hook-nosed, eye-brows-identified, bearded, scimitar-armed and bombed/bombing killer. That very man (or nowadays also woman?) who after the fall of The Soviet Empire more than anything else has been the very symbol of evil. The danger of Islam per se seems to be recently reinvented regardless of its long historical background. And Mohammad? Well, my Bengali wife is a secularized Muslim, a socialist and a feminist, and she has been fighting all her life against patriarchal structures and oppression – and she reacted with some kind of intractable fury and rage about the anti-globalization, "orientalism" and racism of her new social context. And suddenly all that which seemed so unbelievable became believable. Or...?"

IV *Social coherence* – All religions also seem to have a somewhat notable function of keeping – as it were – our lives together. In sociology as well as social psychology (and for that matter ethnology and social anthropology) it is a well known fact that human beings cannot live without any social context.^{vi} And all religions seem to give us the social contexts as well as the social coherence. When I come to my social surroundings/contexts in India I always start visiting the temple and/or the Masjid in order *not to start praying*, meditating, but *rather* to make a *point*: I have come back. I am again a part of the community. I iterate as well as re-iterate my belonging and hence my social surroundings acknowledge my presence as well as I iterate and re-iterate theirs. We – if you like – interactively recognize ourselves as being parts of each others. We *are*, hence we *do*, and hence we are *together*. Another way of putting this is to make a stipulation or ontological statement: Human beings *are* not. We *become* when we *do*! Let me give you an illuminating example of the importance of this: Once upon a time ☺ my then brother-in-law (BIL), who was married into a filthy rich oil family in the South of North America, called me and said that he was terribly disturbed by his family. They were, as he said, six days of the week exploiting all people in their companies, but every Sunday they gathered, together with the other exploiters in the community Methodist Church. My BIL said to me that he considered this to be stupidly hypocritical and that he didn't want to participate in it. Hence he didn't join his family in the weekly sermon. I told him that his family most probably came to church for no other reason than to make it totally clear to everyone that: "OK – We all belong! We are Community. We are – whether we like it or not – belonging. We belong and

today we recognize our belonging...” He chose not to believe me and six months later he came back to Sweden with a divorce in his back pocket. His family started to excommunicate him, and after some time his entire community did the same, and when he started to realize (he couldn’t even buy his daily groceries since the cashier simply ignored him) and his family finally stigmatized him as an anarchist communist (which in itself cannot exist) and, literally, threw him out he began to understand that the sociological “mumbo-jumbo” I had told him actually had some very important social and cultural bearing!

V *Rituals and ritualistic behaviour.* It is also a well-known fact that all religions have their very own rituals (though to some extent with the same kind of meaning) but as we have seen above we can easily recognize ourselves in all religions. In terms of ritualism, however, we also realize that facing the rituals of other religions we actually do *not* recognize them. Coming into a Masjid, Temple, Church, Synagogue...for the first time without being a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian or a Jew, you will most probably feel alienated or reified. You *do* realize that all the people are doing everything simultaneously in a most collective way and you *do* realize that there must be a significant meaning, but you *do not* see the significance. Here you will also find many kinds of symbols. Greeting is one: Salaam, Namaste, Shalom, Frid...We do not understand them since they are more often than not also followed – or rather preceded by a body language – however they always, invariably, mean the same: Put your right hand to your heart, put both of your hands together, put your right hand to your forehead and then to your heart, reach out - with an open right hand...With the same meaning: I come to you as a friend, empty-handed and in peace. Other ritual symbols are of course our different ways of clothes. Even if it may sound strange we can – nowadays on the internet – buy e.g. Muslim clothes as well as Hindu clothes. We also wear e.g. different kinds of jewels. I may wear I necklace with a symbol in Arabic which is totally understandable to all Muslims, I may wear a Cross/Crucifix, and I may wear the five-star symbol, and so on. All rituals and ritualistic behaviour are being transferred to all of us in the process of socialization. Hence our reluctance to even *starts trying* to understand those we don’t recognize and hence understand. Just to give you an example I was once banned from entering a Hindu temple in Tamil Nadu since I was i) bearded and ii) wearing a Muslim pyjama and kurta!

VI *Traditions and traditional behaviour:* I was in the beginning of times, married to a Swedish woman in a most traditional way in a most traditional Swedish Church, and there we made are vows. Our priest told us, in accordance with the text in the Bible, that we were now pronounced husband and wife, and that nothing could separate us but death itself. Did we believe it? Well, obviously not since we now are divorced. Did we believe it then? No. I don’t think so. I was also baptized in the Swedish Protestant Church. Why? Were my parents very religious? No. My Grandfather – e.g. – was an atheist. I also (see above) went through the process of confirmation – which actually should mean that you are supposed to confirm your belonging to the Protestant Church. As you have already seen that was a kind of disaster. I tried. Yes I really did. But...failed. And there are so many traditions in all our religions. To walk seven times around the fire in the Hindu marriage^{vii}, to pick up your

compass in order to turn to Mecca. To...well, you know what I mean: Traditions have a definite and clear background, but we have simply forgotten about that!

VII *Now to some words about science.*

However, though being a social scientist, I start with natural science and some well-known physics, such as Newton, Einstein, Greene, who all of them also worked professionally with just that! Newton was desperately trying to find the so called Great forces (gravity and all that...) and Einstein was as desperate to try to find the covariance between the big and the small forces from the biggest to that smallest if you like, and as far as I understand (And *mind* you I am a *social* scientist!), Greene, and before him e.g. Eisenberg desperately seem to try to understand the discrepancies between the strong, the weak, and the unknown. Hawking (and others) later on very eloquently send us out on very thin ice: "...In other words – the more meticulous and careful you try to measure the position of a particle, the less meticulous and careful can you actually measure its velocity and vice versa. Heisenbergs showed that the uncertainty in the position of the particle (and mind you that these particles are so bloody small that I get a headache just thinking about them!) – times uncertainty in its velocity/speed in terms of the times of its mass can never be less than a "number" which is called Plancks constant. Furthermore this constant is dependent on the very limits and not in terms of the methods of calculation....This insecurity – if you like – seems to be a fundamental and inevitable factor of the world – which also – at least in *my* world and in all sciences should put an end to all kinds of determinism. Quantum physics will never be able to predict *one* single determined result of *any one* observation. Quantum (i.e. Modern physics) physics instead "predicts" a number of, *unpredictable*, results in terms of probability as well as improbable and even totally improbable results!

Combining Quantum physics with the general theory of relativity we seem to be able to open up a new possibility not present here before: *Space and time* can together form an *ending four-dimensional room* that was not there before, and time *itself* can form an ending four-dimensional room without singularities and/or boundaries! Hence a totally incomprehensible hypothesis: **An Ending Universe Without an Ending!**

But on the other hand – why not?

The ontological basic assumptions that actually puts the theories of relativity; our modernity/post-modernity if you like; together with the elaboration of the theories of gravitation as well as with the discussion in quantum physics in terms of electro-magnetism and weak as well as strong nuclear power as well as religion and globalization – well, all these question are there. And one fascinating contributing is the so called String-Theory. Our Universe is supposed to consist of "stupidly" small strings – so small that we can not still measure them – they are supposedly and constantly vibrating, and our question will – of course – be: Isn't this an intriguing discussion trying to connect science and philosophy as totally dependent as well as independent variables not to be seen as two different ways of looking at life, but rather an attempt to see the constant inconsistencies? Now then, scientists normally are most formal, but listen to this poet! Brian Greene:

"Physicists often use the term elegant to describe a solution to a problem that is as powerful as it is simple. It's a solution which cuts to the heart of an important problem with such clarity that it almost leaves no doubt that the solution is either right or at least on the right track. And string theory is just that kind of solution. It provides the first way of putting quantum mechanics and general relativity together -- that is, merging the laws of the small and the laws of

the large -- and it does it in such a sleek manner that it is quite breathtaking. And the term elegant really describes that kind of solution.”...”Physicists often use the term elegant to describe a solution to a problem that is as powerful as it is simple. It's a solution which cuts to the heart of an important problem with such clarity that it almost leaves no doubt that the solution is either right or at least on the right track. And string theory is just that kind of solution. It provides the first way of putting quantum mechanics and general relativity together -- that is, merging the laws of the small and the laws of the large -- and it does it in such a sleek manner that it is quite breathtaking. And the term elegant really describes that kind of solution.”

Well: Brian Greene and other string theorists imply that our universe could be looked upon as an orchestra – the strings are as it were vibrating as the strings on e.g. a violin. And? Well, doesn't it ring a bell? Doesn't it remind us of e.g. the strings of Johannes Kepler? “...the discovery in terms of the nature of musical harmonies made by the so called “Pythagories””? Let us however hope that this is not in line with Marx who once said that: “Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.” (Marx, Karl, & Engels, Friedrich, Collected Works Volume 11, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1979, s103). Other natural scientists, however, seem to mean like this: “How important are theories that can easily change into some kind of basic, ontological assumptions? Are they at all wanted? Or mayhaps even bad? Will it be possible to keep these basic assumptions free from non-scientific discussions in terms of speculative, philosophical, religious or even political content? Well, we have to face the facts: Modern physicists claim that in the speciality of their science they touch the borders of mysticism and metaphysics. See e.g. Fritiof Capra who doesn't bother about it. Instead he is, if you like, *seeking dialectical/dynamic relations between modern physics and classic mysticism* such as these relations have been verbalised/formulated by , philosophers in India and China. Capra made his doctorate in physics in Vienna and he has made research (high-energy physics) at several universities in Europe and USA, and he has also written lots of books and articles (the most well-known book is probably *The Tao of Physics*, but the most comprehensive one is *The Turning-Point*. He is quite well known in India and has lectured at many universities there.

OK. Let us just now turn to the kind of social science I just now totally rely on – or rather find most interesting: Critical Realism as formulated by professor Roy Bhaskar:

By [Fadhel Kaboub](#):

“Roy Bhaskar is the leading author in the critical realist paradigm. This paradigm came as a critique of Positivism and Hermeneutics, as well as a new philosophical approach to scientific thinking. The critical realist philosophical ontology states that something is *real* if it *can bring about visible/material consequences*. In other words, in critical realism something is *real* if it is *causally efficacious* (e.g., a magnetic field, unemployment, poverty). As for epistemology, critical realists tend to opt for a pragmatic theory of truth even though some critical realists still think that their epistemology ought to be correspondence theory of truth. Other critical realists prefer to be more eclectic and argue for a three-stage epistemology using correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theory of truth [Ardebil 2001]...Bhaskar rejected this Kantian idealist and individualist approach, but he kept the Kantian transcendental *realist* approach...causal laws are invisible and are embedded in the natural structure; thus they are different from the empirical patterns of events...Note that this ontological distinction applies for social as well as natural phenomena...Methodological individualism includes utilitarianism, liberal political theory and neoclassical economic theory, according to which “reason is the efficient slave of the passions and social behavior can be seen as the simple maximization problem: ... the application of reason... to desires... or feelings... that may be regarded as naturally given. Relations play no part in this model [Bhaskar 1998, 29]...People do not create society. For it always pre-exists them and is a necessary condition for their activity. Rather, society must be regarded as an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions which individuals reproduce or transform, but which would not exist unless they did so. Society does not exist independently of human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of it ((the error of voluntarism) [Bhaskar 1998, 36].

Personally I think that this gives you a comprehensive and nice introduction to Critical Realism. . After having talked quite a lot with Roy and actually read and studied all

his books, this is what seems to be the “cooking”! Once I tried to summarize critical realism with the help of Roy but we seemed to land up in discussions *transcending* critical realism and hence transcending critical realism and moreover discuss the ontological discussion on meta-reality Or, if you like, the next and obvious step in terms of our social reality about our social reality. Anyway, one of my former students, now Senior Professor Mats Ekström, once verbalised critical realism in a most simple but nevertheless comprehensive way. Read and enjoy:

1. “Critical realism has been developed in opposition to empiricism and naïve realism and also to various forms of idealism and notions of reality as being constituted of subjective interpretations and meanings.¹
2. Social life is distinguished from nature by its hermeneutic character, by the creation of meaning, by intentionality and reflexivity. Social reality consists at the same time of basic structures that are not directly observable but that shape people’s interpretations and actions. These structures are basic inasmuch as they precede¹ individual actions are enduring and slow to budge (though they are not unchangeable). Just as there are non-observable forces deep in our consciousness that leave their imprint on emotions, thoughts and actions, so do the social structures include causal forces that leave their imprint on concrete social action. It is not a question of mystical forces¹but of the structuring properties *inherent* /my italics, AJ/ in the structures.
3. Social/Social-psychological structures can be very general but also more specific. Among the former type is gender or norm structures that are shared by most people in a society, whilst among the more specific type are such dispositions (*habitus*) as result from a person’s specific biographical experiences.
4. All action, all intentionality and reflexivity, brings about change, includes causal forces or generative mechanisms. Man’s capacities for thinking and acting are structured, but in these capacities there is at the same time the prerequisite for not merely reproducing but also transforming these structures.
5. Social reality is regarded as an open, complex and changeable system consisting of interacting structures and causal forces or mechanisms. Causal forces never operate in isolation.
6. Social reality is regarded as being stratified. *Concrete* circumstances, events and actions on the one hand, and *abstract* structures and mechanisms on the other, represent two levels of reality. The concrete and the abstract are related to each other but neither is reducible to the other.
7. A science that seeks basic explanations of concrete actions, experiences, events, etc. must analyse and attempt to understand the underlying structures and mechanisms that generate concrete effects. These structures and mechanisms are looked upon as tendencies. They are assumed to exist even when they do not find expression in something concrete and observable. Generative mechanisms always find expression in an open social reality, in a complex interaction with other factors, factors that neutralise and strengthen the concrete mechanisms. Thus for instance gender-related power mechanisms can assume very different expression in different contexts, and also be invisible in certain concrete relations in spite of the fact that they fundamentally structure people’s actions. In the same way we can understand why emotions of basic insecurity – emotions that have their roots in the person’s early life – can remain invisible for long periods and then assume clear expression when certain circumstances prevail...

10. ...Social science should have a critical and emancipatory dimension...

That’s it!
For now.

I will however come back to you with some more notes on Science. One question I am constantly facing is: *What is the point? And what is the difference between science and religion? Is it – actually – so that the social scientists of today are the priests of yesterday?* ☺

And what about globalization?

I will come back to that!

Anders Jonsson

ⁱ Note that the elaboration consists of i) some more notes in terms of the original article, and ii) a notably "finishing" establishment of the issue of society in religion and religion in society!

ⁱⁱ Note that when I was confirmed as a Christian I once asked my Priest and Teacher whether he was totally sure that God is a male? His answer? Well, his answer was a slap in my face. And *my* response? Well, I was at that very same time a young pugilist, so I boxed him in his solar plexus, and well, that was the end...!

ⁱⁱⁱ Remember Gandhiji from 1947: "I am a Hindu, I am a Muslim, I am a Jew, and I am a Catholic..."

^{iv} Something which is always prevalent/present in all modes of productions with a collectivistic profile/content.

^{v v} When I was a student of Christian religion after my confirmation I asked my teacher if he was totally sure that God is a male. His answer was a slap in my face. My answer was to box him in his gut and the rest? The rest is silence! Anyway, this seems to be an integrated and important part of Islam, Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Hinduism. Well, you might ask me about the Hindu "Gods". And my answer is very simple. Hinduism does not have millions of Gods – Hinduism has one God (Which Gandhiji called **It**). The public, or rather *popular*, thought of all the Hindu Gods is rather quite a normal and common case of (which is also prevalent in what we normally call monotheistic religions) images and incarnations of the will of God. We tend to learn how to behave from these kinds of stories. See e.g. this story about Ganesha: Lord Ganesha was, with his elephant appearance, quite slow but his brother was a handsome and rapid young man. Their father and mother once summoned them and said that we are going to gift one of you a holy mango fruit. This fruit cannot be divided and hence we have to give it to one of you. And the beloved son of ours who is able to bring this fruit all over the world will win it. The young, swift son, immediately ran away to cross the world, but Ganesha took the Mango and circled his mother and father. Thus he not only got the mango – he also tells us that the world/universe consists of nothing but the family!

^{vi} As Marx (as well as Srinivas) would have said: "when you change your social environment you also change yourselves," and as Weber (and – again – Srinivas) would have said: "Man is basically a social being and gets his content in his social context"), and as Durkheim (as well as Gurhyye): "The social web is more than the sum of the individuals."

^{vii} I have discussed this with at least five Brahmin priests and received five different answers...