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A Deeper Study On Ramasami Periyar Of Tamil Nadu On Non-Existence Of Ishwar (God)

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Abstract:

Ramasamy Periyar, a prominent social reformer from Tamil Nadu, made significant contributions to the debate on the **non-existence of God**. His critique of religion was a key element in his broader social movement aimed at eradicating caste-based oppression and promoting rationalism. Periyar believed that the concept of God was a construct used by religious authorities, particularly Brahmins, to maintain social hierarchies and exploit marginalized communities. He argued that belief in God and religious rituals perpetuated ignorance, superstition, and inequality. According to Periyar, these beliefs hindered human progress and rational thought.

Periyar's atheism was not merely a rejection of religious practices but also a **political stance** against the exploitation of lower castes and women. He asserted that the idea of God fostered fear and submission among the masses, preventing them from questioning oppressive structures like the caste system. Through his Self-Respect Movement, Periyar encouraged people to reject religious dogma and instead adopt a **scientific temper** and **rational thinking**. He consistently promoted the idea that social progress could only be achieved through secularism and the complete separation of religion from governance and education.

By emphasizing **atheism**, Periyar sought to liberate individuals from the psychological and social chains imposed by religion. His work laid the foundation for the Dravidian movement's secularism and continues to influence social and political thought in Tamil Nadu. His bold stance on the non-existence of God challenged deeply entrenched beliefs, promoting a society based on **reason, equality, and human dignity**.

Key Words: Atheism, Rationalism, Anti-religion, Scientific temper, Social reform, Brahminical orthodoxy, Caste oppression, Secularism, Self-Respect Movement, Non-existence of god.

Introduction

Ramasamy Periyar, often referred to as Periyar, was a social reformer and rationalist from Tamil Nadu who strongly advocated against the **existence of God** and other **religious beliefs**. His views challenged the traditional **orthodoxy of Brahmanism**, caste-based hierarchies, and the associated beliefs in the supernatural or divine forces.

Key Contributions and Beliefs of Periyar on the Non-Existence of God:

1. **Critique of Religious Orthodoxy:** Periyar rejected all forms of religious belief, particularly targeting Hinduism, as he saw it as a system that supported caste discrimination and social oppression. He argued that belief in God was an instrument used by the upper castes, particularly **Brahmins**, to maintain social and economic control over the lower castes.
2. **Rationalism and Atheism:** A major advocate for atheism, Periyar believed that faith in a supernatural power or God kept people subjugated and prevented them from thinking critically. He promoted a rational, scientific approach to life, calling for people to question religious dogmas and superstitions. He urged people to adopt reason and logic in understanding the world.
3. **Caste and Social Equality:** Periyar linked belief in God to the perpetuation of the caste system. He famously said, "There is no God, there is no God, there is no God at all. He who invented God is a fool. He who propagates God is a scoundrel. He who worships God is a barbarian." This belief tied into his larger social philosophy of opposing Brahmanical dominance and advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, especially Dalits.
4. **Self-Respect Movement:** Periyar was the founder of the **Self-Respect Movement** (1925), which sought to liberate people from the shackles of caste and religious oppression. Central to this movement was the rejection of God and divine authority, which he argued were tools of oppression. The movement encouraged people to live with dignity, free from the influence of gods, religious rituals, and priestly classes.
5. **Anti-Brahmanism and Anti-Ritualism:** Periyar's criticism of Brahmanism was intertwined with his atheism. He believed that Brahmins used religious texts and rituals to enforce social inequality. By denying the existence of God, he aimed to dismantle the social hierarchy that Brahmins upheld through religious power. He often publicly mocked religious practices and idols to provoke discussions on the irrationality of such beliefs.
6. **Gender Equality:** Periyar also argued that religious beliefs were a major source of gender discrimination. He opposed religious customs that oppressed women, such as child marriage, widowhood, and the denial of education to women. His advocacy for women's rights was tied to his atheism, as he believed religious institutions were largely responsible for perpetuating patriarchal norms.
7. **Promotion of Scientific Temper:** **Periyar's atheism** was closely linked to his advocacy for a scientific and rational worldview. He believed that science, rather than religion, should guide human progress and development. His promotion of scientific temper was meant to encourage people to break free from superstitious beliefs and embrace modernity.

Periyar's contributions to the critique of religious belief, particularly in the Indian context, were revolutionary for his time. By promoting atheism and rationalism, he sought to dismantle the social structures that perpetuated inequality and injustice. His belief in the non-existence of God was not merely a philosophical stance but a call for social transformation, urging people to reject the religious and cultural systems that oppressed them. Through the **Self-Respect Movement**, **Periyar's atheism** became a powerful tool in the fight against caste discrimination, social inequality, and religious dogma in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

PERIYAR ON CRITIQUE OF RELIGIOUS ORTHODODOXY

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's critique of religious orthodoxy was central to his socio-political philosophy, and he viewed religion—especially Hinduism—as a tool of oppression that maintained the status quo of caste hierarchies, gender discrimination, and social injustice. His rejection of religious orthodoxy was a radical call for social reform and rational thought, positioning him as one of India's most prominent anti-religious thinkers. Here are the key aspects of Periyar's critique of religious orthodoxy:

1. Religion as a Tool of Social Control:

Periyar argued that religion, particularly Hinduism, was used by the upper castes to control the masses. According to him, the religious texts such as the *Manusmriti* and *Vedas* perpetuated the caste system and sanctioned the dominance of Brahmins over other castes. He believed that religious teachings were designed to legitimize inequality, making the lower castes (especially Dalits) accept their subordination as a divine decree.

- He famously stated: **“Religion and god were invented by cunning men to deceive others and to promote selfishness and crookedness.”**

2. Rejection of Brahmins Scriptures:

Periyar condemned the Brahmanic scriptures, particularly the *Manusmriti*, *Vedas* and *Puranas*, as instruments that reinforced social and gender inequalities. He believed these texts promoted superstitions and legitimized caste-based discrimination. For example, he rejected the concept of *varna* (the four-tier caste hierarchy) as a false doctrine designed to keep lower castes in perpetual servitude.

- He criticized the *Bhagavad Gita* for advocating *karma* (destiny) as a justification for social inequalities, arguing that such doctrines encouraged people to accept their suffering and poverty as the will of God.

3. Opposition to Brahminical Dominance:

Central to Periyar's critique was his opposition to Brahminism, which he saw as a system that perpetuated caste hierarchy and exploited non-Brahmin communities. He argued that Brahmins, who occupied the highest caste position, used religion to justify their social and economic privileges, while simultaneously depriving the lower castes of education, resources, and political power.

- Periyar's anti-Brahmin stance was expressed in his slogan **“Brahminical hegemony should be destroyed for real equality.”**

4. Idolatry and Religious Rituals:

Periyar rejected the practice of idol worship and religious rituals, which he saw as manifestations of irrationality. He argued that such practices diverted people's attention away from rational thinking and scientific inquiry. For him, worshipping idols was a form of mental slavery, as it made people believe in supernatural powers that did not exist.

- He famously broke idols of Brahmanic gods to symbolize his protest against religious superstition. This act, though controversial, was intended to provoke people to question their blind faith in religion and its practices.

5. Criticism of Religious Superstitions:

Periyar was a staunch advocate of rationalism and scientific thinking. He argued that religious beliefs and practices were rooted in superstition, leading to social backwardness and intellectual stagnation. For example, he denounced astrology, miracles, and divine intervention as irrational and misleading.

- He often questioned the validity of religious miracles and challenged religious leaders to demonstrate any supernatural powers they claimed to possess. He viewed such beliefs as harmful because they encouraged people to rely on fate rather than rational solutions to their problems.

6. Role of Religion in Oppressing Women:

Periyar believed that religious orthodoxy was a major source of gender oppression. He argued that religious customs, such as child marriage, the dowry system, and restrictions on widow remarriage, were designed to subjugate women. He particularly criticized religious texts that upheld patriarchal norms and deprived women of rights and autonomy.

- He supported the abolition of practices like *sati* (the burning of widows), child marriage, and restrictions on widow remarriage. He advocated for women's education and empowerment as a means of overcoming the religious restrictions placed on them.

7. Rationalism and Atheism as Alternatives:

To counter religious orthodoxy, Periyar promoted atheism and rationalism. He called for people to reject religious doctrines and instead adopt scientific reasoning and critical thinking. He believed that society could only progress if it freed itself from the chains of religious dogma and superstition.

- **Periyar's advocacy** for rationalism was aimed at encouraging people to question religious authorities and challenge the myths and rituals that, according to him, kept them enslaved.

8. Self-Respect Movement:

Periyar's Self-Respect Movement, which he started in 1925, was a direct attack on the religious orthodoxy that he believed sustained social inequalities. The movement aimed to promote dignity and self-respect among marginalized communities, particularly the lower castes, by rejecting religious rituals and the dominance of Brahmins. The movement encouraged people to conduct weddings without Brahmin priests, reject caste-based rituals and embrace egalitarian values.

- The movement also promoted inter-caste marriages and widow remarriages, challenging the orthodox norms that perpetuated caste purity and patriarchy.

Periyar's critique of religious orthodoxy was revolutionary for its time, as it directly challenged the deeply ingrained beliefs and practices that upheld caste, gender and social hierarchies in India. By advocating for the rejection of religion, particularly Brahminical doctrines and promoting rationalism, atheism, and social equality, **Periyar** sought to liberate people from the chains of superstition and inequality. His work laid the foundation for a more secular, rational, and just society in Tamil Nadu and India at large.

PERIYAR ON RATIONALISM AND ATHEISM

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's advocacy of **rationalism and atheism** was one of the most significant aspects of his social philosophy. His rejection of religious beliefs and promotion of a rational, scientific approach to life were not only aimed at dismantling religious orthodoxy but also at liberating people from the shackles of superstition, caste oppression, and gender inequality. Here are the key contributions of **Periyar** in the promotion of rationalism and atheism:

1. Promotion of Rational Thinking:

Periyar was a vocal proponent of rationalism, encouraging people to question religious and social norms instead of accepting them blindly. He believed that critical thinking and a rational approach to life would help people free themselves from the irrational beliefs perpetuated by religion and tradition.

- He emphasized that rationalism allows individuals to seek truth through reasoning, evidence, and scientific inquiry rather than relying on religious dogma.
- Periyar's writings, speeches and activism were aimed at encouraging people to think independently, challenge authority and reject unscientific beliefs.

2. Rejection of the Concept of God:

A staunch atheist, Periyar rejected the existence of God, arguing that the belief in a supreme being was a human invention designed to exploit and oppress people. He believed that the concept of God was created by the upper castes, particularly Brahmins, to justify their control over the lower castes and keep them subservient.

- **Periyar famously said, "There is no God. There is no God at all. He who created God is a fool. He who propagates God is a scoundrel. He who worships God is a barbarian."**
- For Periyar, the idea of God perpetuated a sense of fatalism, where people accepted their social and economic conditions as divine will, thus preventing them from fighting for their rights and equality.

3. Rationalism as a Tool for Social Reform:

Periyar's rationalism was not just an intellectual stance but a powerful tool for social reform. He linked rationalism to the fight against caste discrimination, religious dogma, and gender inequality. He believed that by adopting a rational, scientific worldview, people would be able to break free from the oppressive structures of society.

- He rejected caste-based discrimination and argued that the caste system was sustained through irrational beliefs in divine destiny and karma. By promoting rational thinking, Periyar sought to undermine the religious justification for the caste hierarchy.
- Rationalism, according to **Periyar**, could lead to a more egalitarian society, where people were judged by their actions and abilities rather than their birth or religious affiliation.

4. Atheism as a Means of Empowerment:

Periyar saw atheism as a way to empower marginalized communities, particularly the lower castes and women, who were often oppressed by religious institutions. He believed that the rejection of religion and God would lead to the dismantling of social hierarchies and allow people to live with dignity and self-respect.

- The **Self-Respect Movement**, which Periyar founded in 1925, encouraged people to reject religious rituals and caste-based practices. It promoted the idea that one should not rely on priests or religious leaders for guidance but should instead think critically and live a life free from superstitions.

- Periyar's atheism was closely tied to his campaign for social justice, as he believed that religion was one of the key factors that kept marginalized groups in a state of subordination.

5. Critique of Superstitions and Miracles:

Periyar was a **fierce critic of superstitions** and **religious miracles**, which he saw as irrational beliefs used by religious authorities to manipulate people. He encouraged people to question such claims and to rely on science and reason instead.

- He often challenged religious leaders and priests to prove their claims of supernatural powers, knowing that such beliefs were used to exploit the masses.
- Periyar believed that superstitions kept people ignorant and prevented them from making progress in life. By exposing the falsehoods of such beliefs, he aimed to liberate society from the influence of religious authorities who propagated them.

6. Public Criticism of Religious Practices:

Periyar's **atheism** and **rationalism** were often expressed in his public acts of defiance against religious practices. He would openly criticize religious ceremonies, idol worship and temple rituals as irrational and backward.

- One of the most famous incidents was when Periyar organized events where Hindu idols were broken in public to symbolize the rejection of superstitious beliefs. These acts were intended to provoke people into questioning the validity of idol worship and religious practices.
- He also criticized the use of religious festivals and rituals, arguing that they diverted people's attention from real social issues such as poverty, education and social justice.

7. Rationalism in Education:

Periyar **placed great** emphasis on education as a means of promoting rationalism. He believed that the spread of scientific knowledge and critical thinking would help people break free from the grip of religious orthodoxy and superstition.

- He advocated for secular education, free from the influence of religious institutions, to create a generation of people who could think independently and rationally.
- Periyar also campaigned for the inclusion of scientific subjects in the educational curriculum and for the spread of literacy among marginalized communities, particularly women and lower castes.

8. Influence on Dravidian Politics:

Periyar's promotion of rationalism and atheism had a significant impact on Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu. His ideas formed the ideological foundation for the Dravidian movement, which sought to create a secular, rational and egalitarian society free from the dominance of Brahmanical documents.

- Political parties like the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)**, which emerged from the Dravidian movement, embraced **Periyar's principles of rationalism** and **social justice**. These ideas continue to influence the political landscape of Tamil Nadu today, where rationalist thought and atheism are more prevalent than in many other parts of India.

Periyar's contribution to the promotion of rationalism and atheism was not just a philosophical position but a comprehensive social reform movement aimed at dismantling the religious and caste-based structures that perpetuated inequality and oppression. His advocacy for critical thinking, rejection of superstitions, and atheism laid the foundation for a more egalitarian and rational society in Tamil Nadu and beyond. Through his writings, speeches, and activism, Periyar inspired generations of people to embrace rationalism and reject the irrational beliefs that held them back from achieving social justice and progress.

PERIYAR ON CASTE AND SOCIAL EQUALITY:

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's contribution to **caste abolition** and **social equality** remains one of the most significant aspects of his legacy. His fight against the caste system was closely intertwined with his broader social reform agenda, which sought to eradicate all forms of inequality, whether based on caste, religion, or gender. Periyar's activism and ideologies directly challenged the deeply entrenched social hierarchy of Indian society, particularly in Tamil Nadu, where caste discrimination was rampant.

1. Opposition to the Caste System:

Periyar was a staunch critic of the caste system, which he viewed as a fundamental source of social inequality and oppression. He believed that the caste system, sanctioned by Hindu religious texts like the *Manusmriti*, was designed to maintain the dominance of the upper castes (especially Brahmins) and suppress the rights and dignity of the lower castes, including the Dalits (formerly known as "untouchables").

- He argued that the caste system was a deliberate construct created by Brahmins to control the masses, keep them in subjugation, and perpetuate a hierarchical social order.
- **Periyar** considered caste as a form of slavery, where the lower castes were kept in perpetual servitude by the upper castes.

2. Critique of Religious Justification for Caste:

Periyar believed that the religious justification for caste, particularly in Hinduism, was one of the primary reasons for its persistence. He denounced the Vedas, *Manusmriti*, and other Brahmins scriptures for promoting caste discrimination.

- He rejected the notion of *varna* (the four-tiered caste hierarchy) and argued that the idea of divine sanction for caste-based divisions was nothing more than a strategy to maintain Brahminical dominance.
- Periyar's condemnation of Brahmanism was rooted in his belief that religion, especially in its Brahminical form, perpetuated inequality by teaching people that their social status was determined by birth and could not be altered.

3. The Self-Respect Movement (1925):

Periyar's most significant contribution to the fight against caste inequality came through the establishment of the **Self-Respect Movement**. The movement aimed to liberate the oppressed castes from the dominance of Brahmins and promote a sense of dignity and equality among all people, irrespective of caste or religion.

- The Self-Respect Movement encouraged the lower castes to reject the religious rituals and customs that reinforced their subjugation. It promoted the idea of self-dignity and called for the eradication of caste-based practices, including the role of Brahmins as intermediaries in religious and social functions.
- The movement also promoted inter-caste marriages, education for the lower castes, and the rejection of caste-based titles and surnames that indicated social status.

4. Temple Entry and Anti-Caste Protests:

Periyar led several campaigns for the **right of lower castes to enter Hindu temples**, a practice that was forbidden by orthodox Hinduism at the time. The **Vaikom Satyagraha** (1924–1925) was one of the early protests in which Periyar participated, advocating for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized groups to enter temples in Kerala, which were traditionally reserved for upper-caste Hindus.

- **Periyar's protests** often took the form of public agitations where he demanded equal rights for the lower castes in religious and social settings. He organized public demonstrations and satyagrahas (non-violent resistance), calling for the removal of discriminatory practices.
- His anti-temple entry campaign symbolized his broader rejection of the caste system and religious orthodoxy. He argued that temples, religious rituals, and idols were symbols of caste dominance, and their exclusionary nature was designed to reinforce the inferior status of the lower castes.

5. Advocacy for Inter-Caste Marriages:

One of the most radical aspects of Periyar's fight against caste discrimination was his advocacy for **inter-caste marriages**. He believed that marriage was one of the primary institutions through which the caste system was perpetuated. By encouraging inter-caste marriages, he sought to break down the barriers that divided people based on their birth.

- **Periyar's Self-Respect Movement** organized inter-caste weddings that deliberately avoided the presence of Brahmin priests and traditional religious rituals. These weddings were seen as a direct challenge to the orthodox Brahminical practice of endogamy (marriage within one's caste).
- He promoted the idea that love and companionship, not caste, should be the basis for marriage, and he even supported legal reforms to facilitate inter-caste unions.

6. Eradication of Untouchability:

Periyar was a relentless campaigner for the abolition of **untouchability**, the most extreme form of caste discrimination. He condemned the inhumane treatment of Dalits, who were regarded as "untouchables" by the upper castes and were subjected to severe social ostracization.

- He demanded that untouchability be abolished not only in practice but also in the minds of people. He saw the practice as a direct result of religious and caste-based teachings, which dehumanized entire sections of society.
- **Periyar** was critical of moderate reformers who only sought to mitigate the harshest effects of untouchability without addressing the root cause—religion and the caste system itself. He believed that any solution short of total abolition of the caste system would be ineffective.

7. Fight for Social Equality and Representation:

Periyar was a champion of **social equality** and believed that political and economic power must be equally distributed among all castes. He fought for the rights of the lower castes to be adequately represented in government jobs, education, and other institutions of power.

- His activism contributed to the introduction of **reservations (affirmative action policies)** in Tamil Nadu, where a certain percentage of government jobs and educational opportunities were reserved for members of the **marginalized castes (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes)**.
- **Periyar** believed that without proper representation and economic opportunities, the oppressed castes would never be able to rise out of their subjugation.

8. Social Reforms and Education:

Periyar strongly believed that **education was the key to social equality**. He emphasized the need for universal education, especially for the lower castes and women, who had been historically excluded from learning. He saw education as a tool to break the cycle of caste-based discrimination.

- He advocated for secular, rational, and scientific education that was free from the influence of religion and caste.
- His influence led to the establishment of several educational institutions aimed at providing opportunities for the oppressed castes and fostering a spirit of equality.

9. Influence on Dravidian Politics:

Periyar's anti-caste ideology had a profound influence on **Dravidian politics** in Tamil Nadu. His ideas of social justice, equality, and the abolition of caste became the guiding principles for the **Dravidian movement** and political parties like the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** and **All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)**.

- The Dravidian parties, which rose to power in Tamil Nadu, adopted Periyar's vision of a caste-free society and implemented policies aimed at promoting social and economic equality, such as land reforms, educational reforms, and affirmative action for lower castes.
- The legacy of Periyar's fight against caste continues to shape the politics of Tamil Nadu, which remains one of the most progressive states in India in terms of social justice and caste-based equality.

10. A Vision for an Egalitarian Society:

Ultimately, Periyar's lifelong goal was the creation of an **egalitarian society**, where people were treated equally regardless of their birth, caste, religion, or gender. He believed that the abolition of the caste system was the first step toward achieving a society based on rationality, equality and human dignity.

- He envisioned a world where the lower castes and marginalized communities could live with self-respect, free from the domination of the upper castes and religious authorities.
- His commitment to social equality extended beyond caste and included gender equality and the fight against religious oppression.

Periyar's contributions to caste abolition and social equality were revolutionary in their scope and impact. Through his radical critique of the caste system, his promotion of the Self-Respect Movement, and his relentless fight for the rights of the oppressed, Periyar laid the foundation for a more just and egalitarian society in Tamil Nadu and beyond. His legacy continues to inspire movements for social justice, equality and human rights in India today.

PERIYAR ON SELF- RESPECT MOVEMENT:

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's Self-Respect Movement, launched in 1925, was one of his most influential contributions to social reform in Tamil Nadu and India. The movement was a direct response to the entrenched social inequalities perpetuated by the caste system, religious orthodoxy, and patriarchal norms. It aimed to create a society where all individuals, regardless of caste, gender, or religion, could live with dignity, self-respect, and equality.

1. Origins and Objectives of the Self-Respect Movement:

The **Self-Respect Movement** was founded to challenge the **oppression of marginalized communities**, particularly the lower castes, and to eradicate the social, religious, and cultural practices that perpetuated inequality.

- **Primary Objective:** The movement sought to instill a sense of dignity and self-respect in people from marginalized communities, especially those considered "oppressed" in the caste hierarchy.
- **Core Ideals:** It aimed to abolish caste-based discrimination, promote gender equality and reject religious orthodoxy that kept people in subjugation.
- **Motto:** "To live as a human being with dignity" was the fundamental goal. Periyar believed that every individual should have the right to think, question and live free from caste or religious oppression.

2. Critique of Brahminical Hegemony:

One of the central tenets of the Self-Respect Movement was its critique of **Brahmanical dominance** in social, religious, and cultural life. **Periyar** viewed Brahmanism as a system that perpetuated caste inequalities, kept non-Brahmins in servitude, and legitimized social hierarchies through religious rituals and texts.

- **Rejection of Brahminical Authority:** Periyar and the movement opposed the Brahmins' control over religious and social practices, particularly rituals that involved Brahmin priests, such as marriages, temple worship, and other ceremonies.
- **Challenging Vedic Authority:** The movement encouraged people to reject the authority of Hindu scriptures like the *Vedas*, *Manusmriti*, and *Puranas*, which upheld the caste system and gender discrimination.
- **Slogans:** One of the slogans of the movement was "**No God, No Religion, No Caste**," reflecting its rejection of Brahmanical Hinduism as the source of social inequality.

3. Promotion of Rationalism and Secularism:

The Self-Respect Movement emphasized **rationalism** and **secularism** as key tools for social reform. It encouraged individuals to question religious dogmas, superstitions, and irrational practices that maintained social hierarchies.

- **Rejection of Religious Rituals:** The movement opposed religious rituals that reinforced caste distinctions, such as the use of Brahmin priests for marriages, funerals, and other life-cycle ceremonies. Self-Respect marriages, for example, were conducted without priests and religious rituals, symbolizing equality and rationalism.
- **Encouragement of Critical Thinking:** Periyar believed that rationalism was essential for breaking free from the mental slavery imposed by religion and caste. He advocated for scientific thinking and rejected the idea of divine intervention in human affairs.
- **Secular Ideals:** The movement promoted the idea that social reforms and human progress should be based on reason, science and humanistic values, not on religious beliefs.

4. Marriage Reforms and Gender Equality:

One of the most significant aspects of the Self-Respect Movement was its focus on **marriage reforms** and the promotion of **gender equality**. Periyar believed that traditional Hindu marriages were a means of reinforcing caste divisions and patriarchal control over women.

- **Self-Respect Marriages:** The movement advocated for marriages conducted without Brahmin priests, religious rituals, or caste-based customs. These marriages were based on mutual consent and equality between partners, challenging the orthodox practice of dowry and arranged marriages.

- **Women's Rights:** The movement also promoted the idea of **women's liberation** from oppressive social practices such as child marriage, dowry, and the restrictions placed on widows. Periyar was a strong advocate for women's education and their right to make independent decisions about their lives, including marriage and family.
- **Criticism of Patriarchy:** Periyar viewed patriarchy as a byproduct of religious orthodoxy and caste hierarchy, and he sought to dismantle it by advocating for equal rights for women in all spheres of life.

5. Inter-Caste Marriages:

The **Self-Respect Movement** actively promoted **inter-caste marriages** as a way to break down caste barriers and create a more egalitarian society. **Periyar believed** that the caste system was perpetuated through the strict enforcement of endogamy (marriage within one's caste) and he saw inter-caste marriages as a revolutionary act of social reform.

- **Challenge to Caste Hierarchy:** By encouraging inter-caste marriages, the movement directly challenged the caste-based social order that divided society into rigid, hierarchical groups.
- **Legal and Social Support:** Periyar advocated for legal reforms that would facilitate inter-caste marriages and ensure that couples who married outside their caste were protected from social ostracism and violence.

6. Abolition of Caste-Based Titles and Practices:

The Self-Respect Movement called for the abolition of caste-based titles and practices that perpetuated social inequality. Periyar encouraged people to abandon surnames and titles that indicated caste, as these were symbols of the caste hierarchy.

- **Name Reform:** He encouraged people to adopt names that did not reveal their caste background, thereby promoting equality in social interactions.
- **Opposition to Caste-Based Rituals:** The movement rejected caste-based practices, including rituals that differentiated between the so-called upper and lower castes. Periyar believed that such practices reinforced the subjugation of marginalized communities and sought to eliminate them from public life.

7. Educational Reforms and Upliftment of the Marginalized:

Periyar viewed **education** as a crucial tool for breaking the cycle of caste-based oppression and empowering marginalized communities. The Self-Respect Movement advocated for the education of all people, regardless of caste or gender, and emphasized the importance of scientific and rational education.

- **Universal Education:** Periyar believed that education should be accessible to all, especially the lower castes and women, who had been historically denied access to learning.
- **Secular Education:** He supported the establishment of schools and institutions that promoted secular, rational, and scientific education, free from religious influence.
- **Focus on Social Equality:** The movement sought to create an educated class of people from marginalized communities who could challenge the dominance of the upper castes and demand equal opportunities in employment, politics, and society.

8. Impact on Dravidian Identity and Politics:

The **Self-Respect Movement** played a significant role in shaping the **Dravidian identity** and the politics of Tamil Nadu. Periyar's rejection of Brahmanism and the caste system resonated with the non-Brahmin communities of Tamil Nadu, particularly the Dravidians, who saw themselves as distinct from the Aryan-dominated Brahmin culture.

- **Dravidian Movement:** The ideas of the Self-Respect Movement laid the foundation for the **Dravidian movement**, which sought to establish a secular, egalitarian, and caste-free society. Political parties like the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** adopted Periyar's principles and implemented policies aimed at reducing caste-based inequalities in Tamil Nadu.
- **Social and Political Reforms:** The movement influenced policies related to social justice, such as land reforms, reservation policies (affirmative action for marginalized communities), and efforts to promote education and economic empowerment for lower-caste communities.

9. Cultural Reforms and Rejection of Religious Superstitions:

The **Self-Respect Movement** also aimed to reform the cultural life of Tamil society by rejecting religious superstitions and promoting rational, humanistic values. Periyar saw religion and its associated rituals as a major obstacle to social progress, particularly for the lower castes.

- **Anti-Superstition Campaigns:** The movement condemned practices such as idol worship, astrology, and religious miracles, which were seen as irrational and exploitative. Periyar often held public events where religious idols were broken or defaced to encourage people to question the validity of such beliefs.
- **Promotion of Secular Festivals:** The movement encouraged people to celebrate secular festivals and occasions that promoted unity, equality, and rationalism, rather than religious festivals that reinforced caste and religious divisions.

Periyar's Self-Respect Movement was a groundbreaking social reform initiative that sought to create a more just, equal, and rational society by rejecting caste discrimination, religious orthodoxy, and patriarchal norms. The movement promoted dignity, self-respect, and equality for all individuals, regardless of caste or gender, and had a profound impact on the social and political landscape of Tamil Nadu and India. Through its emphasis on rationalism, education, gender equality, and the rejection of oppressive social practices, the **Self-Respect Movement continues** to influence movements for social justice and equality in India today.

PERIYAR ON ANTI -BRAHMANISM AND ANTI RITUALISM

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's stance on **Anti-Brahmanism** and **Anti-Ritualism** was central to his ideology and activism. These two aspects were closely tied to his broader critique of the **caste system, religious orthodoxy, and social inequality** in India, especially in Tamil Nadu. Periyar believed that Brahmanism, the ideology and practices upheld by the Brahmin class and religious rituals were key mechanisms through which the upper castes maintained their social dominance and oppressed the lower castes.

1. Anti-Brahmanism: Critique of Brahminical Supremacy

Periyar's **Anti-Brahmanism** was not directed at individuals of the Brahmin caste but rather at the ideology of **Brahmanism**, which he viewed as a system of thought that perpetuated social inequality, religious exploitation and caste oppression.

- **Rejection of Brahminical Authority:** Periyar believed that the Brahmin class used **religion and rituals** to dominate and exploit the lower castes. He argued that Brahmins positioned themselves as intermediaries between people and god, thereby controlling religious and social life.

- He saw **Brahmin priests** as symbols of oppression, reinforcing caste-based privileges by claiming divine authority and imposing religious texts like the *Vedas* and *Manusmriti* on society.
- **Critique of the Manusmriti:** The *Manusmriti*, a Hindu legal text that prescribes strict caste hierarchies and sanctions the social subjugation of lower castes, was one of Periyar's main targets. He denounced it as a document that dehumanized non-Brahmins and entrenched the dominance of Brahmins over other castes.
 - In one of his most famous symbolic protests, Periyar publicly burned the *Manusmriti* to demonstrate his rejection of its discriminatory teachings.
- **Call for Social Equality:** Periyar advocated for a **casteless society**, free from the dominance of Brahminism. He believed that abolishing Brahminical supremacy was essential to achieving equality and justice for the oppressed castes.

2. Opposition to Vedic Religion and Brahminical Impositions

Periyar's **Anti-Brahmanism** also extended to his critique of **Vedic religion** and impositions practiced by the Brahmins. He saw **Brahminical impositions** as a system that legitimized and institutionalized the caste hierarchy, with Brahmins at the top and Dalits at the bottom.

- **Rejection of the Vedas and Puranas:** Periyar denounced the Vedas, Puranas, and other Hindu religious texts as tools of oppression that justified caste inequality. He rejected the authority of these scriptures, arguing that they were written by Brahmins to maintain their dominance over non-Brahmins.
- **Attack on the Concept of Karma:** Periyar criticized the **concept of karma** and **rebirth**, which were central to Brahminical teachings. He argued that these ideas were used to keep the lower castes in subjugation by convincing them that their suffering in this life was a result of their actions in a previous life, thus discouraging them from questioning their social position.
 - According to Periyar, the doctrine of karma served to justify the caste system and prevent the oppressed from fighting for their rights.

3. Anti-Ritualism: Rejection of Religious Rituals

Periyar's **Anti-Ritualism** was an extension of his opposition to Brahmanical dominance. He believed that **religious rituals** were tools used by the Brahmins to control and manipulate society, especially the lower castes. He saw these rituals as irrational, superstitious, and oppressive.

- **Critique of Temple Worship:** Periyar opposed temple worship, which he viewed as a means through which the Brahmins maintained their control over religious life. He argued that temples were centers of caste discrimination, where only Brahmins could serve as priests, and lower castes were often denied entry or relegated to menial tasks.
 - He led campaigns advocating for **temple entry** rights for lower castes, emphasizing that religion should not be a vehicle for social exclusion.
- **Rejection of Religious Ceremonies:** Periyar also criticized religious ceremonies like **pujas**, **festivals**, and **yagnas** (sacrificial rituals), which he saw as elaborate and meaningless rituals designed to exploit the gullibility of the masses. He accused Brahmin priests of using these ceremonies to extract wealth from the poor and maintain their social supremacy.
- **Self-Respect Marriages:** As part of his Anti-Ritualism, Periyar introduced **Self-Respect Marriages** as an alternative to traditional Hindu marriages that involved Brahmin priests and religious rituals. These marriages were conducted without priests, based on mutual consent and equality, and were meant to promote rationalism and break away from caste-based customs.
 - Self-Respect marriages were a revolutionary act in Tamil Nadu, as they rejected the caste and religious orthodoxy that governed traditional marriages.

4. Promotion of Rationalism and Atheism

Periyar's rejection of Brahmanism and religious rituals was part of his broader promotion of **rationalism** and **atheism**. He believed that rational thinking, rather than blind adherence to religious practices, was essential for creating an egalitarian society.

- **Rationalism vs. Superstition:** Periyar encouraged people to adopt a **rational, scientific approach** to life, rejecting superstitions and religious dogmas that he believed kept society backward. He often stated that faith in religious rituals and gods was irrational and harmful to human progress.
- **Atheism:** Periyar was an outspoken **atheist**, arguing that belief in God was used by the Brahmins to legitimize their control over society. He believed that **godlessness** was a necessary condition for true social equality, as it would free people from the mental slavery imposed by religion.
 - He often said, "There is no god. There is no god. There is no god at all. He who created God is a fool. He who propagates God is a scoundrel. He who worships God is a barbarian."

5. Social Reform through Anti-Brahmanism and Anti-Ritualism

Periyar's Anti-Brahmanism and Anti-Ritualism were not just philosophical stances; they were integral to his efforts to bring about **social reform**. He believed that as long as people continued to adhere to Brahminical doctrines and religious rituals, they would remain trapped in the cycle of caste-based oppression.

- **Eradication of the Caste System:** For Periyar, abolishing Brahmanism and religious rituals was essential for dismantling the caste system. He believed that the caste system was fundamentally a religious construct, and that by rejecting the religious basis for caste, society could move toward equality.
- **Empowerment of the Oppressed:** Periyar's goal was to **empower the lower castes**, particularly the Dalits and other marginalized communities, by encouraging them to reject the religious and social practices that legitimized their oppression. He promoted **education, self-respect, and economic independence** as alternatives to religious dependency.

6. Periyar's Legacy in Anti-Brahmanism and Anti-Ritualism

Periyar's **Anti-Brahmanism** and **Anti-Ritualism** had a profound impact on Tamil Nadu's social and political landscape. His ideas influenced the rise of the **Dravidian movement**, which sought to create a secular, egalitarian society free from caste-based discrimination.

- **Dravidian Politics:** The political parties that emerged from the Dravidian movement, such as the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** and **All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)**, adopted Periyar's principles of anti-Brahminism and secularism. These parties implemented policies aimed at reducing Brahmin dominance and promoting social justice, including affirmative action policies for lower castes.
- **Social Justice Movements:** Periyar's legacy continues to inspire **social justice movements** in India, particularly those that fight against caste-based discrimination, religious orthodoxy, and social inequality. His ideas have also influenced the discourse on **rationalism** and **atheism** in Indian intellectual and activist circles.

Periyar's **Anti-Brahmanism** and **Anti-Ritualism** were central to his vision of a society free from caste-based oppression and religious exploitation. By rejecting the authority of Brahmins and denouncing religious rituals as tools of social control, Periyar sought to create a more rational, egalitarian, and just society. His critique of Brahmanism and religious practices laid the foundation for the Dravidian movement, which continues to influence Tamil Nadu's politics and social reforms aimed at promoting equality and rationalism.

PERIYAR ON GENDER EQUALITY.

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's contributions to gender equality were groundbreaking, particularly in a society deeply entrenched in **patriarchal values** and **caste-based oppression**. Periyar viewed the subjugation of women as closely linked to the caste system and religious orthodoxy. His vision for gender equality was intertwined with his larger fight against caste discrimination, religious orthodoxy, and social hierarchies. He believed that women's liberation was essential for achieving true social justice.

1. Critique of Patriarchy and Gender Oppression:

Periyar believed that **patriarchy** was a product of religious and caste-based systems that subordinated women, especially in Hindu society. He argued that religious texts, rituals, and social practices reinforced women's inferiority and restricted their rights.

- **Manusmriti:** One of his primary targets was the *Manusmriti*, an ancient Hindu legal text that laid out the rules of social conduct, particularly for women. Periyar criticized it for promoting the idea that women were inferior to men and should be subservient to their fathers, husbands, and sons.
- **Religious Orthodoxy:** Periyar attacked Hindu religious practices that sanctioned **polygamy**, **child marriage**, and **the degradation of widows**, viewing these customs as tools of patriarchal control. He believed that religious orthodoxy was used to justify and perpetuate the oppression of women, just as it was used to legitimize the caste system.

2. Advocacy for Women's Education:

Periyar strongly advocated for **women's education**, viewing it as essential for their empowerment and liberation. He argued that education was the key to breaking free from the social and religious constraints that kept women in subjugation.

- **Education as a Path to Independence:** Periyar believed that an educated woman could be economically independent and, therefore, more empowered to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. He encouraged women to pursue education and employment as a way to achieve autonomy.
- **Opposition to Religious Schools:** He also opposed religious schools and institutions that promoted the traditional roles of women as homemakers and caretakers. He believed that these schools reinforced patriarchal values and were designed to keep women uneducated and dependent.

3. Campaign against Child Marriage and Dowry:

Periyar campaigned actively against **child marriage** and the **dowry system**, both of which he saw as manifestations of the patriarchal control over women.

- **Child Marriage:** He was an ardent critic of child marriage, which was prevalent in India during his time. He believed that marrying off young girls deprived them of education, personal growth, and the ability to make independent choices. He advocated for laws to set a minimum age for marriage and ensure that girls were not married off before they reached adulthood.
- **Dowry System:** Periyar condemned the dowry system, which he viewed as exploitative and dehumanizing for women. He argued that dowry reduced women to mere commodities and placed an undue financial burden on their families. He urged society to reject this practice and encouraged marriages based on mutual consent and equality.

4. Self-Respect Marriages: Revolutionizing Gender Equality:

One of Periyar's most significant contributions to gender equality was the introduction of **Self-Respect Marriages**, which challenged the traditional Hindu marriage system that he saw as deeply patriarchal and caste-based.

- **Marriage without Religious Rituals:** Self-Respect Marriages were conducted without the involvement of Brahmin priests or religious rituals. These marriages were meant to symbolize equality between men and women, rejecting the notion that women were inferior or subordinate to men in marriage.
- **Focus on Mutual Consent and Equality:** Periyar argued that marriage should be based on mutual respect and consent, without the dominance of caste, dowry or religious customs. He believed that women should have the same rights as men in choosing their partners and determining the terms of their marriage.
- **Legal Recognition:** In Tamil Nadu, Self-Respect Marriages gained legal recognition and became a symbol of social reform, helping to promote gender equality by challenging the patriarchal structures embedded in traditional marriage practices.

5. Women's Rights and Reproductive Autonomy:

Periyar advocated for women's rights in areas such as reproductive autonomy and the right to make decisions about their own bodies. He believed that women should have control over their reproductive choices, including the right to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

- **Opposition to Forced Motherhood:** Periyar argued that women should not be forced into motherhood against their will. He viewed the pressure on women to have children as a form of patriarchal control, where women were seen primarily as bearers of children rather than as individuals with their own rights and desires.
- **Family Planning:** Periyar supported family planning initiatives and encouraged women to have fewer children, believing that this would lead to better living conditions and more opportunities for women to pursue education and employment.

6. Gender Equality in Public Life:

Periyar was a strong advocate for the participation of women in **public life**. He believed that women should be active in politics, public service, and social reform movements and should not be confined to the private sphere.

- **Political Empowerment:** Periyar encouraged women to participate in political movements and to stand up for their rights. He saw political empowerment as a critical step toward achieving gender equality, and he supported women's involvement in the Dravidian movement, which sought to challenge caste and gender hierarchies.
- **Equal Employment Opportunities:** He also called for equal employment opportunities for women, arguing that economic independence was crucial for their liberation. He believed that women should have access to the same jobs and wages as men and should not be restricted to domestic roles.

7. Critique of Patriarchal Family Structures:

Periyar was critical of the **patriarchal family structure**, which he believed reinforced women's subjugation and dependence on men.

- **Rejection of Male Dominance:** Periyar rejected the idea that men should be the heads of households or the primary decision-makers in families. He believed that women should have an equal say in family matters and that marriage should be a partnership of equals.

- **Freedom from Male Control:** He advocated for women's right to divorce and remarry, viewing it as a means of liberating them from abusive or oppressive marriages. He argued that women should not be bound by societal expectations that forced them to remain in unhappy or harmful marriages.

8. Revolutionizing Widowhood:

Periyar sought to reform the treatment of **widows**, who were often subjected to harsh social restrictions and discrimination in traditional Hindu society.

- **Rights for Widows:** In many Hindu communities, widows were forbidden from remarrying and were often ostracized or forced into a life of austerity. Periyar condemned this treatment, advocating for the right of widows to remarry and lead normal lives.
- **Opposition to Widow Seclusion:** He also opposed the practice of **widow seclusion**, where widows were expected to live in isolation and follow strict social restrictions. Periyar believed that widows should have the same rights and opportunities as other women and should not be treated as outcasts.

9. Promotion of Rationalism and Secularism for Women's Rights:

Periyar's promotion of **rationalism** and **secularism** was closely linked to his advocacy for gender equality. He believed that religious and superstitious beliefs were used to keep women in subjugation, and that a rational, secular approach was essential for women's liberation.

- **Rationalism:** Periyar encouraged women to question religious and cultural traditions that restricted their rights and freedoms. He argued that women should embrace rationalism and reject superstitions that perpetuated their oppression.
- **Secularism:** He believed that a secular society, free from religious influence, would be more conducive to gender equality, as it would eliminate the religious justifications for patriarchal practices.

10. Legacy of Periyar's Contribution to Gender Equality:

Periyar's ideas and activism on gender equality have had a lasting impact on Tamil Nadu and beyond. His efforts to promote women's rights, challenge patriarchal norms, and create a more egalitarian society continue to influence movements for gender equality in India today.

- **Impact on Dravidian Politics:** The political parties that emerged from the **Dravidian movement**, such as the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)**, adopted many of Periyar's ideas on gender equality. These parties have implemented policies aimed at promoting women's education, employment, and political participation.
- **Women's Empowerment Movements:** Periyar's advocacy for gender equality has also inspired women's empowerment movements in Tamil Nadu and across India. His emphasis on education, economic independence, and political participation continues to resonate with activists working to advance women's rights.

Periyar's contributions to **gender equality** were transformative and far-reaching. His critique of religious orthodoxy, patriarchy, and social customs that oppressed women laid the foundation for a more equal and just society. By advocating for women's education, economic independence, and participation in public life, Periyar sought to empower women and dismantle the structures that kept them in subjugation. His legacy continues to inspire movements for gender equality and social justice in India today.

PERIYAR ON PROMOTION OF SCIENTIFIC TEMPER:

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's contribution to the **promotion of scientific temper** was central to his philosophy of rationalism and his broader social reform movement. He believed that **scientific thinking** and **rational inquiry** were essential tools for liberating people from the clutches of superstition, caste discrimination, and religious orthodoxy. His efforts in promoting scientific temper were aimed at encouraging critical thinking and dispelling irrational beliefs, which he saw as barriers to social progress and equality.

1. Promotion of Rationalism and Critique of Superstition:

Periyar was a staunch **rationalist**, advocating for the use of reason and logic to understand the world. He viewed superstition and blind faith in religious rituals as major obstacles to human progress, especially in Indian society.

- **Attack on Superstition:** Periyar actively campaigned against superstitions that were deeply ingrained in Indian culture, such as beliefs in astrology, divine miracles, and the supernatural. He argued that these beliefs were propagated by religious leaders to keep people ignorant and submissive, especially the oppressed castes.
- **Encouraging Scientific Inquiry:** He encouraged people to question superstitious practices and to rely on **scientific knowledge** and **evidence-based thinking**. Periyar believed that only through a rational and scientific approach could society advance and rid itself of oppressive structures like caste and patriarchy.

2. Rejection of Religious Dogma and Authority:

Periyar's **promotion of scientific temper** was closely linked to his rejection of **religious dogma** and **divine authority**. He believed that religious teachings often contradicted scientific facts and promoted irrationality.

- **Critique of Religion and Science Conflict:** Periyar criticized religious institutions for promoting beliefs that were incompatible with scientific understanding. He pointed out that many religious claims about creation, the universe, and human life were not supported by evidence and contradicted scientific principles.
- **Opposition to Blind Faith:** Periyar's rationalism involved a direct challenge to **blind faith**. He believed that unquestioning faith in religious leaders or holy texts hindered the development of critical thinking. Instead, he advocated for the use of reason to critically evaluate all forms of authority, especially religious.

3. Encouraging Scientific Education and Secularism:

Periyar viewed **scientific education** as essential for building a modern and progressive society. He emphasized the need for secular and scientific education to free people from the influence of religious orthodoxy and caste-based discrimination.

- **Promotion of Secular Education:** Periyar believed that religious education reinforced superstition and outdated social norms, while **secular education** focused on critical thinking, reason, and scientific knowledge. He promoted the idea that scientific education was crucial for empowering the oppressed castes and enabling them to challenge the social and religious hierarchies that kept them marginalized.
- **Support for Science and Technology:** Periyar was an advocate of modern science and technology. He encouraged people, particularly the youth, to pursue scientific careers and to embrace technological advancements. He believed that science and technology could improve the quality of life and promote social equality by breaking down the barriers of ignorance and superstition.

4. Advocacy for Scientific Temper in Public Life:

Periyar's efforts to promote scientific temper extended beyond education and into **public life**. He encouraged the application of scientific reasoning in all aspects of society, including politics, economics, and social reform.

- **Science in Governance:** Periyar argued that governance and public policy should be based on **scientific principles** and **rational decision-making**, rather than on religious or caste-based considerations. He believed that the scientific method could help create a more efficient and just society by ensuring that policies were made based on evidence and reason, rather than superstition or tradition.
- **Science and Social Progress:** He saw science as a tool for **social progress** and **emancipation**. By promoting scientific thinking, Periyar believed society could overcome the injustices of the caste system, patriarchy, and religious exploitation. In particular, he viewed the application of science and technology as crucial for improving the living standards of the poor and marginalized communities.

5. Opposition to Caste-Based Beliefs Through Scientific Reasoning:

Periyar used **scientific reasoning** to debunk the religious and social justifications for the caste system. He believed that the caste hierarchy was an artificial construct with no basis in science or logic, and that it was sustained through religious myths and rituals.

- **Debunking Myths about Caste Purity:** Periyar challenged the **myth of caste purity** by pointing out that there was no scientific basis for the idea that certain groups of people were inherently superior or inferior based on their birth. He argued that the notion of purity and pollution was a superstition used to maintain Brahmanical dominance.
- **Biological Equality:** He used the findings of modern science, particularly in **biology**, to argue that all human beings were fundamentally equal. He rejected the idea that certain castes were born with divine qualities, emphasizing that science showed no difference in the abilities or worth of individuals based on their caste or birth.

6. Advocacy for Scientific Thinking in Social Reform Movements:

Periyar's **social reform movements**, particularly the **Self-Respect Movement**, were driven by his belief in scientific thinking and rationalism. He argued that social reform should be based on **scientific understanding** of human equality, rather than religious teachings or traditional customs.

- **Rational Approach to Social Issues:** In his efforts to eradicate caste, gender discrimination, and economic inequality, Periyar encouraged his followers to adopt a **rational and scientific approach**. He believed that social reforms should be guided by evidence-based reasoning, rather than by appeals to religion or tradition.
- **Self-Respect Marriages:** Periyar's introduction of **Self-Respect Marriages** was an example of his commitment to scientific temper. These marriages, conducted without religious rituals, emphasized **equality, rationality, and mutual respect**, rejecting the superstitious practices associated with traditional Hindu marriages.

7. Criticism of Astrological and Supernatural Beliefs:

Periyar was a fierce critic of **astrology** and other **supernatural beliefs**, which he viewed as pseudosciences that misled people and reinforced superstition. He believed that these beliefs were used by the upper castes, particularly Brahmins, to maintain control over society.

- **Debunking Astrology:** Periyar denounced astrology as an unscientific practice that exploited people's ignorance and fears. He argued that astrology had no basis in scientific fact and that it was used by religious leaders to manipulate people's lives. He encouraged people to reject astrological predictions and instead rely on reason and science.
- **Opposition to Miracle Cures:** Similarly, Periyar opposed the belief in **miracle cures** and other supernatural claims, arguing that these were fraudulent practices used to deceive the masses. He encouraged people to trust in modern medicine and scientific advancements for their health and well-being.

8. Scientific Temper and Atheism:

Periyar's **atheism** was closely linked to his promotion of scientific temper. He believed that the existence of God and religious beliefs were incompatible with rational thinking and scientific understanding.

- **God as an Irrational Concept:** Periyar argued that the belief in God was irrational and had no scientific basis. He saw religion as a form of mental slavery that kept people from thinking critically and questioning authority. By promoting atheism, Periyar sought to free people from the influence of religion and encourage them to adopt a scientific worldview.
- **Human Progress through Science, Not Religion:** Periyar believed that **human progress** depended on science and reason, not religion. He argued that science could solve many of the problems facing society, such as poverty, disease and inequality, while religion only served to maintain the status quo.

9. Periyar's Influence on the Dravidian Movement and Scientific Temper:

Periyar's **promotion** of scientific temper had a lasting influence on the **Dravidian movement**, which emphasized rationalism, secularism and social equality. The movement adopted Periyar's ideas on the importance of scientific thinking in challenging caste and religious oppression.

- **Dravidian Politics and Science:** The political parties that emerged from the Dravidian movement, such as the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)**, incorporated Periyar's emphasis on scientific temper into their platforms. These parties promoted secular education, scientific advancement, and social reforms based on rational principles.
- **Impact on Tamil Society:** Periyar's efforts to promote scientific temper helped shape a more rational and secular mindset in Tamil Nadu. His influence can be seen in the state's emphasis on education, science, and technology, as well as its rejection of caste-based and religious discrimination.

10. Periyar's Legacy in Promoting Scientific Temper:

Periyar's legacy as a promoter of scientific temper continues to inspire movements for rationalism and secularism in India today. His emphasis on **critical thinking**, **evidence-based reasoning**, and **scientific education** remains relevant in contemporary debates on social justice, education and the role of religion in society.

- **Influence on Rationalist Movements:** Periyar's ideas have influenced the growth of **rationalist movements** across India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. These movements continue to challenge superstition, religious orthodoxy, and caste discrimination, using the tools of science and reason that Periyar championed.

- **Scientific Temper in Indian Constitution:** The Indian Constitution itself enshrines the importance of scientific temper, particularly in Article

22 PRATIGYA (OATHS) OF DR. BHIM RAO AMBEDKAR

डॉ. भीमराव अंबेडकर ने बौद्ध धर्म अपनाने के समय 22 प्रतिज्ञाएँ (Oaths) ली थीं, जिनका उद्देश्य जातिवाद, छुआछूत और अंधविश्वास से मुक्ति पाना था। ये प्रतिज्ञाएँ सामाजिक समानता, स्वतंत्रता और बौद्ध धर्म के मूल्यों को अपनाने पर आधारित हैं। नीचे इन 22 प्रतिज्ञाओं का हिंदी और अंग्रेजी में विस्तृत विवरण दिया गया है:

22 प्रतिज्ञाएँ (हिंदी में)

1. मैं ब्रह्मा, विष्णु और महेश को भगवान नहीं मानूंगा।
2. मैं राम और कृष्ण को भगवान नहीं मानूंगा।
3. मैं गौरी, गणपति आदि हिंदू धर्म के किसी भी देवी-देवता को नहीं मानूंगा।
4. मैं भगवान की पूजा में विश्वास नहीं रखूंगा।
5. मैं ब्राह्मणों द्वारा रचित किसी भी कर्मकांड को नहीं मानूंगा।
6. मैं मनुष्य के बराबर जन्मसिद्ध अधिकार को मानूंगा।
7. मैं जातिवाद और ऊँच-नीच की भावना का त्याग करूंगा।
8. मैं किसी भी प्रकार की जाति व्यवस्था में विश्वास नहीं करूंगा।
9. मैं हिंदू धर्म का पालन नहीं करूंगा क्योंकि यह असमानता और अन्याय पर आधारित है।
10. मैं बुद्ध, धम्म और संघ में पूरी श्रद्धा रखूंगा।
11. मैं पंचशील में विश्वास रखूंगा।
12. मैं अष्टांग मार्ग का पालन करूंगा।
13. मैं करुणा और प्रज्ञा का विकास करूंगा।
14. मैं किसी भी व्यक्ति को अपने धर्म के विरुद्ध कोई भी कार्य नहीं करने दूंगा।
15. मैं चोरी नहीं करूंगा।
16. मैं झूठ नहीं बोलूंगा।
17. मैं व्यभिचार नहीं करूंगा।
18. मैं मादक पदार्थों का सेवन नहीं करूंगा।
19. मैं बौद्ध धर्म का प्रचार करूंगा।
20. मैं सभी प्राणियों के प्रति दया रखूंगा।
21. मैं जीवन में सम्यक दृष्टि रखूंगा।
22. मैं जन्म और मृत्यु के चक्र से मुक्ति पाने का प्रयास करूंगा।

22 Oaths (In English)

1. I shall not believe in Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh as God.
2. I shall not believe in Rama and Krishna as God.
3. I shall not believe in any Hindu gods and goddesses like Gauri, Ganapati, etc.
4. I shall not believe in the existence of God.
5. I shall not perform any rituals or ceremonies prescribed by Brahmins.
6. I shall believe in the equality of all human beings.
7. I shall renounce all forms of discrimination based on caste.
8. I shall not accept any caste system.
9. I shall not follow Hinduism because it is based on inequality and injustice.
10. I shall wholeheartedly believe in Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.
11. I shall believe in the principles of Panchsheel.
12. I shall follow the Noble Eightfold Path.
13. I shall develop compassion and wisdom.
14. I shall not allow any actions against my religion.

15. I shall not steal.
16. I shall not lie.
17. I shall not commit adultery.
18. I shall not consume intoxicants.
19. I shall spread Buddhism.
20. I shall be kind to all living beings.
21. I shall live with a righteous view.
22. I shall strive to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

महत्व (Significance):

इन प्रतिज्ञाओं का मुख्य उद्देश्य समाज में समानता, स्वतंत्रता और भाईचारे को बढ़ावा देना था। डॉ. अंबेडकर ने इन प्रतिज्ञाओं के माध्यम से जातिवाद, अंधविश्वास और असमानता से लड़ने का संकल्प लिया था। यह कदम भारतीय समाज में सामाजिक परिवर्तन की दिशा में ऐतिहासिक था।

15 QUESTIONS OF E.V. RAMASAMI PERIYAR

ई. वी. रामास्वामी पेरियार (E.V. Ramasamy Periyar) एक समाज सुधारक और तर्कवादी थे, जिन्होंने अंधविश्वास, जातिवाद और धार्मिक कुरीतियों के खिलाफ आवाज उठाई। उन्होंने समाज में व्याप्त असमानता और अंधविश्वास पर सवाल उठाए। पेरियार के 15 प्रमुख प्रश्न (15 Thought-Provoking Questions) समाज को सोचने पर मजबूर करते हैं। नीचे उनके 15 सवाल हिंदी और अंग्रेजी में दिए गए हैं:

पेरियार के 15 प्रश्न (हिंदी में)

1. अगर भगवान ने इंसान को बनाया है, तो इंसान ने भगवान को क्यों पूजा?
2. जब सभी इंसान समान जन्म लेते हैं, तो जातिवाद किसने बनाया?
3. अगर भगवान है, तो समाज में इतनी असमानता क्यों है?
4. मंदिरों में केवल ब्राह्मण पुजारी क्यों होते हैं?
5. क्या जाति के आधार पर भेदभाव करना धार्मिक है?
6. क्या शूद्रों को वेद पढ़ने से रोका जाना न्यायसंगत है?
7. क्या मूर्तियों में भगवान वास्तव में निवास करते हैं?
8. क्या भगवान को भोग लगाने से वह वास्तव में खाते हैं?
9. मंदिरों की संपत्ति का उपयोग गरीबों के कल्याण के लिए क्यों नहीं होता?
10. अगर कर्मफल सत्य है, तो अमीर जन्म से अमीर और गरीब जन्म से गरीब क्यों हैं?
11. क्या धर्म महिलाओं को समान अधिकार देता है?
12. क्या देवदासी प्रथा धर्म का हिस्सा थी या शोषण का?
13. क्या पंडित और पुजारी समाज की भलाई के लिए काम करते हैं?
14. क्या अंधविश्वास से समाज का विकास संभव है?
15. क्या शिक्षा सभी के लिए समान रूप से उपलब्ध है?

Periyar's 15 Questions (In English)

1. If God created humans, why do humans worship God?
2. When all humans are born equal, who created caste?
3. If God exists, why is there so much inequality in society?
4. Why are only Brahmins allowed to be priests in temples?
5. Is discrimination based on caste justified by religion?
6. Is it fair to prohibit Shudras from reading the Vedas?
7. Do idols truly embody God?
8. Does God actually consume the offerings presented to Him?
9. Why isn't temple wealth used for the welfare of the poor?

10. If karma is real, why are the rich always born rich and the poor born poor?
11. Does religion give women equal rights?
12. Was the Devadasi system part of religion or exploitation?
13. Do priests and religious leaders work for society's welfare?
14. Can society progress with superstition?
15. Is education equally accessible to all?

महत्व (Significance):

पेरियार के ये प्रश्न समाज में व्याप्त अंधविश्वास, जातिवाद और धार्मिक असमानता पर गंभीर सवाल उठाते हैं। इनका उद्देश्य समाज को जागरूक करना और वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण को बढ़ावा देना था। ये प्रश्न आज भी सामाजिक सुधार के लिए प्रासंगिक हैं।

NINE OATHS OF BIRSA MUNDA

बिरसा मुंडा (1875–1900) एक महान आदिवासी नेता और स्वतंत्रता सेनानी थे, जिन्होंने **ckgjh** शासन और जमींदारी प्रथा के खिलाफ आदिवासियों के अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए आंदोलन चलाया। उन्होंने समाज सुधार और सांस्कृतिक जागरूकता के लिए "उलगुलान" (विद्रोह) का नेतृत्व किया। बिरसा मुंडा ने अपने अनुयायियों को सामाजिक, धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक सुधार के लिए **नौ आज्ञाएँ (Nine Commandments)** दी थीं। ये आज्ञाएँ उनके आदर्शों और समाज सुधार की सोच को दर्शाती हैं।

बिरसा मुंडा की 9 आज्ञाएँ (हिंदी में)

1. **ge lc एक है – सिंxc^axk:** केवल izÑÇr ही परम है, çÑÇr ही सबसे egku है।
2. **किसी भी देवी-देवता की पूजा नहीं करनी है:** मूर्तिपूजा और अंधविश्वास को छोड़ो।
3. **झूठ नहीं बोलना है:** सच्चाई और ईमानदारी का पालन करो।
4. **चोरी नहीं करनी है:** परिश्रम से कमाई करो और सदाचार का पालन करो।
5. **शराब नहीं पीनी है:** नशा और शराब से दूर रहो।
6. **किसी को धोखा नहीं देना है:** सभी के साथ न्याय और ईमानदारी से व्यवहार करो।
7. **स्वच्छता का पालन करना है:** अपने आस-पास सफाई बनाए रखो।
8. **जमींदारों] साहूकारों] Bsdsnkj^ vkSj iqtkfj;^^ से सावधान रहना है:** शोषण का विरोध करो।
9. **ckgjh ¼fnôq½ शासन का विरोध करना है:** अपने हक और आजादी के लिए संघर्ष करो।

Nine Commandments of Birsa Munda (In English)

1. **All are equal – Singbonga:** Believe in one supreme Nature
2. **Do not worship idols or other deities:** Reject idol worship and superstition.
3. **Do not tell lies:** Always follow truth and honesty.
4. **Do not steal:** Earn through hard work and live with integrity.
5. **Do not consume alcohol:** Stay away from intoxication and alcohol.
6. **Do not deceive anyone:** Treat everyone with fairness and honesty.
7. **Maintain cleanliness:** Keep yourself and your surroundings clean.
8. **Be cautious of landlords, moneylenders, contractors and priests:** Oppose exploitation.
9. **Resist Aliens' (Dikkus) rule:** Fight for your rights and freedom.

महत्व (Significance):

बिरसा मुंडा की ये नौ आज्ञाएँ सामाजिक सुधार, सांस्कृतिक जागरूकता और स्वतंत्रता संग्राम का प्रतीक हैं। इन आदेशों का उद्देश्य आदिवासी समाज को शोषण, अंधविश्वास और नशे से मुक्त कराना था। बिरसा मुंडा का संदेश आज भी समाज में प्रेरणा का स्रोत है।

References:

Here are **references** of books and publications related to Periyar's **promotion of scientific temper**, his rationalist philosophy, and his contributions to the social reform movement in Tamil Nadu. These references cover his role in fostering rationalism, social equality and his critiques of religion and superstition.

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These **books explore** various dimensions of **Periyar's rationalist philosophy**, his fight against superstition, his promotion of **scientific temper**, and his impact on social and political movements in **Tamil Nadu**. They provide an in-depth understanding of how **Periyar championed scientific thinking** as a means to combat religious orthodoxy and social inequality.