

WHAT STILL CRAWLS IS RELIGION

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Preamble

If anybody on earth deserves the legal, moral and ethical rights
to say something on religion, it is Rahul.
Rahul was once born in this world some two and half thousand years ago.
Of course he was destined to take birth in this world numerous times,
to taste, to feel and to bear the pains that religion can give.

Rahul is the legendary name of the human being,
who was, is and will be subjected to perennial suffering in this earth
due to special man-made phenomenon.

Respected by millions and hated by others
this phenomenon is known as by the name "religion".

In this world Rahul(s) appear in numerous times and at innumerable places.

Religion, the prime cause of suffering follow him at every step.

This is immovable destiny.

At times he bears the pain with a smiling face,
at times he revolts and at times he breaks in tears.

This is the eternal story of Rahul(s),
the poor victim(s) of religion all over the world.

CONTENTS

STORY ONE	:	BIRTH OF RAHUL
STORY TWO	:	RAHUL VISITS A TEMPLE
STORY THREE	:	RAHUL VISITS A MOSQUE
STORY FOUR	:	RAHUL, LIBRARIAN AND THE ESCAPE ROUTE
STORY FIVE	:	RAHUL MEETS AN OLD LADY
STORY SIX	:	RAHUL'S ENCOUNTER WITH FATHER
STORY SEVEN	:	RAHUL MEETS A LITTLE BOY
STORY EIGHT	:	RAHUL FABRICATES A RELIGION
STORY NINE	:	RAHUL'S VISIT TO ATHEIST-LAND
STORY TEN	:	RAHUL KNOWS THE MISSING MAN
STORY ELEVEN	:	RAHUL SLEEPS, BECAUSE HELEN'S ARE AT WORK

STORY ONE

BIRTH OF RAHUL

Four thousand and five hundred years ago Rahul was born in the royal palace at Kapilabastu, India. To his great fortune or extreme bad luck Gautama Buddha, the great saint, preacher of Buddhism and celebrated philosopher of India happened to be his father. Needless to mention, still today numerous men all over the globe love to follow Buddha's path.

Buddhism, the religion Gautama Buddha preached is one of the greatest religion of this world. It is quite doubtful whether this gentleman at all had any intention to preach any religion. During his lifetime, not for a single time he uttered anything like 'religion' or 'preaching of religion'. Since his childhood the gentleman was kindhearted and could not bear pains of others. As he was gaining age, he was being increasingly startled to see what happens to the old men, why men suffer from diseases, what happens after death and so on. His activities made his father, the great emperor skeptical. The emperor thought, if his son was going to leave the family to become a saint. As a solution, the emperor thought of utilizing the sex-drive of human being. He arranged his son's marriage with one of the most beautiful lady of his empire. Gautama Buddha enjoyed the pleasure of youth and family life. Soon he was blessed with a son. But the pains of the bereaved men did not miss his attention. By this time he promised, he would endeavor his best to redress their pains, or endeavor to know the cause of such pains. His promise, however, gave birth to immeasurable pains for his husbandless wife and fatherless son.

Naturally it was natural for his son, Rahul to suffer from pains from the very beginning of life. In the palace everyone became sympathetic, or more precisely, over-sympathetic to the child deserted by his father at this age. After the child grew up he could easily feel, the men around him were trying to compensate "something". Be it due to their over-concern or anything else, Rahul in that tender age could realize how great that "something" was. He did not have the scope have a taste of what human being mean by 'father's love', even though his father was alive. Mother's secret tears helped him to understand what a 'wealth' it could be. So, it was natural for him to try to know what was the 'reason' that made his father to leave the palace. He started questioning. How long could a bereaved mother conceal the truth from her only son ? By this time he got the knowledge to understand harder things. And he came to learn, all those happened due to 'something' that they respectfully mentioned as 'religion'. That was Rahul's first experience about religion.

To Rahul religion meant something that deprives a child from father's love, care, attention and affection and that causes a loving mother to shed tears. He did not know, with that much of

deprivation he was rather fortunate. In another religion God placed one of his follower in a much worse situation. In order to earn God's pleasure he asked him 'to kill his dearest person'. For any human being, usually he himself is the dearest person. This follower was different. His dearest person was god and that was why he considered God's advise so valuable to him. But he did not think of God, because he could not get him. He carefully removed himself from the list and placed his son in the first position in the list of dearest person and at the same time 'hit list of murder'. Later however, the event came to end through the killing of an innocent animal and introduction of a festival. Billions of men find these activities both 'godly' and logical. Rahul was fortunate that his father was not that ruthless to him.

Rahul was appreciated by others for having a 'great' father. His great father wanted to sacrifice his own life (of course partly damaging the lives of his family members) for finding out the causes behind poverty, disease, distress and death of human being. Definitely it was an honest cause for sacrificing many things. When weighed in a sophisticated and non-sensitive balance the pains of a son, wife and parents for such a noble mission may seem trifling. However, it is also important to look at the 'end of the mission' or in other words 'achievement'. The great man ended up with an untrue and messed up result. Probably he failed to reach the destination. Or might be, there was no destination at the end of the route. The great man followed the wrong procedure that is now known as "Indian Blunder". He failed, but his associates did not. They could catch the golden opportunity. After Buddha's death they placed him in the position of God and preaching his sayings as religion. They filled in the inadequacies with their own sayings and explanations.

It is fair to say something about "Indian Blunder". Please hold for the time being and listed what his follower saints say. Let us place our question :

- Sir, we are worried for human sufferings in this world. We are scared of death. What should we do ?

Saint : You should take shelter of Buddha (compare : Buddhang Sharanang Gachchami)

- Take shelter ? Of Buddha ? But why ?

Saint : Because Buddha attained the supreme knowledge.

- From whom ?

Saint : From, from. Well from himself.

- In that case was he the god ?

Saint : Oh yes, oh yes.

- 'What is God, Sir ?' may be your next question.

The reply may be "Well. God is, God is ... ". The saint might say many things sensible, insensible and non-sensible and would still fail to explain God. In fact the saint needs devoted students to avoid

such situations. Finally he may use the trick that many religious preachers used. He would say 'God is so great that he is simply un-describable, like, like a huge black box'.

- What is a black box ?

Saint : Well, it is like, like "presence (or absence?) of a blind black cat in a dark room".

He might say, 'when God created men he was super-intelligent to know that one day men might ask all the questions like, who created them, why there were pains and deaths, and so on so forth. The great god carefully packed answers to each and every question in a box and carefully stored it.

- Where ?

Saint : Inside human brain. If someone wants to know the answer to any question, whatsoever, he needs to sit peacefully, close his eyes, concentrate his mind and search in that black box.

- What is black box ? Is it the one like "looking for the present or absence a black cat in a dark room ?"

Saint : Yes, it is like that. But if you are sincere, devoted and most of all 'ignorant of logic', then by the grace of your god you would know the correct answer.

- What happens if I fail to get the answer ?

Saint : That indicates, you failed to please god.

- How shall I please my God Sir ?

Saint : Well, your god has a name, doesn't he? God has no appetite, so he does not need food from you. But he an endless appetite to hear his name. He would love to hear his name in your heart. The more you call his name the more pleased he will be. This is the only way to please God.

Believe me or not, that is the Indian way of getting everything, knowing everything. If there lies a stone before you and you want to know whether it is hot or cold, you do not need to touch it. Learn to depend upon your god. He loves to see you to rely upon him. So, do not look at it, do not touch it. Just sit in a solitary place. Close your eyes. Praise your god. Ask the question and you would get the answers. Science has rejected this easy of way of "knowing and getting all". They say, the root cause of India's lagging lies in this 'faith' which they love to call "Indian blunder". Still numerous Indians feel proud for their 'Blunder'. Probably Gautama, I mean, Rahul's father was the inventor of this process.

Two and a half thousand years ago Rahul's father followed the 'wrong' way to find out the genuine causes of human sufferings and ways for emancipation. His noble intentions wanted to, but could not blast the empty box, because 'it was empty and there was no box'. Before discovering this process Buddha journeyed from one place to another and asked these questions to the saints. The saints used their usual tricks. But Buddha was intelligent enough not to be overrun by their tricks. At last he

himself tried the process and came to learn, there was no end to this 'thought process'. During these years Rahul grew up as a fatherless boy and his mother, a husbandless wife.

It is natural for the common people to know, why there are pains, disease and deaths, what happens after men die. They think over the matter, but they cannot spend much time because they have household works to do. Rahul's father had no dearth of time. He asked the question, formulated the answer, then stream-lined it with the common men's logic and formulated the answer. He continued doing it day after day, weeks after weeks and years after years. Time contributed to make his answers perfect. At long last he came out with brilliant answers. Before expressing those to the common men he endeavored his best to discard those by logic. But he could not. That gave him the confidence that he gained the 'supreme knowledge'.

The common people were eager to know the answers. Before they met him, they already knew the great sacrifice the man 'did', the great pains he undertook to find out those answers. Naturally Buddha had a glorified image in their minds. They witnessed a frail-bodied man deprived of food, drink and rest. Their sympathy compelled them to believe his words. Five hundred years after him, the crucified state of a man in a pathetic condition arouse sympathy of numerous men. Needless to mention, this man also was successful to get numerous associates, who later preached his deliberations as a religion. There are exceptions also. Men have also been found to take shelter behind men with glittering swords, instead of such pathetic and frail-bodied persons. They did whatever the strong men asked them to do and even to call those 'religion'. Sympathy and cowardice have great contributions for religion.

Let us not forget Rahul. What did Rahul do when he grew young ? Even though he was not happy with his father, in his later life he, along with his newly wed wife accepted his father's preaching. It is an wonderful religion in which the answers to the common men's questions are logic-proofed. Example ? Listen :

Question : Sir, why does an innocent man suffer from pains?

Answer : Because, in his previous life he caused pains to another man.

Question : Why does a notorious man get affluence and happiness ?

Answer : Because he did some noble jobs in his previous life.

Question : What should we do now ?

Answer : Do good jobs, help others such that you may get the reward in your next life.

(The common men did not find out any loophole. What logic-proof answer that a man can frame, if he is indulged in this act for long years, can never be proved faulty by the common men)

Question : Who created us ?

Answer : (At this stage the preacher had be cautious. Earlier to him the Indian Dravidians not only tell, but clearly showed the 'element behind creation'. They presented the human genitalia and said 'see, who created you'. When the Aryans were asked the same question they mentioned of their dead leader 'Indra'. The people of this land did not accept him. Rahul's father had no reason to disbelieve the Dravidian's concept of god. He already fathered a son. But he had to avoid it for fear of vulgarity. And he did not get a better answer. So he gave a very intelligent and safe answer. He said :) Did I say there is any god ?

Question : Then do you mean to say there is no God ?

Answer : Did I say there is not God?

The sympathy, greatness, great stories and gossips that the common men associated with this man made some of them to roam in the whirlwind of intellectual logic. They started revolving a wheel. Like this world this wheel also must be kept moving. As soon as one get the answer the wheel would come to a dead stop. (Or, it may be so that as soon as he would know the answer he would stop revolving it anymore, throw it away the wheel and leave the place). Not many men have got the correct answer. That is why still today, millions of wheels and with those millions of hearts move in the whirlwind of "Did I say there is god ? Did I say there is not God?" After Buddha's death, however, his associates made him the god because, because they needed an effigy in the temple such that people may contribute in his honor.

Rahul did not keep a diary. In case he kept, he might have written "Religion is ...". As we mentioned, he had the legal, moral and ethical rights to write on it, because in that age he was the worst sufferer from it. After his father's death, his associates preached something named religion. From this 'religion' one could not be sure whether (01) Buddha himself was the god, or (02) whether he merely endeavored to find out the logical answers of the questions which irritated his mind, or (03) whether he longed to see such qualities to grow in human being that might ensure peace and harmony in the human society. A 'Fifth century BC Rahul' would have been satisfied to know the answers to these questions. But a 'twenty-first century Rahul' has raised the basic question. Representing the billions of poor souls humiliated, oppressed and murdered all over the globe Rahul wants to know : Does religion at all has any positive role to play in the human society ? When he raised this question to the leaders of various religions he was showered with sweet answers. Being more intelligent than his fifth century BC counterpart Rahul is not convinced by their words. He wants to know the answer by himself. And in view of the severe wounds on his body and mind impinged by various religions he deserves that right.

STORY TWO

RAHUL VISITS A TEMPLE

Twenty first century Rahul is a young man following Hindu religion. In his thirty-five years of age he had the bitterest taste of religion in his home country . That made him to promise, he would see what religion stands for. Charity begins at home, Rahul also decided to know his own religion first. He decided to visit a temple.

The temple was full of men and women. Needless to mention, all were followers of one religion, Hinduism. Rahul was aware, there were disputes with the very name of the religion. Even though it is popularly known as 'Hindu religion', some experts do not like this name. They say, this name was given by the people living on the west of Sindhu river (Indus), who mentioned the people living on the other bank as Sindhu. Since they could not pronounce this word correctly, they pronounced "Hindu". They wanted to call it Sanatan (meaning Eternal) religion. And there were others who wanted to call 'Aryan religion' even though they did not practice the worship of Aryan gods, eat Aryan foods or follow their social customs.

The priest of the temple was in the chair of the chairperson. Rahul was received warmly and given a seat on the dais. One gentleman presented a brief introduction of Rahul. The man continued saying, honorable chairman and devoted followers, this one is a red-letter day in the life of our temple. We are so delighted that a renowned journalist has come to visit our temple. We were aware, the people of the west do not have interest in religion. That was a fact till September 11. But after the September 11 incident the people of west are showing profound interest in religion and religious affairs. At one time they considered religion as unnecessary or powerless thing. On this day however, they could realize the power of the religion, of course in its destructive aspect. Mr. Rahul has come here to know about our religion and to present his knowledge and information to his western readers. We are delighted to get him among us. Today we shall try our best to tell him details about our religion. This will be a open discussion and all of you are cordially invited to take part in it.

The priest said - Mr. Rahul, you have just heard that on September 11 the west came to realize the destructive power of religion. Well we are happy that it was not our religion. You very well know the persons who drove the planes in twin tower and other buildings. You also know their religion. So, for such a destruction you cannot held responsible all the religions in general. You know, our religion is a peaceful one followed by peace-loving persons. In such a situation what makes you interested in our religion ?

In reply Rahul said – Sir, the incident on September 11 has shown what the people of one religion can do. The people in the west still wait to see what your religion can do.

There was loud laughter in the hall.

The chairman said - You know even though that incident was caused by a few people of one religion, the major portion of the followers of that religion do not endorse that act. They have denounced their acts. I believe, such an act should not be used against any particular religion or the religions as a whole. I believe, the root cause of this incident was not religion, but something else.

Rahul – What do you think was the cause, sir ?

Chairman said – You know, the people in the west believe in money. They believe money is the most important item in human life. They believe, everything starting from mother to motherland are salable or purchasable by money. In this incident also money played the prime role. What do you think ?

Rahul - Sorry, I have no comment.

The chairman said – Oh money. I know there extreme greed for money would someday bring their peril.

Rahul replied – You are right, sir. When they believe the root cause behind 9-11 incident was money, they in fact believe in the destructive power of money.

The idea expressed in such simple words was so difficult for the audience to grasp that they could not understand whether they should endorse or protest.

Rahul said – Sir, even though my name indicates I am a Hindu, I in fact follow no religion. In order to impartially judge various religions the first thing one needs is to become neutral. I now stand in such a position. In the west they believe that a man can become a full-fledged man only when he can rise above all sorts of unscientific superstition including religion.

One gentleman stood up and asked – Sir, we have been told, after the 9-11 the west has become interested in religion. Some even informed, there were mass conversion. What is your idea about it ?

Rahul said – Sir, it is correct that after the 9/11 incident the west has become interested in religion. But mind carefully, they were interested but not attracted. These two are not the same. How can one feel attracted to 'something' that they held responsible for destruction of prestigious and properties and peril of their dear relatives ?

The chairman said – You are right. Definitely the people were frightened due to this incident. But the age of religious conversion by 'frightening' people is over.

Rahul said – Definitely. Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to clarify one point. I discarded religion long ago. When my age was ten I witnessed my father and mother to visit temples, to pray to gods and to entertain priests. But their actions could not impress me. I was rather impressed by those of my grandmother. My grandmother passed M.B., B.S. from Delhi

University in 1942, that was earlier to the Second World War. She served as a doctor in the world war. When the war-stricken men prayed for god's help for relief, my grand mother helped them with medical aids. She could not find any affectivity of such prayer excepting, however, psychological consolation of the believers. By her clear knowledge and understanding she believed, there was not and there would not be any god. Today's intelligent men and the scientists believe in this way. I feel so proud that my grandmother in that early age could realize this fact. When the old lady used to tell me her experiences, her ideas, I was charmed by her confidence. At times however, I wanted to believe in the reverse line, i.e. in the line of my god-fearing parents. At times argued with my grandmother and parents.

The chairperson said – Did not your parents become angry when you argued with them ?

Rahul – Probably they did. But I did not care. I had the privilege, because I was their youngest child.

Chairperson – Please continue.

Rahul – My parents explained matters from their respective points of view. Even in that age I had little difficulty to pick up the truth. For example, my parents used to arrange special prayer expecting good result in my examination. In case the result was good my parents alleged, it was due to god's grace. But I could not discover any grace in it. I knew, I got good grades because I studied hard. My fellow friends who used to work hard also got good grades. Most of them did not arrange such prayer. And there was a special case. One of our class mate, the son of a tycoon arranged one of the costliest prayers for his son's success. After the result was published his son was found to have failed.

Chairman asked – Sir, did not it happen so that one of your friend studied hard and then could not get good grade ?

Rahul – Yes, in a few case things happened like it. I knew those happened due to the combined affect of some 'coincidences and non-coincidences' that you call luck. But I could not notice any act of 'god' there.

Chairman – Sir, would you please explain 'coincidences and non-coincidences', that you just said ?

Rahul - Yes. In case of one friend, he studied hard and was sick during examination. So, he could not get good grade. On another occasion one friend faced accident on road. Then one friend prepared few selected questions. He did not find those in the examination and in spite of hard work failed. I meant such cases by 'coincidences and non-coincidences'.

Chairman – I see. I believe, the cases you mentioned as 'coincidences and non-coincidences' are considered by us as acts of god.

The audience endorsed the chairman's idea. By this time the tension and the sense of irritation among the audience were subsided. Rahul came to understand it happened so because these people follow a religion in which god is their friend, whom they love and at times accuse. They do not protect the image of their gods by any artificial means.

Rahul continued - Explaining our daily activities and incidents from an unbiased platform I in fact could not discover the action of anything that I you call god.

Chairman – That may be correct in your case. But I know in this gathering there are many persons who strongly believe in god. Am I correct ?

His question was for the audience and they instantly endorsed the idea.

Rahul said – Excellent. I invite persons, who can give concrete proof regarding the existence or actions of god. Would any such person please come here and enlighten us ?

An old man came to the dais and said – I am a priest. My father also was a renowned priest in this locality. In our house we have a large temple of god. During the time of my father I have witnessed dying patients to be recovered by the grace of god. I have seen several cases where the patients who dishonored god did not survive. Sir, do you believe my words ?

Rahul – Yes sir, I believe every word you said. Please clarify one thing. Do you mean to say, the patients who recovered were not given any medical treatment ?

Priest - Yes.

Rahul – And the persons who expired did not have any natural cause behind their deaths ?

Priest - Exactly.

Some of the audience nodded heads in disbelief.

Rahul said – Sir, if all these are true, then I must say those were miracles. Sir, do you believe in miracle ?

There arose cries among the audience indicating they had different views.

Rahul had a look at the audience and said – It seems you have differing views. Let me first ask this gentleman. Priest sir, do you believe in miracles ?

Priest - No.

Rahul - Then how do you explain the deaths of those persons without any natural cause ?

Priest - It happened due to god's will.

Rahul - But why won't you call it miracle ?

Priest - Because it was not miracle, it was acts of god.

Rahul - Well, what happens if the same thing is done by a man ? Would you call it a miracle ?

Priest - Yes. But I know no human being can perform any miracle.

Rahul - Gentleman, I am sorry because I forgot to tell you one thing. I had undergone vigorous and rigorous practices for about ten years. Through that practice I have attained the power to perform miracles.

The chairperson asked – Mr. Rahul, is it magic ?

Rahul – No sir, it is not magic. You know, in magic what you see is not real. You see a man to die, but in fact he does not. But in my case it happens exactly what you see with your eyes. If you like I can show you my miraculous power today. What do you say ?

There arose hue and cry among the audience. Some even raised hands in support of seeing miracles.

Rahul said – Very good, I have got your endorsement. Now I shall show my miraculous power. Let me start with this gentleman who believes, no human being can ever do miracle. Do you agree sir ?

Priest - Yes.

Rahul - Very good. The time by my watch is seven thirty. I have got permission from this gentleman to show miracles. There is a strong possibility that after my action is over, the police may come and accuse me. In order to be relieved from their accusation I shall ask for the approval of this man for a second time. You all must listen carefully what he says. Later, I shall present you as witnesses before the police. Agreed ?

The priest said – Yes.

Rahul - By my miraculous power I shall make your daughter to expire exactly at seven forty, i.e. ten minutes from now. Sir, please hold this mouth-piece and declare before all such that they can later testify that you gave me permission. Please say “I agree to your proposal”.

There was pin-drop silence. The man did not say anything. The audience could not understand what caused his silence. After few insistences from Rahul the priest said – I love my daughter.

Rahul said – That's o.k. In that case I can do it with your son. Please declare your endorsement for my program.

The audience was feeling the ever-increasing heat of silence. Suddenly the man cried “no”. Like a mad man he threw away the mouthpiece and left the dais.

Rahul said – Gentlemen, you have just witnessed a peculiar incident. By this time you very well know what miracle means. For a student it is like, he collected all his documents specially the most essential admit card before entering the examination hall. Then, when the invigilator asked for it he could not find it. No one ever took it. The admit card just disappeared, the way I wanted to make the daughter or son of that man to disappear. The boy was ousted from the hall. Think of his reaction when he realized why he could not appear at the examination. We know the reason was a miracle.

There was a murmur among the audience. They could not believe Rahul's statement.

Rahul said – I mention another case of miracle. A gentleman who collected large sum of money from the Bank counter. He put the money in his bag. After one minute he could not find any money there. No, one other than himself carried the bag and no other person even touched it. The money vanished by miracle.

Again there was a murmur among the audience. They could not decide what to say.

Rahul continued – The third case of miracle is of a brilliant boy. This boy studied hard, wrote his best in the examination scripts, then he discovered his name in the list of failing students. The boy also discovered the worst boy of the class to become first. These are all miracles. A lady used to wear a special pendant almost perennially. In her life this lady did not face any accident. On one particular day she forgot to wear the pendant. That day she was run over by a bus. That was a miracle.

The audience kept staring at Rahul, some with faith and others with disbelief.

Rahul said - Ladies and gentlemen, the men present in this temple are either in the shoes of the student expelled from the examination hall for not having the admit card, or in the state of the gentleman who could not find his money in the bag, or of the brilliant boy who failed, or of the dull boy who secured the best position, or of the lady who died only because she forgot to wear that pendant. All these happened due to miracle. y Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard everything. Now tell me, what is your idea about miracles ?.

There was a long silence.

Then a man stood up and said – Sir, if these are miracles, then I must say I hate miracles. I would be the last man to live in the country where such miracles happen.

Rahul – What about others ? Sirs and madams, what do you think of it ?

The audience almost in a chorus shouted – We hate miracles, we dislike it. Down with miracles.

Rahul asked – Do I get a single person who likes miracle ?

No one stood up.

Rahul said – Ladies and gentlemen, please don't forget. All the miracles were not harmful, some were beneficial. The dull boy secured first position. Don't you like that ?

A student stood up and said – No. For a dull boy to secure the first position is more humiliating than to fail. And it is a disgrace for the best boy.

The audience endorsed his idea.

Rahul said – That's excellent. That means you like to accept only the natural outcome of the incidents. You probably believe, in this world honest men should work and get the reward. Similarly insincere and dishonest man should get the befitting outcome, be it good or bad. Ladies and gentlemen, do you endorse the case that a boy would work hard and fail and his worthless friend would top the list ?

The spontaneous reply from the audience was, 'No'.

Rahul - If someone can make such miracles to happen, would you like him ? Please mind, I am capable of doing miracles.

One person stood up and said – I understand, miracles are against natural rule and natural justice. I do not like it. I don't like the person who does it, even if it is you.

Rahul - What happens, if the man is not me but your father ?

The man said – Same reaction, I do not like him.

Rahul said – Very good. What happens if that person is god ?

The man said – I do not like him.

Rahul – Even if he is god ?

Man – Yes, even if his name is god or he is god.

Rahul – Gentleman, would you please give a second thought to what you just said ?

Man – I have thought over it. I consider god as great. He must ensure natural justice. In case he violates that in the name of miracle, I don't need him. I dislike him. I consider him as my enemy.

Rahul looked at the chairman and asked – Sir, you are seating in the most important position in this hall. What is your opinion about it ?

Chairperson said – What he told is absolutely correct. If God commits injustice he no more remains god, and we no more need that god.

Rahul – Does that mean, you do not allow even god do the 'miracles' which are against natural law and justice ?

Priest – Exactly.

Rahul said – Very good. Sir, at this juncture I am going to disclose a secret information that might startle you. I mentioned of the brilliant and dull boys. The dull boy did not study and the intelligent boy did. There was an old Banyan tree with miraculous power in front of their school. While passing through that tree the intelligent boy spitted on it, and the dull boy prayed for its help. And I tell you, that did the miracle.

Rahul suddenly stopped. For a few seconds there was no sound.

One man stood up and said – Sir, I shall tell you two things. Firstly, a tree can never do such a thing. Secondly, if it can do so, then I shall hate it.

Rahul smiled and said – Well, if a tree cannot do this miracle your god can easily do. In that case would you hate your god ?

Man – Yes, I will.

And the next moment the man burst into loud laughter. Very soon he was joined by others. What Rahul heard for the following one minute was laughter and laughter.

It was prayer time. The man in charge of prayer called the audience for prayer. Like enchanted men the audience started leaving the room without a word. The man who asked for prayer said – What happened ? Why are you leaving ?

One of them turned his face and replied – I want things to happen in the natural way. I hate miracles. Natural things take place without god's intervention. If I do not like miracles, why do I need a god ?

STORY THREE

RAHUL VISITS A MOSQUE

As part of his program in the Indian countries Rahul planned to visit a mosque. His intuition told, this time he might have to handle angry mob. The participation of men from that religion in the 9/11 incident and the stringent measures taken by some governments on the followers of this religion made him to think in this line. After he stepped inside the mosque he, however, was amazed to see the smiling and greeting faces of men.

The chief religious person of the mosque came to preside over the meeting.

He gave a brief introduction to Rahul and said – I express my heartfelt delight to get this gentleman amongst us. We know, at present he comes from a very important country. The country is powerful, resourceful and highly developed in science and technology. Few years ago, a number of men from our religion conducted an operation, I must say, destructive operation that smashed valuable properties and caused deaths of innocent men. We feel extremely sorry for their act. For that reason it was natural for that country to show rudeness to the people belonging to our religion. I find nothing wrong in it. Probably we would show more rudeness if the men from other religion did that act to us. We have many relatives in that country. Quite often we hear, they are not safe there. We are not sure if it will be possible for them to live there in future. Since Mr. Rahul comes from that country and he is associated with the newspaper world, I am confident he can aptly enlighten us in this matter. Sir, please tell us about the future of our relatives in that country. We are extremely worried for them.

Rahul said – From what I know from my association and experience, I can assure you, your innocent relatives are and would remain safe in that country. By constitution that one is a secular country. That means, the policy of that state is, no man would get preference or negligence because of his religion. So, there is absolutely no reason why your relatives should face problems for their religion. However, you know in any democratic country the people themselves reserve some rights and the state cannot instantly bring them under control. There takes place hazards due to this reason. So, in case you hear of your relatives to fight any adverse situation, it could be created by the citizens, not by the government.

At this stage Rahul stopped for a few seconds to take fresh breath.

The chief priest said – If that be the situation then I believe it is much better than what happens in our country. In our country the government cooperates with the religious activists on the plea that ours is a religious country. We should feel happy that that country do not follow our instance.

Rahul said – Well, as I was saying, now the question is how the people of other religions would look at your relatives. It is not possible to predict anything in this matter. From my experience I

know, the common people of that country in general, are peace loving. They seldom take the initiative in fight. So, in case your relatives do not initiate any such thing, I find absolutely no reason to be worried for them.

The priest said – We are happy to hear that. Now gentleman, do anyone of you have any question to ask this gentleman ?

One man stood up and said – Sir, you know one of our religious leader has invited the citizens of that country to accept our religion. What do you think of it ?

Rahul said – Your religious leader has placed that invitation for the people of that land. So it is for them to decide on this matter. Who am I to say anything about it ?

Man – Well, what is your opinion about it ?

Rahul – I think they would not keep this invitation.

Man – Why ?

Rahul – You mentioned you have many relatives in that land. Can you tell me why they left this country and went to that distant land ?

There was no reply. Rahul said – I need no reply. I very well know, your relatives knew they would get better scope of work and living in that country. Isn't it ?

A section of the audience replied – Yes, that's correct.

Rahul – Very nice. You know it is natural for human being strive for achieving things they consider better. The government of that country wants to make the land habitable for the citizens irrespective of their religions. I am not sure if you know it or not, a greater section of their people follow no religion. With the development of scientific knowledge the number of people without religion are on increase. I am almost sure, your leader's invitation won't be able to change their minds. What do you say ?

Man – Sir, probably you are correct. I came to know the new generations, I mean the children of our relatives are showing decreasing attraction towards religion. There are still followers of other religions. Is there any possibility that they might accept this invitation ?

Rahul – Let us analyze the situation. You know, they are all enlightened and educated people. Their literacy rate is hundred per cent. As soon as they would get this invitation, what do you think is natural for them to do ? To make a comparison between the options, isn't it ?

Man – Yes sir.

Rahul – So, they would compare, they would have a look at their own lives and that of the people who gave them that offer. Am I right ?

A section of the audience replied - Yes.

Rahul - If you were in their positions won't you have done the same thing ?

Audience – Yes.

Rahul – So, you might understand, for any enlightened person changing religion or accepting a new religion largely depends upon this comparison.

Man - Sir, do you think this one is the only pre-condition of change of religion ?

Rahul – Of course not. You know numerous people all over the world changed religion for numerous reasons like, financial gain, taking revenge on others and so on. Such cases happened in this land also. Isn't it ?

The audience endorsed his idea.

Rahul -Now, tell me if you were in their position would you accept the offer for changing religion ?

Several voices shouted simultaneously - 'No'.

At this time one gentleman stood up and started laughing.

Rahul asked – What's the matter, sir ? What makes you to laugh ?

The man said – Sir, please allow me to laugh for another two minutes. Then I shall disclose why I was laughing.

It was one of the strangest experience in Rahul's life. The religious prayer hall was full to the capacity. All were seating calm and quiet and waiting for one man to finish his act of laughing. The man was laughing with all the sound he could make. Neither Rahul nor the audience had the idea what made him to laugh in this manner. The man stopped after two minutes. But still he retained a feeling of amusement on his face.

The man said – Sirs, I could not stop laughing to think what a fool we are. Quite often we sit here and think of destroying the prayer houses of other religions. And this happened for such a trifling reason. In case my ancestors accepted a different religion, today I would have stayed in another prayer house and would think of destroying this one. And I tell you, it happened so only because my ancestor accepted this religion. I am just being guided by the decision taken by my forefather. Then I so painfully collect reasons and reasoning to talk and act in favor of the religion my forefather accepted. I spread hatred against other religions and even indulge in killing. By doing so, I work against and kill my ancestors' relatives, whom I know, my forefathers would have never killed. What a fool I am. By following the religion my forefathers once accepted, I kill my blood relations which even my forefathers do not endorse. What great fools we are.

There elapsed a few minutes without any word.

Then another man stood up and said – Sir, one of my friends told me, 'in case all the religions were in practice in this land during the time of our ancestors, then there was a possibility for them to have accepted a different religion'. And that made us to laugh. What do you think of it, sir?

Rahul – Your friend is absolutely right. It is a comment, a realization that can make any sensible man to laugh. Just consider from an unbiased angle. Today men are sacrificing their lives, taking others lives and spreading hatred for the sake of their religion. In reality, what a great price they are paying for what a trifling matter. But they would act so differently only if their ancestors accepted a different religion. So, what in fact is responsible for all these acts is not religion, but our ancestors' decision.

Priest – You are right. If we could realize the truth, the reality and the essence of this statement, then there would not have existed any clash with religion.

Rahul – Gentleman, you can realize these plain and simple facts. If you can understand these you would know, how trifling, how unnecessary any particular religion is. But still if you wish to stick to your religion, no problem. But in case you wish the people from the west to accept your religion, then you are to establish instances such that, when compared, they can find your religion better and superior. How far is that possibility ?

One gentleman stood up and said – Well, even if there was any such possibility, I know, that has completely vanished after the WTC incident.

Another gentleman said – Sir, for arguments sake let me ask you a question. What makes you to think their standard is higher than ours ?

Rahul replied – If their standard was not higher why do you import consumable items, transport vehicles, communication equipments, medicines and industrial equipments from that country?

One audience said – You are right, sir. We import those because we cannot produce products of that standard in our country.

Rahul said – You are right. You know, the government of a country provides many facilities for its own citizens and only a few for the foreigners. Many of your relatives now staying in that country are not getting the privileges of citizens, but of foreigners. And I tell you, they consider those better than what they could enjoy in their country as citizens.

One man said – You are right sir. That is why my relatives who stay and work in that country illegally are not willing to come back.

Rahul – Quite possible. In such a context, gentlemen, how far do you think your leader's invitation would be accepted by the people of that country ?

Man – He would turn to a laughing stock. But I don't understand what made that leader to give such a call. Is he a great fool ?

Rahul – I do not rule out the possibility. But there are things which are still worse.

Priest – What is that ?

Rahul – After your leader gave that call numerous men from your religion gave him a big support. Isn't it ?

Priest – Yes, you are correct.

Rahul – In case the leader asked for money to fulfill his mission, what do you think his supporters would do ?

Priest – We know they would raise money.

Rahul – By that way the leader could earn a lot of money. Isn't it ?

Priest – Yes. But Mr. Rahul, I believe the man could not continue this practice for long. He must have to show some action before the donors turned impatient.

Rahul – You are right, sir. Could it be the reason why Laden had to take that destructive operation on that country ?

The audience remained calm. In a slow voice the priest said – I think that was a strong possibility.

Rahul said – Gentlemen, you have seen in no way you could prove that you are in a better position than those in the west. The west however does not attach religion with their superiority. But if you request them for accepting your religion, it is natural for them to judge the case of their superiority in relation to religion. They would say, one strong cause behind their success is ignoring religion from state activities.

Priest - I am sorry to say, for one reason or the other I also think so.

Rahul - So, gentlemen, in case you cannot prove that you are superior and that, the reason of your superiority lies in your religion, how can you expect them to pay heed to your invitation ?

One man stood up and said – Sir, even though I find most of your thoughts and comments are not palatable and do not go in our favor, I find everything you said appealing, straightforward and clear. I have little doubt what you said is true, because only truth can be so straightforward, so appealing and so easy to understand. I can tell you I have accepted every word you have said. Sir, would you mind answering one question ?

Rahul said – It would be my pleasure, sir.

Man - We know the government of the country you mentioned do not like religion. Good. But we all know they profusely funded a fundamentalist group in another country. That turned those men into “terrorists”. These terrorists did whatever was natural for them to do. Then that government ruthlessly smashed those people and indirectly occupied that country. Sir, what made the government that do not like religion, to fund the religious extremists ?

Rahul – Sir, I mentioned the policy of their government is not to encourage religion. As per policy their government do not give privilege to any religion inside the country, and I believe they maintain the same policy abroad also. But you know quite well, diplomacy is quite different. It does not always follow the straight path. What did we see in this case ?

Priest - Foreign funding caused the moderate religious men to be extremists and terrorists. And they attacked the interest of the funding country.

Rahul - Yes. So, the funding country got a ground for counter attack and the religious extremists faced peril.

Priest – That’s strange.

Rahul – In fact there is nothing ‘strange’ in it. Take it this way, smashing religious groups was their target. But it was a highly sensitive issue. By attacking their buildings with plane bombs these groups in fact stepped inside their trap. Now it was so easy for them to crush the fundamentalists. Now do you have any doubt that they dislike religion ?

The audience almost in a chorus shouted – No, not at all.

STORY FOUR

RAHUL, LIBRARIAN AND THE ESCAPE ROUTE

Rahul visited a large mosque of Delhi city. He had to go through their formalities. He presented his credentials as journalist. The gentleman who seemed to be their chief inquired, if there was possibility of their names and photographs to be published in his newspaper. Rahul said 'yes'. Then he added, 'only if you can satisfy my quarries'. 'What are those ?' was the imminent question. Rahul replied 'You know human being are the members of family, community, state and the world. You would explain how your religion ensures their welfare in these forums'.

The chief asked – Tell me, why it is essential for you to know these.

Rahul : You know, a group of men belonging to your religion performed some successful and numerous unsuccessful operations in the west. And they did those in the name of religion. Naturally the people and the government in the west have become skeptical about the positive contribution of religion. They have seen negligible constructive and plentiful destructive actions of religion. In such a situation, they have become interested to know its reason and naturally, your religion.

Chief : Look man, as for reason of the incidents you mentioned you can blame the concerned men, but not their religion.

Rahul : Sir, this is an impractical proposition and I cannot accept it. When we dislike certain attitude, say 'the tendency to steal' of a man we have no way other than to dislike the man himself and to punish him. And that helps to eradicate stealing from the society. Expressing our disliking and hatred for stealing does in no way improve the situation. When we blame a man for his action, we cannot forget his religion, specially when he says, he does all those for the sake of religion. He even proves his claims by showing religious scriptures.

The chief nodded his head and said : Yes, that is correct. I believe this is an extremely difficult question to answer. The missions of those men have given birth to so many confusions and complexities. It is nice that you have come to meet us. This will give us a scope to clean our breast, erase our slate. All right, we shall utilize this opportunity to clear up our position. What do you say ?

The chief threw the question to his associates. They expressed endorsements by nodding heads.

The chief said – All right young man, you can ask your questions.

Rahul : My questions are, how and how far your religion influences the lives and activities of its followers ? How does it serve the cause of human being as member of his society, country and this world ? I request you to explain things in plain language. I do not accept anything that you cannot convince me. You cannot convince me by saying a difficult or contradictory statement and then saying, this one has been told by so and so great man. On the other

hand I shall accept the statement of any laymen if its meaning is understandable and straight forward. And believe me, I shall not be a silent listener. I shall raise question and present my logic. But I assure you, I have a free and unbiased mind prepared to accept anything that would convince me.

Chief : In that case, why not attend our weekly meetings ?

Rahul : Sorry sir, I know in such meetings you remain surrounded by men who love to believe whatever right or wrong you say. I hate to be that type of believer. Also I shall not feel safe to challenge the general surrounded by his soldiers.

The chief asked his associates – What do you think we should do now ? Should we entertain this man or say 'no' ?

One associate said – Sir, I believe it would be better for us utilize this scope not only to explain our positions, but also to enlighten the western people about the philosophy of our religion. You know how badly our relatives are now treated in the west.

Other associates endorsed his idea. The chief discussed matters with his associates and finally authorized the old librarian to talk on their behalf. The librarian led Rahul to his room.

Rahul pulled out his recording gadgets.

The librarian said – Young man, I appreciate your noble mission. But I have a request. If you want to hear the truth, I mean the truth I believe in my heart, then you must not record it. I can express those to you only unofficially. Now please tell me, what do you want, fact or fiction ?

Rahul : Of course fact. And I assure you there won't be any recording.

Librarian : Very good. Let us start. As librarian I get ample scope of reading books. In addition, in the recent years I have spent a lot of time in seeing television programs. Due to these, to tell you the truth, I myself have become confused about religion.

Rahul : What type of confusion ?

Librarian : You know, if you compare among the followers of the leading religions, we invest the most for the religion. Could you get my point ?

Rahul : No. What do you mean by invest ?

Librarian : I mean, investment in terms wealth, time and energy.

Rahul : Why do you call it investment ?

Librarian : When I invest something, I do it for some return. In religion also I invest my wealth, time and energy to get something in return.

Rahul : Do you mean to say, return after death ?

Librarian : Exactly.

Rahul : Well, if I have understood correctly, you mean to say, in comparison with the followers of other religions you spend more time, energy, money on religion. Am I correct ?

Librarian : Yes. We may exclude the cases of the religious preachers and gurus. Religion is their profession, job, mission, craze and livelihood. So they can afford to spend time on it. But in my religion you may see, how much wealth, time and energy the common men spend on religion.

Rahul : Yes, I have noticed that. But why do you do it ?

Librarian : Well, I have seen my father to do it. Following my fathers I have been doing it, without even questioning why I have been doing all these.

Rahul : I believe, you have done exactly what has been prescribed in your religion. Your religion does not encourage questioning, but stresses on believing blindly.

Librarian : You are right. So I also have followed my father blindly. But now, at this age and stage of life I cannot account for, how worthwhile my investment is.

Rahul : Sir, what makes you to think it may be futile ?

Librarian : I mentioned, I am fond of seeing television programs. And my favorites are the scientific programs. In such program the scientists explain the creation of the universe, our known and unknown world and the related topics. They explain everything with profuse photographs, sketches, charts and models. I don't believe a person with intelligence can ever say 'no' to their deliberations.

Rahul : You are right. But how do those affect your religious conviction ?

The librarian laughed and said – After seeing all these I find absolutely no possibility of an afterworld to exist. And if there is no afterworld my entire investment, costly investment, huge investment is futile, just meaningless.

The old librarian remained silent and kept staring the distant sky. Did he seek the answer of 'the greatest question of his life' there ? The vast sky that at one time this man believed to have accommodated the 'heaven and hell' of his after-life abode, by now has now turned into mere roaming places of numerous planets, asteroids and meteors. With eyes to see, ears to hear and a matured brain to analyze how on earth could he think those 'impossible' propositions to have been true ?

Rahul thought, in this world still there are men, numerous men who spend their time, energy and resources, who even sacrifice their own lives and take away others lives only with the conviction that those were worthwhile investments and that they were going to have befitting return for such actions. But how are they going to get the return ? Rahul noticed pains and frustration on the old man's face. He wanted to feel his anguish. The old man with his vast knowledge and large 'investment' has suddenly got the crucial information that 'there is no existence of the promised places'. Rahul also thought, probably the man has been entangled in the horns of a dilemma. He knows the allegiance to this faith ensures his livelihood. And he also knows, he cannot publicly express what he now believes in his heart. Rahul got a little touch of the fight taking place in his heart.

Rahul said – Well, the complexity that you explained may be common for all religions. Isn't it ?

The librarian released a deep sigh and said – Yes. But I find reasons to be worried because in comparison with other religions our invested is huge. And that has created the my problem.

Rahul asked - What problem ?

Librarian smiled and said – Sir, can you throw away your pen through this window ?

Rahul was holding a cheap ball pen in his hand. He replied – Oh, easily. And the next instant he threw away the ball pen.

Librarian : Sir, you could do that because you know it is not costly. Your investment on it is little. Sir, can you throw away your watch ?

Rahul : No.

Librarian : Why ? Because it is very costly, because you have invested a lot on it. Am I correct, sir ?

Rahul : Yes.

Librarian : Your watch seems to belong to a world famous brand. Can I have a look at it ?

Rahul gave him the watch.

After a careful look the librarian said – I am sorry to say, you have been cheated. This is not original, it is a cheap imitation.

Rahul : That cannot be true. I myself have bought it from a renowned shop. They cannot cheat me.

Librarian : I do not wonder at your reply. I know, if you confess you have been deceived, then we would say you are a big fool. But I can tell you, you have been cheated.

Rahul : Impossible. If you say it is fake, I shall take it back to the shop and claim for a change. I have already preserved my receipt of payment and guarantee card.

Librarian : That indicates, you are in a safe position. At least you have your receipt. But I don't have a receipt.

Rahul : What do you mean ?

Librarian : Sorry sir, I was joking. There is absolutely no problem with your watch. I used the trick just to draw an analogy.

Rahul : What analogy ?

Librarian : You know sir, after a man has invested a great deal on something it becomes difficult for him to confess, it was a bad investment. Why ? In case he makes a clean breast other would call him a fool. So, even after being convinced that it was a bad investment, he cannot confess the truth. Sir, now I am in such a position.

Rahul : Probably I could get your point. Well, if you now realize your mistakes, where lies the problem in abandoning it ?

The librarian laughed and said : If I decide to leave, it would give others the scope to say, what a great fool I was or I am. And no one wants be known as a fool, isn't it ?

The librarian started laughing. What the prudent man expressed by those few lines and the big laughter was the irony of his life, a life that he spent in a distinctive way, a life in which he made huge

investment, and now he could not understand why he did all those. At this stage of life, there was no time for retrieval even after he finds ample reasons to do it. He does not want to be known as 'fool', even though he knows, he really is. All on a sudden the old man started laughing more loudly and he continued the same. Rahul could not understand the meaning of this peculiar behavior. But he did not like to disturb him either.

The librarian said : You know sir, the saddest part of my conviction is, I don't have a receipt. And the hilarious part of my life is, I have an excellent safely route.

Rahul said – I understand the non-existence of the receipt. But which one is your escape route ?

Librarian : If some day I discover, there is no after-life and that all my investments were futile, just meaningless, you would never be able to discover my foolishness. That is my escape route.

Rahul : I could not follow you.

Librarian : You know, that realization would take place only after my death. How on earth would you know that ?

The prudent, old librarian who wanted to be assured that all his foolishness would have been safe behind that excellent escape route continued laughing in a peculiar way. Rahul heard his peculiar laugh and his eyes turned moist. He could not find the reason for it.

STORY FIVE

RAHUL MEETS AN OLD LADY

Rahul wanted to know, what an old lady thinks about religion. The lady, aged over eighty was at hand, she was his grandmother. Even at this age she was capable of understanding and analyzing things. Like a professional journalist he readied his recording gadgets and camera.

Rahul said – Grandma, you know I live in a foreign country. In that country I have to eat and drink things which are prohibited in your religion.

Grandmother said – That's not correct. My religion has never prescribed or prohibited foods. What relation can there be in between foods and religion ?

Rahul – But I have always heard them saying, eating this, drinking that are prohibited.

Grandma – My boy, those are the sayings of the orthodox religious priests. You know there was a time when these priests were considered to be most educated men in the society. Taking the scope of that position they prescribed and prohibited eatables at various times and in various situations. In order to add importance they used to tag religion with it.

Rahul – This is something that I am hearing for the first time in this land. Tell me the case of beef eating.

Grandma – The Dravidians did not eat beef because they were agriculture-dependent people and they were highly dependent on cows. The invading Aryans had no dependence on agriculture and they used to eat beef.

Rahul – What does that indicate ?

Grandma – You know the Aryans are considered as the ancestors of the Hindus. So, there is absolutely no point in saying that beef eating was prohibited in Hinduism for religious reason.

Rahul – That makes sense. What about the later developments ?

Grandma – Well, Buddhism prohibits beef eating. Following them the Gupta kings of Brahmin religion prohibited beef eating. Keep in mind, those who prohibited were kings, not religious leaders. Well, due to social system the Hindus abandoned eating beef. Due to long-time practice it has turned to be their culture.

Rahul – In that case I have disobeyed the cultural practice of my religion.

Grandma – I don't believe it. The time you were in India you did not take beef. After you left this country and went under the jurisdiction of another religion abroad, you followed their culture. So you have not committed any wrong.

Rahul - Grandma, you told I came under another religion there. But in fact those people have no such religion.

Grandma – That cannot be true, my boy. What is religion ? It is a system by following which people can peacefully maintain their lives. In that country the senior citizens and political leaders

have devised a system in which they believe their people can live in peace and may prosper.
Isn't it ?

Rahul – Yes, that is true.

Grandma – So, you see they have devised a system that can ensure human living and development.
This is the religion.

Rahul – Grandma, your sayings seem to be Greek to me. So far I know every religion is related with
some sort of faith in god.

Grandma – My boy, religion is a 'formulae' for organized living. It has absolutely no relation with faith
in anything like god. In the past the priests fabricated such a system, in which they
preserved the deity in the temple. From that trick they earned their livelihood.

Rahul : What it so ?

Grandma : Yes. You know in the society they were the most educated and influential men. Men
came to them with problems and queries. With their limited knowledge they could not explain
many of those and left the unsolved problems under the jurisdiction of a fabricated entity
they called god. In this age men are more intelligent. Now the learned politicians,
economists, lawyers, scientists and sociologists work out the system of living. They know the
answer to most of the queries. There is little wonder, god is absent in their system.

Rahul – But grandma, still there are countries where the common citizens and even the politicians
believe in god.

Grandma – What is so strange in it ? Do not people all over the world differ in points of intelligence,
knowledge and perception ?

Rahul – You are right. I know, the political system and judiciary devised in the western countries can
ensure peaceful living of their citizens. Also the economic system they follow ensures
prosperity. If you call 'religion' 'a complete code of life' which our religious often say, then
what the people in the west have devised is definitely a religion. But one point grandma,
those people do not believe in god.

Grandma – That is quite natural.

Rahul - Why is it natural ?

Grandma – They are more educated and learned than us. They are in a pragmatic position in the
fields of science and technology. We are much behind them. They have discovered the non-
existence of god, which our less educated priests and leaders could not still do.

Rahul – Probably you are right, grandma. A ten-year-old boy or an illiterate person cannot think in
the way an educated man can think. Our forefathers who lacked in education, knowledge
and intelligence failed to explain and understand many things. They placed those
responsibilities on an imaginary entity named god. I should say, they rather played an
'escapist policy'. But the men in the west do not need god, because they either know or are
on 'the way of knowing' those. In old days our ancestors could not find out how men and

other living and non-living entities came into existence. So they imagined the unknown person as the root of all creations. They named this imagined person as god. Am I right grandma ?

Grandma – Yes, my boy. You know how intelligent, skilled and developed the people of the west are. They do not need to imagine what are there in the moon. They themselves went there and saw everything with their own eyes. They have invented equipments with which they can see far beyond. By this way they learn and know things, which we only imagine. They know very well, why and how human being are born. Is it not natural for them not to imagine anything like god?

Rahul - Of course, yes. But why do our people still associate religion with gods ?

Grandma – That is a question of understanding. You know there was a time when men believed, intelligence of men stays inside stomach. They believed love operates from heart. Some even believed spleen was the source of courage.

Rahul started laughing to hear these. He knew all she told were correct. In his boyhood his friends often quarreled with these issues.

Rahul said – Yes, grandma, in our childhood our friends debated with it. And a little boy of this age knows, the source of all these is human brain.

Grandma – But still there are men, aged men in various countries who still believe, spleen in is the source of courage and 'god' is the creator of this world. Fools, damn fools, aren't they ?

There was a pause. By this time the thought that roamed in Rahul's brain was, how in this age of science men still argue with the existence of god. Are they all fools ? Definitely no, they are shrewd. They use the 'god concept' for earning money. Then Rahul wondered, 'why do not the experts call the political system of a country religion ?' He found out the reply, 'because it is a complete code of life'. When the religious preachers call 'god-dependent religion' as 'a complete code of life', they in fact commit the blunder. God in fact embodies ignorance. When men cannot answer the essential queries they use a god as embodiment of their answers. Keeping so many queries unanswered, how on earth a god-dependent religion be 'complete code of life' ? Rahul thought, probably the religious leaders know this inadequacy of their religion, but they still strive to keep it up for their financial benefit.

Rahul felt proud to know the depth of knowledge of his old grandmother. If there could be women with such profound knowledge in every house of this country, Rahul thought, there won't have existed any problem or ambiguity with religion. The thought made Rahul inquisitive to know more about the lady.

Rahul asked - Grandma, let me know your academic qualification.

Grandma – Don't you know it ?

Rahul - Yes, I know it. But I need to record it for my interview.

Grandma – Well, I passed M.B., B.S. from Delhi Medical College in 1954.

‘That made this big difference’. At last Rahul could reach the conclusion. Education of this level at that early age made it possible for this lady to gain such vivid and unambiguous knowledge. Today young men and women are studying these subjects. Rahul became confident, in their mature age they would teach the right thing about religion to their descendants. And then, the term ‘religious clash’ would be a matter of the past. In his brain (not heart) Rahul felt tremendous pleasure to know, how fortunate he was to get such an educated lady as his grandmother.

STORY SIX

RAHUL'S ENCOUNTER WITH FATHER

In course of his discussions with the religious people Rahul learnt a lot about the tricks and techniques the religious priests often use to be-fool the common people. Rahul decided to carry out an experiment with one such trick. Soon he got a scope in his own house.

Rahul's maternal uncle came to see them. The man was a great believer of religion. He came to Rahul's room and started narrating the story, how he was saved from death. He told, while traveling in a bus he faced a fatal accident. The man sitting next to him died, but he could survive. "Why and how ?" In reply to Rahul's query he disclosed the secret. It was difficult for Rahul to accept such a rubbish statement in this age of science.

Rahul said - Uncle, do you want me to believe, your life was saved from that accident only because you remembered and asked for your god's mercy ?

Uncle – Of course. Why do you ask this ? Don't you believe it ?

Rahul - Why not ? I fully believe it.

His uncle was aware Rahul was an atheist. He could not account for, what made him to tell like that.

Uncle asked – What do you mean to say ?

Rahul - I mean to say, I have acquired the same miraculous power that your God possess. By dint of this power I am capable of saving any dying men. That is why I did not doubt in your statement.

Uncle – I could not follow you.

Rahul – Well, after I achieved this miraculous power I made up my mind to use it to save the lives of men. But then I changed my mind and decided to use it only for the benefit of my disciples.

Uncle – What nonsense are you talking ? Do you mean to say, you can save the life of men ?

Rahul – Well, as a matter of fact I can save the lives of my disciples only.

Uncle – I don't believe you.

Rahul – That is up to you to believe or not.

Uncle - Do you mean to say you can save the lives of your disciples from imminent death, say due to accident or disease ?

Rahul – Oh yes. I can save their lives from any imminent danger. Well, at times I cannot save them from sufferings or physical injury. But I can avert their death. Is not that great ? After all, life is the most important thing for human being. Isn't it ?

Uncle - What rubbish are you talking ?

Rahul - Don't you believe me ?

Uncle – No, I don't. Can you prove it ?

Rahul – Why not ? But if you want to get a proof, first you would have to become my disciple.

Uncle – Then ?

Rahul – Then whenever you face a danger, disease or accident you would have to remember me and say “Lord Rahul, please help me”.

Uncle – What would happen if I do that ?

Rahul – I shall save your life. It may be so that you would anticipate any danger, fatal problem or disease. You would just say “Lord Rahul, please save me”. And I shall save your life from that danger.

Uncle - Do you want me to believe it ?

Rahul - Believing or non-believing is your matter. But I can prove it.

Uncle - What proof ?

Rahul - I told you, if you pray for my mercy I shall save your life from any danger. In some cases I may not be able to save you from financial losses or physical injuries, or hardships. But definitely I shall save your life. I can take back your life from Zam (the Hindu goddess in charge of death affairs).

Uncle - The way you are talking makes me to think, you yourself have turned god.

Rahul - Did not your religious lord talk in the same way ? Does that mean he has turned god ?

Uncle - Yes, he has turned god.

Rahul - If that man with his little learning can turn god, then I also have turned god. Don't forget I am more educated than that man.

Uncle could not talk for a few seconds due to extreme anger.

After a few seconds he said – Yes, I shall see what type of god you are. You dare to compare yourself with my guru. I am going to tell everything to your father. Let them see what type of a son he has got.

It was a holiday. The man raised great hue and cry. Soon Rahul's father, mother and other relatives gathered in his room. The man narrated what Rahul said. That made Rahul's parents to nearly faint in anger. Rahul, however, did not get nervous. Like a general, managing his corporals he coolly requested them to take their seats.

Father said – Well, there is no need to be excited. Rahul has said he would prove that he has achieved miraculous power. Rahul, did you say that ?

Rahul - Yes, father.

Father - That's like a brave child. Since you have claimed like that it is your responsibility to prove it. If Rahul can prove that he has achieved this miraculous power, then we shall have no problem to accept him as god. Quite often we pray to god for survival. If Rahul can make us to survive, why should not we call him god ?

All endorsed his idea. None had any doubt that it would be impossible for Rahul to prove such an impossible proposition. All, however, felt excited because they were aware, very soon an extremely

interesting incident was going to take place in this venue. Tensions were on increase at every moment. All were eager to see the result of his claim. Rahul sat on a chair and others encircled him. Rahul noticed dissatisfaction in his mother's face and hatred in the looks of others.

Rahul, the real hero of the event said - You know, after great effort I have achieved this miraculous power. By dint of this power I can stop your pains and sufferings. Well, in all cases I cannot completely eradicate it, I can reduce its severity. But in case of death, I am full proof. I can save your life from death by accident or disease.

Father – So far my knowledge goes, men mostly die due to these two reasons. If you can save them from these two then you have learnt the process to make human being immortal.

Rahul – I should not boast. But I accept what you said.

Father shouted in anger – Do not talk rubbish. We have gathered here not to hear joke. Don't think we have no other works to do. I have come here only because I have taken the case of dishonoring our senior relative very seriously. From now onwards think twice before you tell a single word. We are not children with whom you can cut jokes.

Rahul was not worried. In a cool voice he said – I am not joking, father. Every word I spoke is true. You may not believe, but I really have achieved the miraculous power. And I am capable of doing this to anyone who becomes my disciple.

Rahul's mother said - Well, I agree to become your disciple.

His uncle said – I also accept you as my religious lord. I want to get rid of my headache and deaths from accidents. You know I frequently face accidents. At times I just narrowly escape.

Shantu, their old servant said – Rahul, you know I have a back pain that makes me to suffer in the winter. Doctors have declared, it is beyond recovery and I am going to die from it. Now I become your disciple and request you to save my life.

Rahul said – Very good. My disciples, do you have confidence in my miraculous power ?

His mother replied – Not at all, unless and until I get a proof.

Shantu said – I have full confidence in your power, Rahul.

Rahul - Don't call me Rahul. Say 'lord Rahul'.

Shantu – O.k. my 'lord Rahul'.

His uncle said – I don't have confidence in you. I am an engineer and a man with scientific knowledge. I do not run after blind faith.

Rahul said - That is very encouraging. You should never have blind faith on anything. You should not believe anything that cannot sustain scientific analysis.

His father smiled and said – Rahul, it seems you are now trying to find out the escape route. But I tell you, I shall not allow you to do that. You have wasted enough of my time. And I am not going away till I get the proof.

Rahul said – That's very fine, father. I have got two types of disciples here. One type has got faith in my miraculous power and other type, no. But as lord it is my duty to take care of both groups

equally. I hate discrimination. Now dear believers and non-believers, I am going to present to you the proof of my miraculous power. I know you are going to suffer from diseases and face death. In case of disease, whenever you are in unbearable pains, just remember me and say "My lord, Rahul, please reduce my pains". I tell you, instantly I shall reduce its severity to the limit you can bear.

Father said – Rahul, I am less interested in reduction of pain. I know, after a few days even the most unbearable pains turns to tolerable limit. I am interested to see how you save us from death.

Rahul - Very good. In case you apprehend imminent death, be it due to fatal disease or accident, you would remember me and shout, "My lord Rahul, please save my life from death". That's all.

Father - Would the shouting of this excellent line do the miracle ?

Rahul - Of course it would. And there lies my miraculous power.

Father - I do not believe it.

Rahul - I tell you, if you pray to me at the right moment, you wouldn't die. I repeat, you wouldn't face death if you pray to me.

Father - Are you sure ?

Rahul – Of course I am. Well, in some cases you may have to have little sufferings, at times you may have to lose a limb from accident. But there is no power in this world that can cause your death.

Father laughed and said – Rahul, now I have guessed your trick.

Rahul – What trick, father ?

Father – Now you would now place a condition, an extremely difficult requirement that no one would be able to fulfill. Something like –

Uncle – Something like bringing mustard from a family where no one has ever died.

Father – Exactly.

Rahul – No father. I have already asked you to do a little thing. And I believe, it is so easy and simple that any body can do it. Other than this one I have absolutely no other requirement or precondition. My disciples, please tell me, would you abide by my advice ?

All his disciples in a single voice said – Yes, we shall do.

Rahul - Very nice. Now I shall explain to you, how you are to avail my mercy. I have already asserted, if you follow my advice you won't die. Do you agree ?

In a single voice his disciples replied – Yes we do. Please tell us what we are to do.

Rahul's uncle said – I am skeptical. I cannot understand how and why this simple prayer would save my life. Rahul, tell me would this little prayer save my life ?

Rahul – Yes uncle, I assure you it will do. Wherever I stay, whatever far I may stay I shall hear your prayer and shall bring you back from Zam, the god of death.

Shantu said – My lord Rahul, please tell me whether I shall say my prayer loudly or silently ?

Rahul – You can do it in any way you like. The only thing is, you would remember me and pray for my help. Father, do you think it is very difficult or impossible ?

Father – No my son. I must say, it is extremely easy. But would this method work ? My son, are you speaking the truth ?

Rahul – Yes father.

Father - But how ?

Rahul – Look father. They are all my disciples. Tomorrow or day after tomorrow one of my disciples would travel in a train. There is possibility that he would face an accident. Is it not possible ?

Father – Yes, possible.

Rahul – As soon as he would sense the accident, following my advice he would remember me and shout “Rahul, my lord, please save my life”. Won’t he do ?

Father – Of course he would do.

Rahul – And I would save his life. Then, say my disciple ‘Shantu’ would fall in a disease. In extreme despair he would remember me and say “Rahul, my lord, please save me”. Won’t he do ?

Shantu – Yes, I shall do it, my lord Rahul.

Rahul – And I shall save you from death.

Father – Are you sure ?

Rahul – Of course I am. After their lives are saved they would come here and tell to others how in imminent danger they prayed to you me and how miraculously I saved their lives.

Father – But what happens in case they die ?

Rahul – That won’t happen.

Father – What do you mean to say ? Do you want me to believe, they won’t die ?

Rahul – I did not say that. I only said, you would never hear them to say, they prayed to me in danger, then I could not save them from death and they died.

Father – What makes you to be so confident ?

In a grave and loud voice Rahul pronounced each and every word independently and said –
Because a dead man cannot complain.

Instantly there came down silence in the room. Probably his talks were too hard for the audience to understand. Definitely those were hard for the servant and his mother. Rahul’s father however, started smiling. By this time the man imagined things and was in fact listening to numerous men who whispered to his ears ‘well, the bus ran directly over me, I asked for Lord Rahul’s help, and I was saved, even though I lost my left leg’, ‘the thunder dropped down few feet away from me, I prayed for lord Rahul’s help and he saved me’. His father visualized the two places these men narrated. He discovered two dead men under the bus and one dead from lightening-strike. He wanted to know if those dead men prayed for Rahul’s help, before they died. There was no way of knowing that. He wanted to visualize what happened immediately before the men died. He saw their lips to tremble

and to say 'My lord Rahul, please save me'. And then they died. But now there was no way for the dead men to here come and say, 'well, in my danger I called my lord, and still I died'. The word "Eureka" with all its delight and satisfaction bubbled up in his father's mind.

Rahul's father smiled and said – Right, I have got the point. I feel immense pleasure to know I am the proud father of the most intelligent son of this country. I now know, most, if not all of the successful saints of India so successfully use this trick to befool their intelligent disciples, not to say anything about the less intelligent persons.

STORY SEVEN

RAHUL MEETS A LITTLE BOY

Rahul did not ever think of interviewing a little boy for the purpose of disclosing secrets of a serious subject like religion. But Sanju, his brother's son insisted on taking his interview and Rahul started as a mere game. A thought sparked in his mind and soon it made him to take the matter seriously. He thought, this little boy could act as important subject of his observation. In this age this boy has acquired a concept about religion and god. At present this concept is in the stage of formation. This boy and hence his 'immature thought' in fact represent those of the millions of children of this country. By that consideration, it is extremely important to know what they think, how they think and what is the process that leads a child to grow into either god-loving or god-hating persons in their later age.

Rahul said, - Sanju, I shall ask you some questions and you would answer. Do you agree ?

Sanju agreed and the interview session started.

Rahul - I have observed that you worship god. Tell me, why do you worship god ?

Sanju - Well, by worshipping god I may get money, may get good grades, win in games and so on.

Rahul - How do you know you will get these ?

Sanju - My parents and uncles told me like that.

Rahul - Do you think a life-less stone or clay idol can give you all these ?

Sanju - Look uncle, in my school I have some friends who do not believe in idol-god worship. They asked me the same question. Do you know what I told them in reply ?

Rahul - What ?

Sanju - I told, 'look, if my stone god cannot do anything, then your 'air' god also cannot do anything'.

Rahul - Air-god ? What is that ?

Sanju - You know, they do not like or pray to idol-gods, but they worship another god. This god has no visible shape or form. Our science teacher has taught us, air exists everywhere and it is not visible with eyes. So, when they worship that invisible god we can easily call it air-god.

Rahul could not help smiling and said - Very appropriate answer. What happened after that ?

Sanju - There was a fight regarding which god was powerful.

Rahul - What was the decision ?

Sanju - Naturally the stone or clay-god was more powerful.

Rahul - How ?

Sanju - I told, I could break their noses by throwing my idol-god. But they could not do anything like that by using the air-god.

Rahul - What did they say after that ?

Sanju - They asked for one week's time to give their reply. After week they came and stretched hands for check-mate.

Rahul – Check-mate ? What is that ?

Sanju – That is the honorific name for accepting defeat. Since then we have turned good friends. They disclosed to us, when they were unable to find a suitable answer they thought of beating us.

Rahul – Yes, I know when the fools cannot come out with a logic, quite often they think of physical torture. Why did not they beat you ?

Sanju - Their parents advised, that was unethical.

Rahul – Very nice. But the strangest thing is –

Sanju – What ?

Rahul – Long ago there arose similar debate between these two groups.

Sanju – Is it ? Seems strange. What happened after that ?

Rahul – The air-god group broke the idol-god of the other.

Sanju – How strange. It was a debate regarding the power of gods. Why should they attack gods ? Were they barbarians ?

Rahul was sure, they were. But he could not express this simple truth to this little boy. He wanted to defend their action by using a weak logic.

Rahul said – Well, they said they wanted to see how far their idol-god could save itself.

Sanju – That was an idiotic approach. They were asked to show the power of their air-god. I am sure, they very well knew, their air-god had absolutely no power. Hence they adopted this escape route. That was definitely a dishonest approach.

Rahul – What makes you to think so ?

Sanju – I know, if they decide to test the power of god by attacking god itself, then the air-god enjoys certain advantage.

Rahul – What is that ?

Sanju – When the ‘air-god’ group would come to break the ‘idol-god’ of the other group, they would be successful to do it. But when the ‘idol-god’ group would try the same they would find nothing to break.

After finishing his deliberation Sanju started laughing. Rahul could understand the ‘trick’ in it. First they shifted the question of ‘exhibiting power’ on to ‘physical entity of god’, then in order to prove the power of god they wanted to test the durability of the entity, knowing fully well, their ‘air-god’ cannot be destroyed in that process. All on sudden something like lightening struck Rahul’s brain. He could not help asking, ‘Sanju, do you think those people fabricated ‘air-god’ concept to enjoy this benefit ?’

Sanju replied – Quite possible.

Rahul was aware, in that age people in general less intelligent. What a little boy of nine like Sanju can clearly understand in this age, was beyond the understanding of matured brains.

Rahul could now visualize how things happened in that distant past. He closed his eyes and saw the two groups. He saw the idols of one group, he named them 'the idolater'. He looked for the god of the other group and saw nothing but air. So, he named them 'air-ater'.

The air-ater said – Look my friends, this world is full of dangers and hazards. In case you want someone to save you from these hazards you need a strong god. Isn't it ?

The idolater replied – Yes.

Air-ater - Tell us, whose god is more powerful.

Idolater – Definitely ours.

The air-ater picked up a stone and threw at the idol. Before their staring eyes one hand of their 'idol god' fell down.

The air-ater burst into loud laughter and shouted – “Have you seen, your god could not save itself from our little attack. How do you expect it to save you from danger ?”

The idolaters thought of taking revenge, but could not find any on whom they could take the revenge. The idolaters accepted the defeat. They did not even think, someone who wants to have win shrewdly may use such a concept of god. Being sons of the same soil their level of intelligence was limited. Were they more intelligent they could ask “Well, we saw our idol god could do nothing to save itself and probably it cannot do anything to save us. Now show us what your air god can do to save you. Is not your non-existent god or air god equally powerless ?

‘What happened to you, uncle ?’ That was a call from Sanju that brought Rahul back from the world of imagination. He returned to the real world. By this time he understood why the idolaters are compelled to take revenge on persons of the air-aters, after they damage their idols.

Rahul said - Sanju, you know very well none of the idol god or air-god in fact can do anything. Men have imagined those for their own sake. If these gods could change your luck or academic results, you won't have to work or study. And if you can get better results by working hard why should you spend your time and energy in worshipping these gods ? Is it not wise to abandon worshipping of gods ?

Sanju – You know uncle, at times I also think in this way. But then, I do not.

Rahul eagerly looked at the little boy. It seemed to him, this day he was going to get the answer to the most important question, that was so often raised by the scientists, sociologists, psychologists, noble-thinkers and even criminologists. In spite of his intelligence this boy is still immature and does not understand complex things. His brain in fact represents that of the men who reigned on this earth hundreds of years ago. In that age they knew less and understood still less. By taking the response of this boy to various questions, Rahul could easily guess the minds of those bygone persons. Rahul shivered to think of the tremendous possibility that he now held at his finger tip. Within a few minutes, he thought, he was going to get the million dollar answer, the explanations why the ancient people clinked to mysterious faiths on god and religion. Few seconds ago Sanju disclosed, he could

guess in the fakeness of gods, but still he wanted to stick to it. Why ? Rahul was aware, in reply Sanju would explain it and with it he would get the answer of his immature-brained ancestors.

Rahul asked – Dear Sanju, please reply to my last question. You believe there cannot be any god with the capability of doing something for you. Rather you are to earn everything by your own effort. But still you prefer to stick to it. Why ?

The little boy had a smirked smile and said – Don't you understand ? If I stick to it I get sweets, fruits and juice. No one tells me anything if I spend time in the temple. Is not that great ?

Rahul listened to every word the little boy with utmost attention. He placed the immature boy in the same basket with the less intelligent men of earlier ages and got what he was looking for. He picked up his notebook and wrote – “the reason for which men in the ancient age preferred to worship god was their greed for alluring items promised by the religious preachers”.

STORY EIGHT

RAHUL FABRICATES A RELIGION

Rahul met Mr. Sandy Jones. He had to wait for two months to get an appointment. Mr. Sandy Jones is a popular black leader and chairman of Sandy Stores. The appointment was for ten minutes, but it continued for over forty-five minutes. When Rahul showed him pictures of religious atrocities in his country, Jones could not take away his eyes from those. Probably he thought, how on earth religious can religious men be so ruthless ? Rahul was acquainted with the stony faces of Mr. Jones, that he saw in posters and television shows. He did little idea that such a man can shed tears in front of a stranger.

Mr. Jones said : Rahul, I remember the days when my forefathers were brought to this land in cargo ships and sold in open auction. I cannot for get the torture they did on them. When I remember those days, I feel like taking revenge on the whites. But then I can't. Do you know why ?

Rahul : No.

Jones : Everyday from morning till late night I see them. I meet them in works, in prayer, in meetings, on the roads. I see their repentant faces. When I shake their hands I know, I know they remember the past activities of their forefathers not as glorious, but as dark something. That makes me to change my attitude, that makes me to love them. But I feel, the men who are doing these are different.

Rahul : What makes you to think so, Sir ?

Jones : Look, what they did was bad. Then remember, it happened two to five hundred years ago. Now they have turned civilized, modest and nice people. But those who are doing such atrocities in that country now, have no scope of being civilized. In our society we use a word 'born criminal'. I think you know its meaning.

After forty-five minutes Rahul came out of his office. In his pocket there was an envelope. Mr. Jones gave him a cheque for ten thousand dollars.

He told "Mr. Rahul, I feel strong urge to do something for the tortured men. But I don't know hat to do. I give you this money to do something. Please let me know what you have done. I shall be always with you in your fight".

Sagir Ali came to Rahul in the afternoon. This is their lunchtime. During lunchtime Sagir Ali has to serve lunch to his customers. After finishing his duty he comes here with their lunch. Rahul gave him the news. It was a good news, but it brought new responsibility. There was no way he could spend a single dime for their own purposes.

Rahul said : Sagir, what can we do with this money ?

They discussed over the matter and finally came to a decision. That was how they came to the office of McDolanld's renowned consultancy office. Even though small, the office was renowned for is staff, most of whom are Ph.D.'s from renowned universities. When Rahul and explained their objective, at first they were in a hoax. But finally they accepted the job as a challenge. The fee was ten thousand dollars and time, two months.

The idea in fact came from Sagir Ali's brain. After discussion they finalized the objective and presented to McDonald. Rahul said, "you would give a concrete proposal regarding what I have to do in case I want to introduce a new religion, that by all means, would be the strongest and most influential religion".

On the stipulated day McDonald arranged an one-day seminar at their own cost. Renowned personalities including Mr. Jones were invited. The guests and speakers sat around a round-table. The chairman formally handed over the reports to Rahul. The head of McDonald's social Welfare department presided over the meeting.

Rahul initiated the discussion saying : Ladies and gentlemen, two month's back we assigned this firm to prepare for us the basic guidelines for a definite purpose. What was our purpose ? We told, we want to kick off world's strongest and most influential religion. Today McDonald have given us the guidelines. First of all I shall ask their representatives to enlighten us about the salient features of their proposal.

The team leader stood up and started his deliberation : Mr. Chairman, our valued customers and guests, I have no hesitation to declare, this one is the most interesting and challenging job I have ever faced. In the report you would find the long list of persons and organizations whom we contacted in order to enlighten ourselves about the problem and its solutions. On the basis of their experiences and suggestions we have prepared our report. Now I shall narrate various important features of the report. In case you have any query, please feel free to ask me.

Our client, Mr. Rahul wants to preach a religion that he intends to be the strongest and most influential religion of this world. You all know what religion means. We would have to think of imaginary someone as creator and god. In the proposed religion we have one god. We have not proposed any name for this god. But we suggest a short name and the one that can be pronounced easily should be taken.

Mr. Jones asked : Well, the name can be fixed later. Tell me, would this god have an effigy or not ?

Team leader : No effigy. Sir, our customer wants the strongest religion. A strong religion has show its strength through fight. Whenever such a fight takes place, the opponent to come for a revenge. And the first thing they would look for is our god. If there is no figure of the god, they cannot destroy any.

There was a loud laughter in the hall. The audience endorsed the idea by nodding their heads.

Mr. McDonald said : Dear team leader, can you tell me the difference between the two types of religions, I mean to say those with effigies and those with no effigy ?

Team leader : Very nice question sir. The religions who have physically conceivable gods, e.g. idols, can easily attract men with creative minds. Why ? Because they would need artists, sculptures and painters to create these idols. Also people with artistic knack would come to appreciate those. But as I said earlier, they would be weak, because their gods can be smashed by others.

Jones : Religion is a nice thing, a creative thing. Why do you raise the question of smashing other's idols ?

Team leader : Our client never said, they wanted a good religion, they said, they want strong religion. You know, artistic minded men cannot be strong. Those who love to create feel pains to destroy. We want the people whose craze is to destroy.

McDonald : Is there any direct relation between the two ? I mean to say, cannot it be so that religious men without idols be artistic minded ?

Team leader : Yes, they can be so. But after they follow an idol-less religion, they cannot maintain artistic mentality.

McDonald : How can you say that ?

Team leader : Our proven experiences have made us to opine like that. Let me explain. The idol-religions have great advantage to collect followers and to keep them engaged in it. They can use them in making idols, decorating its abode, finding out means to please the idols and so on. The idol-less religions do not have these privileges. Am I right, sirs ?

Chairman : Yes, you are right.

Team leader : Our information and knowledge prove, in such a situation the idol-less religions keep a provision of destruction.

There was loud laugh in the room. After it was subsided the team leader said – They usually preach teachings that make their followers to think the followers of other religions as enemies. While the idol-gods use the creative mentality of men as the attracting force, the idol-less religions use the destructive, enemy-like mental attitude for the same purpose.

There was pin-drop silence. It seemed as if the audience were not prepared to hear such a statement and they felt it difficult to digest the statement.

After a few seconds Mr. Jones said : Strange. But I believe, its true. I feel I am a fool, because I could not catch this plain truth earlier.

Team leader : Naturally, for our customer we have proposed a strong religion without any idol.

McDonald : Nice. What are the other important points of this religion ?

Team leader : The second point is, one can accept this religion, but once accepted he or she cannot leave it.

Jones : How would you check it ?

Team leader : It would be the moral duty of the followers of this religion to kill the person who leaves or wants to leave this religion.

McDonald : Very strong I see. Please continue.

Team leader : The third important thing is, the principle of this religion will be faith, blind faith.

Rahul : I believe, faith is the common characteristics of this religion.

Team leader : Yes. But many religions allow the followers to argue, place counter comments. But in our proposed religion, anybody within this religion or outside is not allowed to say anything against what we shall say. In case anybody says, the followers would kill him.

McDonald : I do not understand why the followers would take this risk.

Team leader : Here I am reading from page no. 13. "Be he or she a follower of this religion or not, any person arguing with any line of the book of this religion would be slain by the followers. The successful follower would be praised, protected and raised up by the community".

Jones : Excellent arrangement.

McDonald : I doubt if any person would like to enter into this trap.

Team leader : Family planning is completely banned in this religion.

Jones : Why do you propose this peculiar thing in this age of science ?

Team : Just now Mr. McDonald opined, he has doubt if any person would like to enter into such a religion. This question was raised in our meeting and we have considered it with utmost care. We know, in this world there is no dearth of men with destructive nature. Since we have kept provisions to attract such people, we know at least some of them would enter in the trap. Once inside they cannot go out, because any attempt to go out means death. Now we want these few persons to increase through biological process. That is why we have banned family planning and declared, any descendant of the follower of this religion shall be considered to be a follower of this religion.

McDonald : I believe you have kept provision for multiple marriage for men.

Team leader : Yes sir, we have that provision. Our next point is, maximum investment on religion.

Sagir Ali : What does that mean ?

Team leader : That means, the followers would have to spend considerable time, energy and money on religious activities and rituals.

McDonald : Don't you think it would give some sort of 'non-attraction' for this religion ?

Team leader : No sir. This is our double protection such that the followers do not abandon this religion and always speak high of it.

Jones : Would you please explain further ?

Team leader : Yes sir. Sir, even though we have proposed 'death' for the non-enthusiastic follower, it may not be possible to apply in all cases. So we have proposed 'investment' as the second line of protection. We know, the more we invest on something the more important it turns to us.

Jones : Not only important, it turns of great concern for us.

Team leader : Exactly. We propose, the follower of this religion would have to spend at least five hours per day in religious prayers. If he does that, then at his twenty-five years age say, he would discover, he has spent about five years of his life on this purpose. This would increase his concern for this religion.

Sagir Ali : I could not follow.

Team leader : I am coming. Say you have invested few thousands on a business and did not find it fruitful. Now someone comes and says, better abandon it. What would we do ?

Jones : If you ask me this question, I would abandon that.

Team leader : Good. What happens if you have invested several million and the business is equally fruitless ? Would you abandon it ?

Jones : Impossible.

Team leader : That's right and natural sir. If someone asks, 'why did you invest so much on this fruitless business', what would you say ?

Jones : I would say, I apprehend great profit from this business in future.

Team leader : Why would you say like this, sir ?

Jones : For two reasons. I would see if I can get that man as buyer. Number two, If I confess it was and is a losing concern and I have invested so much money on it, that indicates, I am a great fool. Even the fools do not want to be known as fools, not to anything about me.

Team leader : Sir, if we can make the followers of this religion to invest more and more time, they would be exactly in that sate. They won't agree, they are so fool to invest on a 'fruitless' business.

Jones : One thing sir. Even if I do not abandon this losing business and tell to others, it would be profitable, some day they would know the fact, isn't it ?

Team leader : Yes sir. That is exactly what would happen in your business. But it would never happen in case of religion.

Jones : Why ?

Team leader : Like any other religion this religion also promises the rewards in the after life, i.e. life after death. To tell you the truth, it is never possible to know what would happen after death.

McDonald : Why ? The science has already revealed, there is no heaven or hell.

Team leader : Sir, I have already mentioned, our religion is something that you must believe. You cannot do any argument. We do not allow your science to argue with us. Your science says, they have not seen the heaven and hell. We say, the all powerful god of this religion has created heavens and hells inside one of the smallest element, that you say electron. Your science cannot disapprove that. Or if they say, they have disproved that, I shall go for still smaller element. And I would say after death a man turns so mighty that several billions of them may be placed in one electron.

McDonald : I do not believe it.

Team leader : It is easy for you to say like that. But take the case of a follower of this religion. Say his age is fifty. At the rate of five hours per day, this man has spent about ten valuable years of his life on it. How can he now prove himself 'a great fool' by saying this religion is wrong ?

Jones : That's correct. I believe, the greater is the investment, the greater will be the concern for it. Am I correct ?

Team leader : You are right sir. That is why we have proposed this greater investment of time on religion. This one has another advantage, the man may avert his duties by using it as an excuse.

Loud laughter traversed from one corner of the room to the other.

Team leader : Sir, I told, alike other religions in this religion also all the religious awards and rewards will be given after death. By this time perhaps you could understand our tricks. In case of your business, its failure will be detected very soon. But in this case of the proposed religion, the fruitlessness of investment would never be known, because everything would take place after death.

Sagir Ali : You have fabricated the religion so intelligently. I am simply amazed.

For two hours the audience heard the deliberation of the team leader. After the chairman declared the session closed, there were loud and prolonged clapping in the room. That indicated how satisfied the audience were. That also indicated, they had little doubt about the religion, fabricated by Mr.

McDonald's consultancy firm.

STORY NINE

RAHUL'S VISIT TO ATHEIST-LAND

Rahul visited a remote village in the central region of this India. Even though he was Indian by birth, at present he was treated in his own country as a foreigner. After he got down from the passenger train at Delhi, the first advise he received from the security guard was to maintain constant vigilance over his belongings. Since then every time he came across a government official invariably they gave him the same advise. One of them even disclosed, 'Sir, no place in this land is safe'.

While he was moving by the train Rahul was astonished to see numerous prayer houses. In whichever direction he looked he saw the peak of a temple, mosque or church. Rahul had a secret smile to think, even in this poor land these buildings were constructed with costly materials and their peaks were competing with one another to touch the sky. Rahul asked one passenger, "Sir, I find numerous prayer houses all around this place. And still I hear the railway staffs to advise me to keep constant look at my luggage. Why ?" The passenger could not understand the inference of his question and said – They are correct. You should remain vigilant.

Rahul asked – Does that mean, the men around are miscreants ?

Man – Of course they are.

Rahul – Then why are so many prayer houses here ?

Man – Those are for praying.

Rahul – I know religions teach men to become honest. Don't these institutions play that role ?

The man laughed and said – Sir, in this land the religious priests say, contribute money to the prayer house and you will be happy. They never say, be careful in honest earning. Probably they know, men can earn superfluous money only if they are dishonest.

Rahul said – That means, the priests need the disciples' money and not their honesty.

With much enthusiasm the man replied – Exactly.

Rahul was astonished beyond anything. The time when he used to live in this country he believed, the only institution that could make men good was religion.

When Rahul disembarked from the train at Dharmanagar station it was ten in the evening. He was to go to Haritsagar and did not know how to go to that place. He met the stationmaster.

The stationmaster said – Haritsagar is a place forty miles away from this place. You can hire a taxi and it may take about one hour. So you will reach there before mid-night.

What surprised Rahul was, the man did not mention anything about security at this odd hour.

Rahul asked – Do you think it will be safe for me to travel at this time ?

- Why not ? This place is very good. You can travel there any time of the day or night. The people are excellent.

Rahul could not understand how on earth it was possible.

The following day Rahul was speaking to some men in Haritsagar village. He passed the previous night in the house of the village head.

Rahul was aware, it was easy to be religious, but hard to be atheist. At the dawn of civilization when science was in its sleeping state men knew very little about this world. They could not understand why this thing happens in this way and that thing, in that way. So, some men imagined a 'powerful force' that they named 'god'. These people belong to the religious group. When men became more intelligent they discovered the 'causes behind some of the previously unexplained incidents'. Definitely they could not find out all. But they came to know, those would be discovered in future by more intelligent men, who would use sophisticated instruments. After many years we came to know, how wonderfully they could guess the truth. The reason that made these men to discover the causes behind the unexplained incidents was their 'disbelief in that imaginary all powerful force'. In case they believed in its existence, they would not have felt the need to find out the causes. These men were atheists, who later turned to scientists. Obviously, only the atheists can become scientists. And as for contribution towards development of this world, the religious people have little, while the atheists, plentiful.

The religious men have nothing more to learn by themselves. In case they feel the need to know anything they can ask their 'all powerful force', which they believe is capable of informing them whatever they want or need. Naturally the religious men do not need to study or conduct research in any subject other than religion. Anything that the atheists and scientists know by study and research, the religious men do simply by gratifying their 'all powerful force'. Naturally the atheists need intelligence and perseverance, where as the religious men need devotion and blind faith. The knowledge of science interferes with this 'blind faith'. There cannot be any science in religion, even though the religious people may use the peculiar term "religious scientist" for self-satisfaction. Religion is the greatest enemy of science, and science is the destroyer of religion.

One needs certain minimum quantity of intelligence to become an atheist, where as anybody with little or no intelligence can become religious.

Rahul wondered how could the people of Haritsagar could become atheist, specially when they are surrounded by numerous religious villages. He raised the issue with the village head. The man replied, Sir, on average the intelligence of the people of this village is higher than the neighboring village.

The village-head's was in conformity with what Rahul had in mind. The head said – Sir, when the people of those villages sit idle and say, the problem would be solved by 'God', in this village we

apply our intelligence to solve those. Result ? Our problems are solved, their problems remain unsolved. Of course they remain satisfied with the thought that God wants their problems to remain in that state.

Rahul laughed. He had similar experiences in his childhood. He saw his illiterate parents to pray to God for solving problems. Then when those were not solved they got similar consolation. They did not have the intelligence to question, if they can remain satisfied with unsolved problems, why should they endeavor to gratify the entity they call God ?

Rahul asked – Sir, I am amazed to know there are atheist in this land. When you say you could become atheist because you have more intelligence, I find no reason to differ. But I know there are intelligent people in other areas, but they could not become atheist. What is your secret ?

The headman replied – Sir, some twenty years ago an wise man visited this village. He was an atheist and he explained to us what atheism and religion mean. We felt attracted to atheism and asked him, how we can become atheist. He gave us three simple formulas. We followed those and became atheist. Now you find no thief, miscreants, no person suffering from contagious diseases in this village. In point of time and animal production our neighboring religious villages are no match for us. The time they pray to their god for rain, we work in the field and arrange water for the crops.

Rahul - Do you become successful at all times ?

Headman- No sir. But when we fail we do not console ourselves by calling it the act of god. We endeavor to find out the cause of the failure, such that we can use this experience and knowledge in future.

Rahul – Excellent. Sir, would you please tell me the three formulas you used to become atheist ?

Headman – Well sir, these formulas are for the religious man to start with. According to Formulae One : the religious man would think, I am a religious man. So, I am confident, my god is so powerful as to do anything or everything. So, cannot think of speaking ill of my god. However, my religion encourages me to speak ill of other religions and their gods. Some religions even suggest killing of men belonging to other religions for religious benefit. So I have absolutely no problem to abuse others gods. So, the teaching of Formulae One is : "Please use the filthiest words for others' gods and continue abusing those whenever you get time". One has to continue doing it for four days.

Rahul : Is that all ?

Headman : No sir. On the fifth day he has to think in the following way, for four days I have so honestly abused others' gods. And I now find those gods could not do any harm to me.

Naturally I now know how 'powerless' those gods are. Excellent. Now I should know that men belonging to those religions quite often abuse my god in the same way I did to them. And they discover, my god cannot do any harm to them. This indicates, 'the entity that I call God is equally powerless'.

Rahul : Very nice, very nice. I am so impressed. Now please tell me about the formulae two.

Headman : Well, the Formulae Two starts with the thought : Why I follow religion ? The reply is, if I pray to God, I am told God would give me what I want. But do I always get it ? How many times I prayed for various items ? How many times I got those ? The discovery is, most of those were not fulfilled. And in the few cases those were fulfilled, those were done as natural outcome, not as act of god. The religion also promises many good things after my death. I now discover, most of what they promise right in this world is not fulfilled. Why should I take it granted that their promises in the afterworld would be fulfilled ?

Rahul : Sorry to interfere. This is simply excellent. Please continue.

Headman : One has to continue this thought for four days. On the fifth day he has to think in the following way : science has discovered, there is no possibility of the 'existence of any world after death'. With my eyes I can find dead bodies are burnt to ashes. When they are put in graves those disintegrate beyond recognition within a couple of years. Same thing would take place with my body after my death. With intelligence and a normal mind, do I have any reason to think, those fragments would someday reintegrate to make a new 'me' such that I can enjoy those promised rewards ? Or, even it can make 'someone', would that 'someone' be myself ?

Rahul : Today I have gained an experience that I never had in life. Thank you so much. Sir, please tell me the third formulae.

Headman : Well, Formulae Three starts with the thought : Let me make an inventory of the elements harmful for the humanity. Definitely Adolph Hitler is one such element. Atomic bomb is another one. Let me quantify the 'harm' due to these elements in terms of loss of human life, damage of properties, sufferings of men etc. One has to continue doing it for four days. On the fifth day he has to think in the following way : I now know how harmful those elements are for the humanity. So, I need to avoid those in all possible ways. In case I cannot avoid, I must hate those. On the fifth day, one has to include "religion" in this list and to make a quick evaluation. He must honestly remember the numerous victims or religious atrocities, the deaths, pains, tortures suffered by men, the human civilizations destroyed by the religious men throughout the world.

Rahul : Excellent.

Headman : You know sir, we applied these formulas on the villagers. At first they challenged. They told, we won't be able to change their allegiance to gods. We did not say anything. We just

made them to promise, they would honestly follow our advise for five days. I tell you sir, we were successful in case of all the villagers.

Rahul : What happened after that ?

Headman : The men in the neighboring village held a meeting to avoid us. They say, they won't try it, because they know as soon as they would try it they would become atheist.

Rahul : So, they still follow religions, isn't it ?

Headman : That's right.

Rahul : You could not change them ?

Headman : We did not try that. Sir, we are atheists. We cannot be as bad as the religious men whose common history is forceful conversion.

Rahul : You are right.

Headman : But I can tell you one thing sir. Tomorrow or day after tomorrow they would come to us. Men in those villages are suffering from numerous problems like less production, diseases, crimes and so on. They now compare our village with theirs and say, ours is the heaven that their religion promised.

STORY TEN

RAHUL KNOWS THE MISSING MAN

On May 01, 2007 Rahul had a very unusual and at the same time, very interesting experience. He was invited in an international conference on religion. Religion is known all over the world as 'divine and only path to eternal peace'. After being so brutally tortured by the 'men of religions', Rahul cannot understand, how would religion ensure peace in the heaven, when it cannot do the same in this world.

The background of the conference was simple. The religious people are rightly called 'blind' because they do not use their own eyes, but the ones that their religion give them to see. Before 9/11, the citizens of USA also were blind in one respect. Till that time they were obsessed with the "of the people, by the people and for the people" of the Gettysburg address. They blindly believed, there government was like that, even though in reality their government was "of the capitalists, by the capitalists and for the capitalists", where the common people were the guinea pig of their experiment and exploitation. The capitalists constructed shy-soaring buildings that further blocked their vision. On 9/11 these buildings were ruined to dust. The blocked vision of the US citizens was open and for the first time in life could see their government, who were "of the capitalists, by the capitalists and for the capitalists".

They realized, there government was at serious fault. They could not tolerate the humiliation of the world due to the childish failure of their government. For the first time in history they learnt to 'doubt' in the activities. So, when their government declared that religion was not an issue behind the 9/11 incident, they could not accept it. They raised their voice of protest. Their capitalist-backed-government, who was fortunate to have all the news medias at its control ignored people's suggestions. By this time the government showed 'heroic achievements' by conquering Afghanistan and having first-hand victory in Iraq. But then the situation changed. The hard-earned money of the tax payer drained into the personal accounts of the weapon producers. The common people understood, that was the reason why their government delayed wars. The case of Vietnam war half-opened the eyes of the US citizens. The Iraq war opened the remaining half. The deaths of the US sons in foreign land added blood to their tears.

Due to the pressure of the citizens the government had to take up the issue of religion seriously. The people discovered, there existed qualitative difference between the people belonging to various religions. Their deduction was, this difference must have been caused by the religions they follow. They were convinced, there must have been something in religion that attributes positive or negative qualities to the followers. They demanded for evaluating religions.

Due to the pressure of the 'citizen council' at last their Government called for "The International Conference for The Evaluation of Religions" (EVAREL). At the beginning some religions disagreed to participate in it, saying 'their religion was divine and beyond evaluation by human being'. One influential agent from USA endorsed their claims. The conscious citizens immediately discovered, this agent was a slave of the capitalists. The people burnt down their office. The citizen council issued a call for boycotting products of the companies, who would stand against this conference. Due to their pressure the government declared, those who would not come for evaluation wouldn't be given the status and privileges of religion. This time no lobbying agent with his ugly face appeared. Now participating in this International Conference turned to be a matter of prestige for various religions. There were over ten thousand applications. The authority scrutinized those on the basis of number of followers, existence of authentic books etc. and approved one hundred and five religions. As a person oppressed by religion, Rahul was invited to be present as guest.

On the stipulated day the representatives of all of the 105 religions gathered in the famous city hall. There was a circular table with about 50 ft radius at the centre of the hall and the delegates sat around it. At the centre there was a glass dome covering the religious books of the participating religions. The dome was rotating at a gracious speed. In the preliminary discussion some representatives declared, their religions were divine. When the same issue was raised with the others, they informed, their religions were formulated by intelligent and sympathetic men for the welfare of mankind.

The following day the representatives found a little change in the decoration of the hall. At the centre there were not one but two glass domes. The books of the religions, who on the previous day declared to have 'divine' origin were kept in one dome, while the books of the man-made religions were in the other. The representatives of the 'divine' religions were extremely happy and thanked the chairman for his correct gesture. The chairman said 'I do not believe, religion can be divine. However, if a religion was divine yesterday, then it is divine today. If it is not divine today, it was not divine yesterday or the day before yesterday'. In reply the representatives of the divine religions said, 'our religions were divine, are divine and would remain divine for ever'. 'How do I know ?' asked the chairman. 'Our religions are indestructible, that means no human being can destroy them'.

The chairman said 'I believe, I am a human being. Let me see if I can do anything'. He pressed a button, instantly flame appeared inside one dome and all the books belonging to the 'divine' group turned to ashes. The representatives who opined that their religions were man-made did not surprise at the incident. By this time the representatives of so-called divine religions had their clothes wet. The members of the divine religion group were taken away from the central table and given seats

near the delegates. They wanted to stay, but the chairman said, since their claim was proved wrong they must get some punishment.

The discussion session begun, the representatives of various religions described the bright sides of their religions and the darker sides of others. The religions who were accused were given time to clear up their positions. The chairman accepted only logical and scientific reasoning, all others were expunged. Then he raised a question : "Tell me, whether or not the quality of a man, as reflected in his actions is influenced by the religion he follows".

The representatives of man-made religions said "the divine religions have vanished in an un-divine way. In case of the man-made religions, by principle these have been formulated by men for the well being of the human being. It cannot serve that purpose unless the followers acquire good qualities. So, it is natural that the religions have been formulated such that men acquire good qualities. We believe, religions profusely influence the activities of its followers". The claimants of the 'divine-religion' said, 'religions have no influence on the actions of its followers'. The chairman said, 'we don't want dead horse. Something that cannot change or influence human activities cannot be called religion'.

The 'divine religion' group said, 'Yes, their religions can influence the activities of human being'. This time the chairman adopted a stern action. He said, 'since the claimants of the 'divine religion' could not prove their claim and then changed their statement in broad daylight, they may either leave the conference or stay here by agreeing that all religions are man-made". The representatives of this group held discussion among themselves. They were suffering from indecision. The chairman declared "Gentlemen, don't forget the consequences of remaining outside this evaluation". They looked at the ashes under one of the two domes. That reminded them, their 'divine' religions could not save their skin from human intervention. How on earth could they save theirs, in a situation where all the nuclear-power nations are their allies ?

The divine ashes helped them to arrive at the right decision. There were many discussions, hot and sour, mild and extreme, warm and cool. Finally the chairman arrived at the decision "Yes, men's qualities are greatly influenced by their religious teachings. If a religion cannot change or influence the activities of a man, then it loses the most essential quality to be called a religion. In case of religious conversion, a man first observes the activities of the followers of other religions. Then he accepts the religion that suits his nature".

The chairman was pleased. He said "O.K., gentlemen, now we shall see what your prudent men have written in your religious books. Since religions are formulated for the welfare of human being, I believe these books do not contain any line that might hurt others, incite clash or create

misunderstanding. Now we shall now read from the authentic books deposited with me by various religions. In case you find nothing unfair or objectionable in any line, you have to press the switch "Yes". In case you find any line is unfair, you would express that by press the switch 'no'. Our computer would keep a record of your actions. You must act consciously and seriously. Gentlemen, remember, our system records every action of you. We may later held you accountable for your actions". The books were read out in a special manner. When one line was finished there appeared the following line on the board "Do you think this line contains anything malicious to fellow human being ? Do you think this line goes against the internationally accepted principle of equal rights for men and women of all races, religions and colors ? Express your opinion by pressing "Yes", "No" or "Can't say" switches on your table". They discovered, in some books there are repetitions of the same phrases numerous times. They were aware, saying the same phrase again and again was one form of brainwashing. So, they eliminated the unnecessary repeated phrases. That considerably reduced their work load. Still, it needed long seven days to finish all the books. Through this session the representatives, delegates and guests acquired mixed idea about religion. They were aware of some objectionable remarks in some religions. But they did not know, in some religions there are open invitations to kill the followers of other religions. The lines were quoted from their authentic books and the concerned delegates could not disagree. The chairman proposed, in order to see religion as a sacred subject all the objectionable and harmful lines should be eliminated from the religious books. The men who were working with computers instantly worked on it and came with the outcome. They opined, if the lines for which the representatives and delegates pressed 'no' switch is eliminated then some religious book would lose 25%, some 50% and some 95% of their volumes. (In one case they opined, they could save only the first and the last cover). The chairman asked the representatives whether they endorse the idea of elimination. Fifteen religions agreed. It was immediately done and the chairman declared, "We have achieved the great and honest purpose of religion with these fifteen religions. For the remaining part of the session they would stay here as our honorable guests".

The chairman asked the remaining ninety representatives to formulate five important prayers to their gods on the basis of their respective religions. The representatives did the job in two hours and handed over their proposal to the chairman. Those were computerized and shown on large screen. The representatives, delegates and guests present in the hall read those with great enthusiasm. The chairman told 'ninety religions did not agree to eliminate the debatable and objectionable lines from their religious books. So, we invite them to make these five prayers as mandatory prayer. What do you say ?' The ninety representatives at once conveyed their endorsement.

On the last day the chairman said "Ladies and gentlemen, I kept a proposal to all the guests and delegates, excepting of course the representatives of religions to formulate 'a prayer to god, if there

be any god'. To our good luck, they have given their proposals. There were so many repetitions and we selected the best one by counting on votes. Some religions have eliminated the objectionable lines from their religious books. We congratulate them. Those who did not agree to eliminate such lines, have given us five mandatory prayers. We have checked those and did not find anything objectionable. We would request them to use these prayers more frequently and their religious books containing objectionable lines as little possible. Our guests and delegates have finalized one prayer and we have to give due honor to it. I propose, this one be accepted as your "Sixth Prayer". Do you agree ?"

The representatives replied, 'Well, we cannot give you words unless we hear it'.

The chairman said, let the sixth prayer appear on the screen. Instantly the following text appeared on the screen "MY GOD (to be replaced by the gods of respective religions), PLEASE DESTROY THE RELIGION RESPONSIBLE FOR MAXIMUM BLOOD-SHED AND CARNAGE OF HUMAN BEING".

Earlier the representatives of ninety were afraid that the sixth prayer might not be palatable. But as soon as they saw it, they became happy and conveyed their acceptance with pleasure. Thus the conference had grand success. The chairman ordered for the preparation of last hour's celebration. The chairman asked, 'Anything more to report ?' The man collecting signatures of the representatives came to the dais and said "Sir, one of the representatives is missing".

Rahul smiled, he knew the representative who was missing.

STORY ELEVEN

RAHUL SLEEPS, BECAUSE HELEN'S ARE AT WORK

Four thousand and five hundred years ago Rahul was born in the royal palace at Kapilabastu, India. To his great fortune or extreme bad luck Gautama Buddha, the great saint, preacher of Buddhism and the celebrated philosopher of India happened to have been his father. Numerous men all over the globe love to follow Buddha's path.

Gautama Buddha, Rahul's father made him a lot to suffer. If Rahul was intelligent he might have asked his father the questions : (01) Whether or not he himself was the god. (02) Whether or not he merely endeavored to find out the logical answers of some frequently asked questions (FAQ) of the common men. (03) Whether he longed to see human being with good qualities, such that peace and harmony may prevail in the human society.

A 'Fifth century BC Rahul' would have been satisfied to get the answers to these questions, but not a 'twenty-first century Rahul'. This Rahul has seen his relatives to be cut in pieces, dumped in drums and laid under deep water of the lake at Nidarabad, he has witness his relatives to be burnt alive at Bashlhali, and he has seen many things that man fail to describe, all in the name of religions. How can he be satisfied with the answers of those few questions only ?

Rahul lost his relatives, he could somehow avert the drums of Nidarabad and fire of Bashkhali. When he reached New York he was not in a normal state. Like a mad man he roamed and roamed on the street. The man who brought him to his house was Sagir Ali. Sagir Ali, owner of a small Indian restaurant in New York was aware, few generations ago Rahul's great grand father and his grand father were the same man. He did not hesitate to accept Rahul as his brother. He gave him food, assured him shelter. That helped Rahul to come to senses.

Sagir Ali was aware, his own brothers drummed Rahul's at Nidarabad, burnt Rahul's at Bashkhali. That made him to forget something they call religion. But Rahul could not forget it, it was the reason why he lost parents, brothers, sisters, habitations and the country. Rahul decided to fight against it. Sagir Ali said, "Rahul, please go on, your brother will be with you".

For five Rahul has been fighting against religious atrocities, fighting against religions' preaching malign against innocent people. He has been shouting at the top of his voice, he has been crying as loud as he can, he cannot laugh (the religious atrocities took away the causes of his laugh). He could do a job, earn money, enter into marriage and pass happy life. The tortures, pains, inhuman behavior that he got due to religion did not allow him to do that. His conscience taught him to do something.

So, when the people of New York works at day time, the twenty-first century Rahul fights. When the people of New York sleeps at night, the twenty-first century Rahul fights. He cannot remember, what time to take bath, when to take food. Sagir Ali, ex-brother of Nidarabad drum episode, Bashkhali fire episode however, does not forget.

Up to 2002, Rahul was the lone 'fighter' on the streets of New York and Sagir Ali was his lone patron. People threw a peculiar look at him. Some felt sympathy to read the sign he held, others ignored. Some threw dimes. Sagir Ali told him, "Rahul, I feel proud to get you as my brother. I shall look after you, so long I survive. I know what my ex-brothers have done to Rahul's in that country. I shall do it as a mission, as a protest to my ex-brothers' activities".

But still Rahul needs money. He has to print posters, palm lets, festoons. He needs to distribute those to men. He needs to request them to do something for those who are still the victim of religious atrocities. Up to 2002 Rahul and Sagir Ali were the lone fighters. Things abruptly changed overnight when one morning nineteen men belonging jumped with 'passenger plane bomb' on some prestigious buildings of USA. It was a heinous act, no doubt. But it acted as an eye-opener for billions. Earlier they attached zero importance to religion, on 12 September they could estimate how dreadful religion could be. Rahul's long-time preaching got a foothold in their hearts. They could now realize, how 'unsafe' they really are, when they 'make themselves secular' and 'allow others to be fanatic'.

Today you may notice the big difference. They have raised a roof such that Rahul can be safe from sun and rain. Young persons work there day and night. Look they have prepared many festoons. Probably they would arrange a procession to draw the attention of humanity. How long would they keep blind eyes to the facts ? How long would they be misguided by their capitalists ? Look, that young lady in yellow suite. Her name is Helen, she is the daughter of a capitalists. She also has joined hands against her father. Have you seen the writing of her dress : "Money-sucker cannot be my father". Yes, that is the proper reply from the younger generations. How long would the people sleep in the beds of the capitalists, when they feel fire right under their back ? Have a look at what they have written in those festoons. "AMERICA, BIG COUNTRY HAS BIG RESPONSIBILITY". "USA, BEING WORLD'S BIGGEST POWER YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO WHOLE WORLD". "SECULARISM IS MEANINGLESS WITH ACTIVE RELIGIOUS TERRORISTS". "USA, HELP TO INTRODUCE SECULARISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD". "USA, SECULARISM IS YOUR BEST SECURITY". "USA, BOYCOTT THE RELIGIOUS COUNTRIES, THEY ARE DANGEROUS FOR US, ALSO FOR THE HUMANITY".

Those are all nice and proper slogans, aren't they ? Through experience and due to people's pressure their government also have learnt to see in the proper way. In spite of the capitalists' constant shout the people now know, the problem lies inside their country, not outside. Look, what they have written in those two boards, "USA, CONTROL YOUR MONEY-THIRSTY CAPITALISTS". "USA, THOSE WHO CONSPIRE WITH THE RELIGIOUS COUNTRIES ARE OUR GREATEST ENEMIES, EVEN IF THEY ARE OUR CAPITALISTS". "CAPITALISTS, DON'T FORGET, YOU LIVE ON US". "CAPITALISTS, REMEMBER, IF WE BOYCOTT YOUR PRODUCTS YOU WILL BEG".

At this time of night Helen and her friends are making festoons, where Rahul sleeps at peace. The world's worst religious victim probably have got the assurance, at last the young generation of the world's most powerful country have joined hands.

THE END