

## Article

# The Hinduism and Hindu Nationalism of Lala Lajpat Rai

Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav <sup>1,2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> M.S. Merian—R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies, ‘Metamorphoses of the Political: Comparative Perspectives on the Long Twentieth Century’ (ICAS:MP), New Delhi 110011, India; vanya.vaidehi@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Multiple Secularities Forschungsgruppe—Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities, University of Leipzig, 04109 Leipzig, Germany

**Abstract:** Lala Lajpat Rai was a prominent figure of the Arya Samaj, the influential nineteenth-century Hindu socio-religious reform movement. He is also seen as having sown the seeds of Hindu nationalism in the first decade of the twentieth century. Exploring Lajpat Rai’s thought between the 1880s and 1915, this article traces how felt imperatives of Hindu nation-building impelled him to regularly re-define Hinduism. These first prompted Rai to articulate a ‘thin’ Hinduism, defined less in terms of an insistence on a complex set of beliefs and more in broad, simple terms. They then induced him to culturalise Hinduism and make a distinction between ‘Hinduism’ and ‘Hindu culture’. The article ends by comparing the Hinduism and Hindu nationalism of Lajpat Rai and V.D. Savarkar, the chief ideologue of the Hindutva ideology, which is considered the main influence on India’s Hindu nationalist movement. It argues that while formulations of a thin and culturalised Hinduism enabled both men to articulate a ‘Hindu nationalism’, their nationalisms in fact remained qualitatively different. By scrutinizing intellectual trends and processes occurring in Rai’s thought, the article demonstrates that the modern ideology of Hindu nationalism impacted how Hindu religion was defined and re-defined and how such re-definitions can still produce distinct forms of Hindu nationalism.

**Keywords:** Lala Lajpat Rai; Arya Samaj; College Party; thin Hinduism; culturalised Hinduism; Hinduism; Hindu culture; Hindu nationalism; Hindutva



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## 1. Introduction

Several scholars have argued that British colonial state practices and knowledge production transformed Hinduism in the nineteenth century. Change consisted of the intensification of Hinduism’s unity and cohesiveness, its homogenisation, its re-definition to emphasise textualism, and the sharpening of its boundaries vis à vis other religions (Vishwanathan 2008, pp. 25, 27, 31–33, 39; Killingley 2003, pp. 509–11; Metcalf 1994, p. 137; Jones 1981, pp. 74–84; Sarkar 2014, pp. 27–34; Zavos 2000, pp. 40–41; Appadurai 1993, p. 332). However, scholarship has broadly noted that Hinduism was also transformed by Hindus themselves—those influenced by colonial understandings of ‘religion’ and Hinduism and who responded to colonial critiques of Hinduism through efforts to reform it to establish its rationality, morality, and modernity (Vishwanathan 2008, pp. 33, 35; Killingley 2003, pp. 513, 515–16). This was often realized by re-defining Hinduism to exclude supposed irrationalities such as polytheism, textual plurality, idol worship, excessive ritualism, and hereditary caste. Apart from reformulating Hinduism to emphasise textualism; exclusive monotheism; idol-free worship; the absence of rituals, or, at least, simplified rituals; and more flexibility within the caste system, this, in some cases, even entailed the appropriation of proselytism (Vishwanathan 2008, pp. 25–28, 36; Killingley 2003, pp. 515–17, 519–20; Zavos 2000, pp. 32, 43; Pennington 2005, pp. 19, 65–69; Sen 2003, pp. 3, 47–48; Thapar 1989, p. 218; Frykenberg 1989). Creative reformulations of Hinduism in the nineteenth century are seen to be advanced not just by Hindu reformers but also

self-proclaimed defenders of orthodox Hindu tradition (Dalmia 2001). These changes in Hinduism appear as part of the history of how Hindu beliefs and practices were altered by the Hindu encounter with British colonialism and remain broadly confined within the scholarship on religion in colonial India and on Hindu 'reform' and 'revival'. This, alongside the separate analytical vocabulary used for histories of nationalism (Bhatt 2001, p. 16), frequently elided an appropriate and focused exploration of the precise, intricate ways in which ideas of *nationhood* and *nationalism* transformed the conceptualization of Hinduism in the colonial period.

To be sure, it has been broadly noted that Hindu religion was metamorphosed by Hindus exposed to the new concept of the 'nation-state' through the colonial encounter. This concept prompted Hindus to re-imagine Hinduism as an all-India, national religion (Vishwanathan 2008, pp. 28–30). This reconceptualization of Hindu religion as a single national tradition is conveyed by Vasudha Dalmia's phrase 'nationalization of Hindu traditions' (Dalmia 2001). It has been noted that the creation of modern Hinduism entailed the subservience of religion to nationalist ends (Dalmia 2001, p. 6). Scholars have remarked that the systematization of discrete Hindu practices by Hindus—a central theme of the scholarship on nineteenth-century Hinduism—often resulted from the Hindu search for a pre-existing national identity (Vishwanathan 2008, p. 26). In short, nationalism provoked reformulations of Hinduism through greater systematization. Moreover, although not exploring this question in depth, some scholars of nineteenth-century Hindu reform and revival do mention their linkages with nationalism. They note that while Hindu 'reformers' sought to counter colonial critiques by reforming Hinduism explicitly in accordance with Western ideals, with the rise of a more self-confident, assertive nationalism, this was increasingly considered as reflecting national self-loathing or a lack of pride (Heimsath 1964, pp. 25, 191; Sen 2003, pp. 10, 34). Subsequently, many Hindus attempted to counter colonial criticisms about the contemporary degeneracy of Hinduism and Hindus by constructing an ancient, supposedly original Hinduism free of features viewed as pre-modern, irrational, and/or immoral. National cultural self-assertion against the West provoked a reformulation of Hinduism (Heimsath 1964, pp. 25, 191, 206; Sen 2003, pp. 17–18). This often involved an appropriation of modern Western ideals into Hinduism, with this reform portrayed as only a revival of an ancient Hinduism already embodying these ideals (Jaffrelot 2011, pp. 6, 14–16; Sen 2003, pp. 35–36).

The dialectical relationship between British colonialism and nationalism produced not just the increased reification and cohesion of Hinduism but also energetic internal contestation about what constituted its essential features (Dalmia 2001, pp. 1, 10, 13, 18; Sen 2003, pp. 4–5)—a fact evident in the mushrooming of various Hindu reform organizations such as the Brahmo Samaj, Dharma Sabha, Tadiya Samaj, Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma Sabhas, the Dev Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission (Jones 1989). The felt urgency of nation-building resulted in divergent reformulations of Hinduism. Vasudha Dalmia carefully traced how this process produced one particular, influential formulation of Hinduism advanced by Bharatendu Harishchandra in late-nineteenth-century Benaras (Dalmia 2001, 1995). She outlined the trajectory of this evolving conceptualization of Hinduism. The need to present a cohesive front against the British at the national level prompted an emphasis on Krishna-centric monotheism and *bhakti* devotion as the central features of Vaishnavism. This represented a strategy by a figure belonging to the Pushtimarg *sampradaya* to unite different Vaishnava *sampradays* (Dalmia 1995, pp. 179, 189). Eventually, the imperative of uniting Hindus drove Harishchandra to reconceptualize monotheistic worship of Krishna through *bhakti* as central features of a pan-Indian Hinduism (Dalmia 1995, pp. 195, 202).

This article follows a broadly similar constructivist approach to trace how emergent ideas of nationhood and imperatives of nation-building led Lala Lajpat Rai to experiment with and articulate different, shifting articulations of Hinduism. However, while Dalmia's study focused on how such imperatives prompted an emphasis on Vaishnava *bhakti* and monotheism, this article highlights how, in Lajpat Rai's thought, the production of the

Hindu nation amidst the diversity of Hinduism led him to first de-emphasise doctrinal complexity and purity, and belief more generally, and then emphasise a culturalised Hinduism—‘Hindu culture’—over Hindu religion. This reveals the distinctive effects that Hindu nationalism had on the conceptualization of Hinduism in the thought of a prominent Arya Samajist and Hindu politician–thinker. Rai’s thought both reflected and shaped broader intellectual trends and represented a significant strand of Hindu thinking about Hindu identity and Hinduism. An examination of Rai’s ideas reveals the latent and even unselfconscious political manoeuvres sometimes embodied in conceptualizations of what is ostensibly Hindu religion. Scholars have noted that nationalism drove articulations of a homogenised Hinduism around which Hindus could rally. Rai’s thought shows that this sometimes entailed re-defining Hinduism in terms of fewer, simple beliefs rather than many, elaborate beliefs and in ways that de-emphasised belief and observance altogether. It further shows that nationalism could drive a prioritisation of Hindu culture (conceived in broadly non-religious terms) over Hindu religion. In being predicated on a conceptualisation of Hinduism that de-emphasised belief and a prioritization of ‘Hindu culture’ over Hinduism, Rai’s Hindu nationalism converged with Savarkar’s. However, as the end of this article will reveal, it, nevertheless, retained significant differences. Two forms of Hindu nationalism can re-define and re-craft Hinduism for their nation-building projects in strikingly similar ways but still constitute distinct nationalisms with varying political implications for India’s religious minorities. This is an important revelation considering dominant historiographical interpretations of Rai’s Hindu nationalism as an ideological antecedent of Savarkarite Hindutva (Jaffrelot 1999, 2011; Bhatt 2001).

## 2. Thin Hinduism and the Hindu Nation

The young Lajpat Rai’s view of Hinduism was shaped by the Arya Samaj’s distinct conceptualization of Hinduism, as it was being reified and unified but also internally contested in the colonial context. Following the Arya Samaj, Lajpat Rai saw the ancient Vedas as exclusively containing the word of God and characterized post-Vedic Puranas, Tantras, and Upanishads as false human creations (Lajpat Rai 2003l, pp. 375, 377–78, 409; 2003m, p. 221). Here, Rai distinguished himself from the self-proclaimed ‘orthodox’ Sanatanist Hindus who considered the medieval Puranas—the foundation of Krishna, Shiva and Ganesha devotion—as sacred. He also differed from reformers such as Ram-mohun Roy and Swami Vivekananda, who propounded an Upanishads-based Hinduism, and from Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who drew on the transgressive Tantras (Adcock 2013, pp. 10–11; Sarkar 1992). Being Arya Samajist further entailed jettisoning several contemporary Hindu ceremonies, festivals, and practices for their supposed contravention of the Vedas (Jones 1976, pp. 95–96). However, most attacked was Hinduism’s polytheism, which, despite multiple gods in the Vedas (Witzel 2003, p. 517; Killingley 2003), was perceived as deviating from the monotheism supposedly espoused by them (Lajpat Rai 2003l, p. 378).<sup>1</sup> Rai quoted German orientalist Max Müller to argue that Vedic monotheism was comparable to the monotheism espoused in the Koran and that ‘even the Bible does not contain such a clear enunciation of the concept’ (Lajpat Rai 2003l, p. 380). While sharing their censure of popular Hinduism (Jones 1976, p. 107), and, frequently, even their propagation of monotheism (Dalmia 1995, pp. 180–90), Sanatanists were most affronted by attacks by Aryas such as Lajpat Rai on idol worship.

For Aryas, Vedic religion taught that God was formless and, therefore, that notions of human incarnation, holy-men, and temple and idol worship be repudiated (Lajpat Rai 2003l, pp. 378–79, 407, 412–15). Despite the Vedas containing elaborate ritualism (Witzel 2003), this was rejected as priestcraft (Scott 2016, pp. 156–57). Instead, Rai, similar to other Aryas, enjoined worship through a simple fire ceremony and reading a portion of the Vedas once daily (Lajpat Rai 2003m, p. 227). This conception of simple Vedic monotheistic worship of a single formless God diverged from Sanatanists, who rationalized intricate ritualism and often worshipped a personal God (or gods) through *bhakti* devotion to idols (Dalmia 1995). The re-interpretation of Vedic religion as idol-free, formless monotheism

relocated features of Protestant Christianity in the Vedas. This represented an assertion of its worth relative to Christianity, characterized as superior by the British (Jaffrelot 2011, p. 76; Mitter 1987, p. 195).

Despite severely criticizing Hinduism, Lajpat Rai did not intend to eschew it in favour of 'Vedic religion'. The Arya Samajist split of 1893 saw him disagree with the 'Gurukul Faction', which insisted on all fifty-one doctrines prescribed by the Samaj's founder Dayanand Saraswati, including vegetarianism, as essential for Samaj membership (Adcock 2013, pp. 97–99). Rai joined the 'College Faction', which held that not all of Dayanand's doctrines, vegetarianism included, were binding tenets of Vedic religion, which required only belief in one true God and the Vedas as the sole source of his wisdom (Lajpat Rai 2003m, p. 221; Adcock 2013, p. 97). The aim, Rai argued, was to 'keep all dogma in the background', realize 'the simplest of creeds, to which no Hindu . . . should have any difficulty in subscribing', and 'make the Arya Samaj as Catholic as it possibly could be without sacrificing its Hindu character' (Lajpat Rai 2003m, p. 221). Vegetarian himself, Rai was indifferent to the particularities of Arya doctrine and practice (Lajpat Rai 2003m, p. 224; Jones 1976, p. 171). Unlike the Gurukul Faction, for him, the creation of a pure Arya community adhering to 'Vedic religion' was not worth the fracture of the larger community following 'Hinduism'. The downplay of elaborate Arya beliefs facilitated a continued claim to broader 'Hinduism'. Rai insisted that Dayanand intended not to found 'a new religion or sect' but 'purge Hinduism' of the evils that had corrupted it (Lajpat Rai 2003l, pp. 412–13; 2003m, pp. 201, 217). This 'reform of Hinduism' would be achieved through a 'return' to ancient monotheistic Vedic religion, defined as Hinduism's original, uncorrupted form (Lajpat Rai 2003l, pp. 412–13; 2003m, p. 266). As an Arya Samajist, Rai defined Hinduism through its terms. However, the desire to retain links to 'Hinduism' had him de-emphasise the elaborate set of beliefs enjoined by Gurukuli Samajists and define Hinduism in terms of a simple Arya precept of Vedic monotheism.

This minimalizing of Arya beliefs allowed the inclusion of the largest number of Hindus, despite their diverse beliefs and practices, within his Arya-inflected 'Hinduism'. Echoing colonial-missionary views, Rai saw contemporary Hinduism's idolatrous polytheism as a source of disorder and idol-free monotheism as a source of unity (Lajpat Rai 2003l, pp. 394–95). The 'return' of Hinduism to its supposedly primordial Vedic monotheism would transcend diverse Hindu beliefs and practices and produce Hindu unity. The imperative of Hindu unity prompted Rai to reduce the number of Arya Samajist beliefs while defining 'Hinduism' and stress only idol-free Vedic monotheism. Beyond viewing the latter as important for asserting Hinduism's worth in relation to Christianity (and Islam) and strengthening its integrity and unity, Rai remained disinterested in the finer points of Arya Samajist beliefs. Sudipta Kaviraj defines thick religion as one that entails a detailed catalogue of beliefs, all of which are seen as essential (Kaviraj 2010, pp. 345–46). In contrast, thin religion emphasises only a few, simple, and broad criteria, and is unconcerned with adherence to a detailed, complex list of beliefs (Kaviraj 2010, p. 348). We may, therefore, say that, by the 1890s, the imperatives of strengthening the Hindu 'nation' impelled Lajpat Rai to articulate a thin Hinduism.

### 3. Downplaying Belief, Hindu 'Culture', and the Hindu Nation

The same tendency to de-emphasise belief, doctrine, and worship was evident in the educational vision for the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) College he elaborated in 1893. Unlike the Gurukul Faction, Lajpat Rai and his College Faction did not strongly prioritise a rigorous religious education for Hindus (Jones 1976, pp. 85–86; Fischer-Tiné 2001, pp. 283, 391). Rai sought to 'avoid' both the systematic teaching of 'Vedic theology' as a subject and Sandhya prayers involving the recitation of Vedic *mantras* during College hours (Lajpat Rai 2003a, pp. 102–4). Instead, he aimed at a 'Vedic' education that prioritised 'the promotion of our language and culture on a national scale' (Lajpat Rai 2003a, p. 98), teaching not just the Vedas but Sanskrit and 'the study of Hindi literature and the [sic] allied culture' (Lajpat Rai 2003a, pp. 98, 100–1). Reflecting the very recent, nineteenth-

century tendency to view Hindi in the Devanagiri script and Urdu in the Persio-Arabic script as separate national languages of Hindus and Muslims, respectively (Dalmia 2001, pp. 146–52, 219–20), Rai envisioned a Vedic education entailing pedagogy in Sanskrit and Hindi language and literature. These embodied Hindu ‘culture’.

Unlike Gurukul Samajists, Lajpat Rai strongly prioritised English liberal education alongside Vedic education. He stated that even Swami Dayanand had discouraged an exclusive focus on Sanskrit, and admitted that ‘enlightenment’ and ‘renaissance’ had ‘come from the West mainly through the English language’ and that English education was vital for ‘the rejuvenation of the nation’ (Lajpat Rai 2003a, p. 97). Exposure to English ‘liberal education’, the greatest blessing of British rule (Lajpat Rai 2003h, p. 86), was vital for collective Hindu reawakening. In Rai’s view, English education had made Hindus aware and proud of their ‘history’ and conscious of their present decline vis à vis their past and other nations (Lajpat Rai 2003h, p. 86). It was vital to impart to Hindus a historical consciousness apparently necessary to collectively revivify them. Indeed, the modern discipline of history, central to colonial education, had intensified ‘community consciousness’ (Diamond 2014, pp. 81, 93; Dirks 1990, p. 25; Chatterjee 1995). Noting this, Rai recommended, alongside Vedic education in what he considered ‘Hindu’ (Sanskrit and Hindi) language and literature, an English education in Hindu ‘history’. For Rai, knowledge of the ‘history’ of one’s ‘religion’ and ‘community’ was the main purpose of education (Lajpat Rai 2003i, p. 115); it advanced the understanding of Hindu identity, attachment, and pride in Hindu religion and community and illuminated the path to collective regeneration shown by Hindu ancestors (Lajpat Rai 2003i, pp. 115–16). ‘History’ was a source of Hindu identity and collective Hindu rejuvenation. The education that Lajpat Rai sought to promote for Hindus thus aimed less at instruction in religious belief and doctrine and more at non-religious instruction in the language, literature, and ‘history’ of Hindus, all viewed as key components of the Hindu ‘culture’ that he wished to promote through DAV education.

By the 1890s, the felt urgency of regenerating a Hindu nation impelled Lajpat Rai to not only de-emphasise elaborate religious beliefs and thin down Hinduism but also side-line Hinduism in favour of the language, literature, and history—or the profane ‘culture’—of Hindus. This represented a move from an emphasis on belief towards the explicit recasting of Hindu identity in primarily de-sacralised ‘cultural’ terms, the latter constituting the culturalisation of Hinduism (for more on the culturalisation of religion, see Astor and Mayrl 2020). Hindu nationalism, therefore, prompted Lajpat Rai not just to ‘thin down’ Hinduism but soon turn instead to Hindu ‘culture’. To be sure, Hindu religion appeared in Rai’s Hindu history. Countering British imperial discourses that disparaged Hinduism as lacking the capacity for unity and self-rule (Adcock 2013, pp. 94–95; Inden 1986, pp. 25–28), Rai drew on Orientalist accounts of a glorious ancient Vedic past permeated by Vedic religion (Lajpat Rai 2003l, p. 382). Here, the Aryan ancestors of Hindus had unitedly followed Vedic monotheism. Moreover, reflecting Arya Samajist anti-clericalism, and overlooking the indispensable role of priests in Vedic ritualism (Witzel 2003, pp. 79–80), Rai portrayed Aryans as rejecting Brahmin intermediaries between themselves and God, which supposedly also made them fiercely politically self-reliant (Lajpat Rai 2003l, p. 382). The religion that appeared in Rai’s Hindu history had less to do with belief or practice and more with highlighting Hindu capacity for unity and self-rule. Partha Chatterjee has argued that nationalist histories of India in the nineteenth century were largely Hindu nationalist. These were unconcerned with the divine, their appeal more political than religious (Chatterjee 1995, p. 126). Insofar as Rai highlighted an ancient Aryan past to conjure a Hindu nation and articulated a Hindu history that remained unconcerned with belief and observance, he followed the same nationalist-historiographical paradigm illuminated by Chatterjee.

#### 4. Social Hinduism and Belonging without Believing

In the early years of the twentieth century, Lajpat Rai de-emphasised belief even more strongly while defining Hinduism. Ancient Hinduism was now defined as a 'social faith', capable of 'arousing the multitudes, containing 'the idea of social unity' and 'social responsibilities' and possessing 'the notion of national responsibilities' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 302, 307; 2003d, p. 298). In his 1904 article titled 'The Social Genius of Hinduism', Rai argued that Hinduism contained 'social ideals' advanced by Social Darwinist thought globally ascendant at the time. Perhaps drawn to Social Darwinism due to its emphasis on society-driven rather than state-driven change (Kapila 2007, pp. 114–16), an attractive idea given the limited prospects of state-driven change under colonialism, Rai sought to prove that Hinduism contained Social Darwinian ideals that could generate change through social and national regeneration. Lajpat Rai (mis)read Herbert Spencer's ideal as propagating that 'the interests of each citizen and the interests of citizens at large' be 'merged', such that the individual would eventually develop an 'altruistic instinct', whereby he attained 'the highest satisfaction in voluntarily sacrificing himself in the interests of the social organism' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 303; For Spencer's rejection of extreme altruism, see Dixon 2008, pp. 198–99). Rai also referenced social Darwinist Benjamin Kidd whose social ideal required the sacrifice of the individual good for even 'the interests of generations yet unborn' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 304). Spencer criticized Christianity for promoting a forced extreme altruism, which hampered natural social evolution towards altruism, and promoted degenerate classes (Dixon 2008, pp. 195–96, 204). In contrast, Kidd had argued that only religion—especially Protestant Christianity—could goad individuals into the irrational altruism of sacrificing their interests for human progress and unborn generations (Dixon 2008, pp. 303–6).

Rai cited several Vedic and post-Vedic texts to highlight that Hinduism met Spencer and Kidd's social ideals. Despite its theme of war (Singh 2008, pp. 815–16), for Rai, the *Rigveda's* division of society into four 'castes' reflected the 'unity of the social organism', 'the mutual interdependence of all parts of society', a 'complete system of social duties', and the 'essential oneness of the whole' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 307–8). The Brahminical-legal *Manusmriti* embodied Hinduism's 'original social conception', emphasizing 'service of others' and 'the social good of the whole' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 308–9). It enjoined each caste to perform their duty also for other castes: 'The Brahmin is enjoined to study not for the benefit of his soul only, but to teach others as a purely social duty . . . It was the duty of Kshatriyas to protect all . . . the duty of Vaishyas to produce and trade for all and that of the Shudra to labour for all' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 309). Rai glossed over his brief acknowledgement of 'inhuman' caste inequalities in the *Manusmriti* to present the caste system as demonstrating Hinduism's 'altruistic morality' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 313–17) and social unity. Manu's marriage laws apparently met Kidd's ideal of showing 'anxiety for the welfare of unborn generations' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 319). Rai cited hymns from the *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* containing entreaties to 'assemble, speak together', have a 'common mind', 'agree and be united', and 'love one another' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 319–22). While they addressed Vedic gods or the family, Rai read these hymns as aiming at 'effective social organization' and a 'common national purpose' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 321). This 'spirit of unity' was found by him in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (Lajpat Rai 2003o, p. 322). Thus, Hinduism's multiple texts supposedly contained the highest Social Darwinist ideals, proving the existence of the notion of 'social or national responsibilities' and the 'spirit of unity' among ancient Hindus (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 301–2, 322). Ancient Hinduism had the potential to regenerate Hindus as an effective social whole and nation again.

Rai saw himself as contesting Hindus who urged that the social and the national could not be built by relying on Hinduism but required reliance on Western 'reason' (Lajpat Rai 2003o, pp. 301–2, 306, 319; Heimsath 1964, pp. 200–4; Natarajan 1959, p. 86). Using Kidd's argument that reason can produce anti-social tendencies and that religion was required for altruism, Rai ignored its critiques (Dixon 2008, pp. 311–12) and Kidd's emphasis on Christianity to argue that ancient Hinduism already possessed resources for

social and national rejuvenation. Exclusive reliance on reason was rejected because it was supposedly a Western, foreign concept as compared to the indigenous, 'national' Hindu scriptures. Rai's critique of reason itself drew on Western intellectuals; the western concept of 'altruism' unflinchingly borrowed; and western-origin ideologies of Social Darwinism and nationalism 'found' within Hindu texts. Still, Rai saw his assertion of Hindu scriptures over reason as a defence of the national over the Western. As he conceptualised ancient Hinduism as a driver of social and national cohesion, moves towards these were portrayed as moves towards original Hinduism rather than departures towards the West. Importantly, in undertaking these intellectual manoeuvres, Lajpat Rai relinquished his earlier Arya-influenced definition of Hinduism as Vedic monotheism. Accepting the Samaj as one of Hinduism's many sects, and moving towards a broad-based definition of Hinduism, Rai now embraced Hinduism's multiple post-Vedic texts. He also omitted emphasis on God and belief to define Hinduism as social and national spirit. In short, in the very early years of the new century, imperatives of Hindu nation-building despite Hinduism's tremendous internal diversity motivated Rai to sideline the Samaj and the question of belief altogether as he defined Hinduism. Put differently, Rai seemed to sense that a particular Arya Samajist-based definition of Hinduism would alienate the majority of non-Arya Samajist Hindus, given the diversity of Hindu beliefs. To crystallise a Hindu nation that included diverse followers of Hinduism, Rai espoused a definition of Hinduism that de-emphasised not just specific Arya tenets but religious belief more generally. Hindu nationalism impelled Rai to argue that the multiple Hindu texts revered by Hindus preached a 'Hinduism' that equalled a social and national spirit. By following this true 'Hinduism', Hindus with different beliefs could realise the Hindu nation.

Yet, subsequent writings show that diversity of belief remained an obstacle to his project of Hindu nationalism. In his article titled 'Hinduism and Common Nationality' (1907), Rai contested arguments that because Hinduism 'does not represent one set of beliefs', nothing substantial bound 'one Hindu to another in ties of national brotherhood'; and Hinduism was more a 'congeries of different religions . . . holding diverse and not unoften [*sic*] diametrically opposite views on matters of faith and doctrine', constituting neither a 'religion' nor a 'religious nationality' (Lajpat Rai 2003f, p. 331). Quoting the German Sanskritist Theodor Goldstücker, Rai pointed to the 'hundreds of creeds' within Christianity, each of which claimed 'exclusive possession' of it and whose deep differences had even provoked wars not seen in the history of other religions (Lajpat Rai 2003f, pp. 333–34). Islam also contained as many disparate beliefs and doctrines as Hinduism (Lajpat Rai 2003f, p. 332). Just as internal diversity and discord disqualified neither Christianity and Islam as 'religious nationalities', nor did it invalidate Hinduism as one. Christianity and Islam accommodated even 'scoffers' who 'questioned the divinity of the Quran and Bible' but clung to 'the outer form of religion, the very essence of which they take pleasure in decrying' (Lajpat Rai 2003f, p. 332). Such individuals remained as much Christian for 'ceremonies, baptism, marriage, etc.' as any devout believer. Thus, the logic went that even atheists were not disqualified from 'Hindu nationality' if they adhered to Hinduism's 'outer form'.

For Lajpat Rai, atheists who adhered to Islam's 'outer form' belonged to the Muslim nationality and atheists adhering to Christianity's 'outer form' to the Christian nationality. Similarly, atheists adhering to Hinduism's 'outer form' were as much part of the Hindu nation as believers in Hinduism. Although called 'religious nationalities', religious belief was not essential to belong to them. What mattered was an adherence to a religion's 'outer form', by which Lajpat Rai meant culture, although he did not use the term. Here, the Punjabi Lajpat Rai seemed to echo the Bengali critic Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1838–94), who, in the previous century, had been the first to explicitly and systematically insist that the substance and essence of Hinduism was culture rather than the worship of God(s) (Chatterjee 1940, p. 15; Sartori 2008, pp. 111, 120). Rai and Chatterjee differed significantly. For Chatterjee, Hindus had to regenerate the Hindu nation by actively striving to acquire culture by cultivating their human faculties. This was an activist and humanist conception of culture as cultivation (Sartori 2008, chap. 4). Rai's allusion to culture as Hinduism's 'outer

form' implicitly relied on a passive and anthropological conception of culture. Hindus were told that atheists subscribing to the attributes and products of Hindu society (Hindu culture in the anthropological sense) belonged to a Hindu nation. Still, Rai and Chatterjee converged in conceiving Hinduism as culture rather than in terms of belief and in including atheists into their notions of Hinduism and the Hindu nation (Sartori 2008, p. 122).

Around 1904–7, Lajpat Rai simply took for granted that the distinctness of their religions and their 'outer forms' constituted Muslims and Christians into nationalities distinct from Hindus. Additionally, he ignored the question of whether believers in religions such as Sikhism or Jainism could be considered 'outwardly' Hindu and thus included in his Hindu nation. His concern remained to show that neither differences among followers of Hinduism, nor even the renunciation of belief in Hinduism by some, meant that such individuals did not constitute one Hindu nation. This is because they were collectively immersed in a Hindu cultural milieu. To facilitate a capacious Hindu nation, Rai now downplayed belief, worship, ritual, and practice more strongly in defining Hinduism to enable 'belonging without believing' (Astor and Mayrl 2020, p. 9). Anxieties about the diversity of Hindu belief and observance meant that the Vedas were still summoned by the Arya Samajist Rai as the nucleus of a pluralist but still holistic Hinduism (Lajpat Rai 2003f, p. 335). However, the Vedas appeared only as a surface-level, desacralized identity marker to materialize belonging to Hinduism and the Hindu nation, with their content remaining irrelevant.

In the 1890s, Hindu nation-building led Rai to first articulate a thin Hinduism, where the list of Arya beliefs requiring adherence was radically shortened and begin to turn to Hindu 'culture' (as Hindi and Hindu history) over Hinduism. By 1904–7, it led Lajpat Rai to define 'Hinduism' in substantially desacralized terms, as delinked from belief and as a simple signpost of communal and national belonging. 'Hinduism' was substantially emptied of convictional content and defined as communal and national identity (for more on culturalised religion as a form of identity, see Astor and Mayrl 2020, pp. 3–9).

## 5. Hindu Nationalism and Culturalised Hinduism

In 1909, Lajpat Rai participated in the Punjab Hindu Sabha, following the grant of separate electorates and weighted representation to Muslims. His drive to build his most capacious Hindu nation now resulted in not a radical re-formulation of Hinduism—entailing the emptying of its convictional content—but Hinduism itself being firmly superseded by 'Hindu culture'. Rai now believed that grounding the Hindu nation in Hinduism would exclude 'our friends of the Brahma Samaj, Jains and some Sikhs' who did not 'subscribe to the scriptural authority of the Vedas' (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 155–56). To include such groups, he now explicitly argued that it was sufficient for them to 'studiously retain, and laboriously maintain, the distinguishing features of Hindu culture in their thought and life' (Lajpat Rai 2003e, p. 157). 'Community of religion', he said, was not necessary for the formation of a 'nation', the 'essence' of which lay in its 'culture' (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 158–60). This was different from Bankimchandra Chatterjee's stance that Rai had echoed before. Chatterjee and, similar to him, Rai had argued that the substance or essence of Hindu religion was culture. Rai was now arguing that the essence of the Hindu nation was not religion but culture. Efforts to build a broad-based Hindu nation—including Brahmos, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists—had Rai displace even the Vedas in favour of Hindu culture as he defined Hindu nationhood. Hindu nation-building now caused Rai to displace even this surface-level marker of Hinduism hitherto retained to bind the diverse followers of Hinduism into a Hindu nation. Culturalised Hinduism, phenomena imagined as decoupled from belief and observance, and conceived as 'Hindu culture', was made the centre of Hindu nationhood to realize Rai's most capaciously defined Hindu nation.

Lajpat Rai defined 'Hindu culture' amorphously and in upper-caste north Indian terms, as 'easily distinguishable from Semitic and other non-Aryan cultures' and European culture (Lajpat Rai 2003e, p. 157). The conception of Hindu culture as non-Semitic, Aryan, and non-European meant that the idea of racial commonality played a role in Rai's

Hindu nationalism, even as he strongly denounced notions of racial purity and superiority (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 160–62). Racial terms emerged as Rai struggled to define the ‘Hindu culture’ that supposedly distinguished the Hindu nation from India’s Muslims and Christians, who, in turn, presumably were seen to follow non-Hindu Semitic cultures. Still, it was ultimately ‘Hindu culture’, ‘reflected in our literature, especially our epic poetry’ and ‘our festivals and social practices’, which formed the essence of Rai’s Hindu nation (Lajpat Rai 2003e, p. 163). Rather than race, culturalised Hinduism, a phenomenon emptied of religious significance and cast as ‘Hindu culture’, constituted the Hindu nation’s core.

In the nineteenth century, imperatives of realizing a broad-based Hindu unity produced articulations of thin Hinduism and flickers of a turn to Hindu ‘culture’ in the form of Hindi and Hindu history instead of Hinduism. In the new century, Rai first defined Hinduism as national spirit and in terms of belonging rather than believing. Then, the felt urgency of realizing an even more broad-based Hindu nation, including Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, had Rai supplant Hinduism with ‘Hindu culture’ as the centre of his Hindu nation. Importantly, Rai’s culturalization of Hinduism (and definition of Hindu culture as non-Semitic) served to realize a Hindu nation that included some religious groups but deliberately *excluded* India’s Muslims and Christians. Like in several other forms of Hindu nationalism, Rai’s Hindu nation was defined against Muslims and Christians.

The de-emphasis on the finer points of belief and the emphasis on ‘Hindu culture’ as a means of crafting a capacious ‘Hindu nation’—which included Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists but excluded Muslims and Christians—would be similarly evident in the definitions of Hinduism and Hindu nationalism Savarkar articulated in 1923. In *Essentials of Hindutva*, Savarkar emphasised that while ‘Hinduism’ was a ‘sectarian term’ signifying ‘spiritual or religious dogma’, ‘Hindutva’ or Hindu-ness was broader than Hinduism, ‘not primarily’ or ‘mainly’ concerned with ‘any particular theocratic or religious dogma’ (Savarkar 1969, p. 4). Religious belief, he averred, is substantially unimportant for Hindutva or Hindu national belonging. While residence in and love for India constituted the first ‘essential’ of Hindutva and possession of Hindu blood the second, these remained insufficient essentials for Hindu national belonging. The third ‘essential’—reverence for ‘Hindu culture’ or Sanskriti—was crucial. This ‘Hindu culture’ was represented in the literature, art, architecture, history, mythology, law, festivals, rites, rituals, customs, ceremonies, and sacraments of Hindus (Savarkar 1969, pp. 92–101). The majority of Muslims and Christians who met the first two (geographical-affective and racial) essentials of Hindu national belonging, supposedly failed the third (cultural) essential (Savarkar 1969, pp. 92, 99–100). Having adopted ‘new cults’, they had disowned Hindu culture (Savarkar 1969, pp. 100–1), which disqualified them from the Hindu nation. As with Rai, rather than particular beliefs or broad belief in any school of Hinduism (which, for Savarkar, included Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism), ‘Hindu culture’ was key to the realisation of the Hindu nation and served to exclude Muslims and Christians.

Despite Savarkar’s declaration about the relative unimportance of Hindu religion to Hindutva nationhood, this ‘religious aspect’ of Hindu culture (Savarkar 1969, pp. 102, 116), ultimately remained relevant to Hindu national belonging. As with Lajpat Rai in 1909, compulsions of building a broad-based Hindu nation drove Savarkar to tailor his definition of ‘Hinduism’ (Savarkar 1969, pp. 102–3). The definition of the Hindu nation was prior to and determined the definition of Hinduism, defined as the religious beliefs of this nation (Savarkar 1969, pp. 103–5). Savarkar argued that ‘Hinduism’ must connote not just Vedic dharma but all ‘heterodox’ schools of Avedic (non-Vedic) dharma native to India—i.e., Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism (Savarkar 1969, pp. 104–8). Importantly, ‘Hinduism’ was ‘completely identified with the land of the Hindus’, making it for them ‘not only a Pitrubhu, but a Punyabhu, not only a fatherland but a holyland’ (Savarkar 1969, p. 111). Thus, as Savarkar saw it, even those minority of Muslims and Christians who partook in Hindu culture were ultimately excluded from the definition of Hindutva nationhood. Having converted from ‘Hinduism’, they had turned to Islam and Christianity, religions

not born in India but supposedly foreign to it. They, therefore, now considered Arabia or Palestine rather than India as their holyland (Savarkar 1969, p. 113). Their conversion out of Hinduism, the system of religions linked exclusively to Indian territory, ultimately de-linked them from Indian territory and made them foreign. Rather than Hinduism, it was 'Hindu culture' that excluded the majority of Muslims and Christians from Hindu nationhood. Still, what decisively excluded all Muslims and Christians within the Hindu nation while including various followers of Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism was Savarkar's exclusive linkage of 'Hinduism' to India. Hinduism included all religious schools born in India, which considered *only* India as their holyland.

Even so, Savarkar insisted: 'It is not a question of embracing any doctrine . . . we are not speaking of any religion which is dogma' (Savarkar 1969, pp. 113–14). Hinduism surfaced not to emphasise belief but only to tie certain religious groups to Indian territory and question the ties of others to it—i.e., to clarify national belonging. Hindu national belonging was deciphered not through belief in 'Hinduism' (Savarkar 1969, pp. 80–81, 114) but by symbolic belonging to either of the schools of 'Hinduism' considered native to India. Islam and Christianity had drawn Muslims and Christians away from India's native Hindu culture and into foreign cultures (Savarkar 1969, pp. 100–1). Hindu national belonging required them to abandon these religions, with their links with foreign cultures and holylands. Yet, reflecting his indifference to belief, the atheist Savarkar required not that Muslims and Christians convert to 'Hinduism' but adopt and venerate 'Hindu culture' even as atheists (Savarkar 1969, pp. 84, 114–15, 130). As with Lajpat Rai a decade before, the imperatives of building a robust Hindu nation drove Savarkar to de-emphasise belief-related particularities in his definition of Hinduism and treat it merely as a signpost of Hindu national belonging. Belief was similarly also side-lined in favour of phenomena disassociated from belief and observance and cast as 'Hindu culture', a manoeuvre which served to include followers of Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism and exclude Muslims and Christians.

The difference was that Lajpat Rai's Hindu nationalism did not demand religious desertion and cultural assimilation, unlike Savarkar's Hindutva. It imagined a strong Hindu nation, alongside equally robust Muslim and Christian 'religious nationalities' (Lajpat Rai 2003c, pp. 6–10; 2003j, pp. 233–34; 2003e, pp. 165–68), free to proselytize and possess their religion-based personal laws (Lajpat Rai 2003b, p. 215; 2003g, p. 195). Unlike Savarkar, Rai also did not portray Hinduism/Hindu culture as a native, Islam/Islamic culture and Christianity/Christian culture as foreign to India or seek a supreme claim for Hindus over India's territory. These aspects of Rai's thought reflect an acceptance of India's religio-cultural diversity.

To be sure, respecting diversity did not nullify all possibilities of rivalry or even conflict. Still, Rai's Hindu nationalism did not dream of expunging difference to establish Hindu homogeneity. Moreover, despite converging with Savarkarite Hindutva in imagining Hindus and Muslims as radically distinct in religious and cultural terms, Rai conceived these 'religious nationalities' as sharing some 'joint aspirations' and interests (Lajpat Rai 2003c, pp. 6–10; 2003j, pp. 233–34; 2003e, p. 165). As he imagined an agonistic yet cooperative political relationship with Muslims (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 165–66; 2003c, pp. 4–9), Lajpat Rai saw his Hindu nation as compatible with a larger 'Indian nation: 'By aiming at unity and solidarity amongst the Hindus, we do not contemplate a blow at Indian unity . . . I believe that the political salvation of India must come out of the combination and union of all communities into one national whole . . . that decidedly is the goal' (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 165–67). Rai conceived the Hindu nation in a pre-nationalist sense to signify a cultural community. Even if politically charged, this nation was not imagined in a modern nationalist sense to signify a political community that deserved a self-ruling state over a particular territory. When Rai used the term nation in this modern nationalist sense, he imagined an 'Indian' nation, including Hindus and non-Hindus (Lajpat Rai 2003e, pp. 158, 165). Although Rai did not define the cultural identity of this common Indian nation, his not asserting a superior claim of Hinduism and Hindu

culture over India, and not demanding assimilation, revealed a basic respect for India's diversity. Unlike Savarkar's Hindutva, which was based in supremacy and domination, Rai's nationalism did 'not seek a Hindu majority crushing Mahomedan or other minorities, and accepted proportionate Muslim representation (Lajpat Rai 2003n, p. 199; 2003e, p. 167).

A common de-emphasis on belief and emphasis on a culturalised Hinduism produced qualitatively distinct forms of Hindu nationalism in Savarkar and Rai. For Savarkar's Hindutva nationalism, the exclusion of Muslims and Christians from the Hindu nation meant an exclusion from the only nation in India, whose religion and culture were identified with India and accorded hierarchical supremacy. Inclusion into the Hindu nation was required and conditional upon religious desertion and cultural assimilation, reflecting a relatively deep aversion to diversity. For Rai's nationalism, the exclusion of Muslims and Christians only meant that they formed nations themselves, whose religion and culture too had space to flourish in India. Inclusion into the Hindu nation was not required via desertion and assimilation. Instead, Rai envisioned a nation of multiple religiously and culturally distinct nations. These could be politically charged and entangled in politically conflictual relationships but had to also eventually politically cooperate as members of a future self-governing, diversity-respecting 'Indian' nation, into which they had to eventually also unite.

## 6. Conclusions

This article contributes to the study of the relationship between religion and nationalism. Let us first clarify the lines of argument it has not taken. One, the examination of Lajpat Rai's Hinduism and nationalism has not been used to argue that Hindu nationalism was a new form of Hinduism (for the argument of nationalism constituting a new religion, see Smith 2003). Second, although a worthwhile intellectual endeavour, the article has not relied on Rai's thought to advance the argument that the myths, narratives and symbols of Hinduism were imported as the building blocks of nationalist ideology (for this approach to the study of religion and nationalism, see Smith 2003; Hutchison and Lehmann 1994; Gorski 2000; Schama 1988; Jaffrelot 2007). Third, this article on Rai's thought aimed to illustrate neither that Hinduism and the nation were imagined as coterminous by several Hindus nor that Hindu religious imagery and symbolism infused nationalist discourse in India (Smith 1986, 2003, 2008; Gould 2004). Finally, this article's central concern was not to bolster the argument that Lajpat Rai's Hindu nationalism constituted a specifically religious as opposed to a civic form of nationalism. The body of scholarship showing such forms of connection between religion and nationalism resulted from the desire to challenge the long-held view of nationalism as a secular phenomenon that replaced religion (Gellner 1983).

The primary focus of this article has been to highlight not simply the connections between religion and nationalism, which admittedly existed, but the dynamism and even tension between these concepts as they encountered each other in the thought of nationalist Hindus such as Lajpat Rai. In particular, the article provides insight into how the concept of the nation could cause repeated mutations in conceptualizations of Hinduism. Hindu nationalism may have connected nation and religion, but nation-building instrumentalized and regularly altered and tailored religion—here, Hinduism—to serve its purposes. Admittedly, Lajpat Rai's thought on Hinduism reflects merely one strand of thinking on modern Hinduism. In no way did it reflect the totality of the sociological and intellectual formation that made up Hinduism in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the examination of the impact of Hindu nationalism on Rai's definitions and re-definitions of Hinduism provides empirical depth to scholarship that notes that Hinduism was transformed as it encountered the concept of nationhood. While Dalmia's study adds this depth via the perspective of a Sanatanist Vaishnavite Hindu from the United Provinces, this article provides textured substantiation through an Arya Samajist Hindu from Punjab. As he worked with ascendant ideas of nationhood, Rai's definitions of Hinduism first de-emphasised elaborate belief and then de-emphasised belief to privilege communal belonging. In the end, they even pushed him to de-emphasise belief while

culturalising Hinduism, distinguishing Hindu religion from 'Hindu culture', which he conceived in broadly nonreligious terms. The article concluded by warning against any assumptions that Hindu nationalism's tailored conceptualizations of Hinduism necessarily produced the same kinds of Hindu nationalism.

Before ending, I must briefly clarify why this article confined itself to Lajpat Rai's thought between the 1880s and 1915. This is because it was in this period that Lajpat Rai articulated a 'Hindu nationalism', which scholars argue laid the ground for (and shared ideological affinities with) the Hindu nationalism Savarkar elaborated in *Essentials of Hindutva* in 1923 (Jaffrelot 1999, 2011; Bhatt 2001). The article's core analytical objectives were to delineate how thin and culturalised Hinduisms can be elaborated to realize a Hindu nation; how Rai and Savarkar converged as they articulated thin and culturalised definitions of Hinduism to realize their Hindu nationalism; and how they still produced different forms of Hindu nationalism. The aim was to show that the teleological linkage of Lajpat Rai's Hindu nationalism with Savarkar's Hindutva have obscured its distinctions from Hindutva and the internal differentiation among the body of ideas often clubbed together under the rubric of 'Hindu nationalism'.

After 1915, Lajpat Rai's writings cease reflecting a persistent struggle to elaborate a thin or culturalised Hinduism to realize a capacious 'Hindu nation', excluding Muslims and Christians. Henceforth, he permanently ceased to view Hindus and Muslims (and Christians) as separate 'nationalities' and firmly shifted to exclusively articulate an 'Indian nation' composed of different religious communities. Rai undertook various, shifting intellectual strategies to fortify his imagined Indian nation. The only one relevant to this article's thematic focus is his brief reliance on 'Hindu culture' to argue that despite their religious differences with Hindus, Muslims and Christians were part of an 'Indian' nation along with Hindus as they were shaped by India's regional cultures and its 'Hindu culture' (Lajpat Rai 2003k, p. 244). Notably, this departed from Rai's earlier use of 'Hindu culture' to exclude Muslims and Christians from Hindu nationhood while imagining them as part of a multi-national polity. Rai's new Indian nationalism was problematic in assuming that India's national essence lay in Hindu culture and overlooking that India's Muslims, Christians, and Hindus may be shaped by Christian and Islamicate cultures, which can be viewed as much a part of India's essence as Hindu culture. Still, Rai's temporary use of culturalised Hinduism aimed to endow India's Hindus, Muslims, and Christians with a sense of common national belonging. Rai's Indian nationalism remained unlike Savarkar's Hindutva, conceptualized during the same period (Savarkar 1969, pp. v–vi), where 'Hindu culture' served to exclude the majority of Muslims and Christians from what he considered India's only nation. Despite its occasional resort to Hindu assumptions, Rai's Indian nationalism also differed from Hindutva in its continuing lack of insistence on religious dissimulation and cultural assimilation. It differed further in its ability to transcend Hindu assumptions. Instead of Hindutva's requirement of Hindu blood, Rai would argue that Hindus and Muslims belonged to a common, mixed 'Aryan-Mongolian race'. Instead of its insistence on a Hindu culture united by Sanskrit, Rai advocated Hindustani as India's national language. In place of Rai's earlier reliance on a Hindu history to rejuvenate a prideful Hindu nation and unlike Savarkar's Hindu history, which emphasised ceaseless Hindu-Muslim warfare (Sharma 2003, pp. 149–67; Chaturvedi 2010, pp. 430–34), Rai crafted a history of peaceable coexistence between Hindus and Muslims. Important for our discussions of culturalised Hinduism, he was also ultimately able to imagine an 'Indian nation' based not in Hindu culture but a pluralist blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures (for these details, see Bhargav 2022, p. 5; Bhargav 2018, chap. 3).

In relation to this article's analytical focus, this reveals that nationalisms in India used culturalised Hinduism for different ends. In Rai's pre-1915 Hindu nationalism, it served to exclude Muslims and Christians from the Hindu nation while continuing to imagine agonism and cooperation with these 'nationalities' in a common Indian polity. In Savarkar's Hindutva nationalism, it served to exclude these religious groups from the only imagined nation in India and seek Hindu supremacy over them. In Rai's Indian

nationalism, ‘Hindu culture’ became part of one of several arguments demonstrating that Hindus and Muslims belonged to a single ‘Indian’ nationhood, which, as his statements elsewhere show, remained based on a practical acceptance and even celebration of India’s diversity. However, the more important analytical implication derives from the difference between Rai’s earlier ‘Hindu’ nationalism and later ‘Indian’ nationalism. As his Indian nationalism did not equate religious and national identities, ceasing to see Hindus and Muslims as separate nations, it no longer struggled to create a Hindu nation out of Hindu religion. The materialization of his later Indian nationalism, therefore, did not depend as heavily as his Hindu nationalism on repeated struggles to radically re-formulate, alter, and mutate Hinduism. Forms of nationalism that seek to create a national identity or unity out of religion, therefore, appear more strongly dependent on remoulding religion to suit its ends than nationalisms whose attempts to create a national identity and unity remain relatively delinked from religion.

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## Note

- <sup>1</sup> While Lajpat Rai and other Aryas converged with Brahmos like Rammohun Roy in preaching monotheism, they rejected Roy’s Upanishadic monotheism. Aryas abjured not only the Upanishads but also Roy’s insistence on the essential unity of the Supreme Being and the individual soul. Arya Samajist monotheism believed in the Vedas as exclusively divine and made a sharp distinction between God and his creations (Rai 1915, p. 84).

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