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A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF WESTERN CULTURE
ON HINDUISM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

Approved:

Harold B. Rubin

J. J. Seamands

by

George K. Varghese

February 1971

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INTRODUCTION

India is one of the ancient countries of the world. She has had great influence in the world. Her influence has been spread in the fields of science, medicine, astronomy, astrology, religion, philosophy and ethics. India's known history goes back beyond 3000 B.C. which is as old as any other civilization in the world.

India gave birth to several world religions. Among them Hinduism has contributed much in shaping the cultural pattern, the modes of thoughts, and the lives of the people in India. Although India gave birth to Buddhism, it has spread into several parts of the world and died away in India. Hinduism is supreme over the people of India.

Hinduism is a religion which encourages and assimilates any type of religious thought and life style into her body. One could observe in Hinduism theism, monism, polytheism, atheism, agnosticism, animism and metaphysical philosophy. In its ethics we see love, truth, enmity, war, accomplishment of duty by any means, and many other forms of ethics. Its social life includes polygamy, monogamy, polyandry, adultery, ancestor worship, caste, festivals, spirit worship, fear of spirit, pacifism, piety and devotion, asceticism, starvation for religious purposes, and negation of the world. It took a long period of time to develop all of these characteristics in Hinduism. With many of these characteristics the Hindu society has become a static society. In many ways we could say that India was sleeping for several centuries during the Christian era. She

became stagnant, lifeless, and unfit to live in a modern, fast changing, and dynamic world.

However, since the coming of the British into India and the introduction of technology and rationalism through English education, the old sleeping giant has been awakened. By the middle of the nineteenth century and especially by the beginning of the twentieth century any student on Indian affairs could observe a restless India. Stagnant and static India had awakened. She received a new life.

The British introduced railways, post and telegraph, technology, electricity, a unified monetary system, English education, taxes, and many other new and modern amenities which were necessary for the life of a modern society. They introduced the ideas of liberty and justice, fair judgment and the equality of human beings. They introduced courts and judges in India.

Needless to say the result of all these was, as Macauley predicted, the upheaval of Indian society against the British and the achievement of the independence of India. Charles Grant, speaking about it, said:

Where there is the rational ground for apprehending that such a race will ever become turbulent for English liberty? A spirit of English liberty is not to be caught from a written description of it, by distant and feeble Asiatics especially.¹

About this an Indian said, "Why did they teach us to read about liberty and justice and self-government, if after all we are to have

¹F.G. Hutchins, The Illusion of Permanence (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 186.

none of these?"²

PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

For centuries Indian society was stagnant, and the grip of religion upon her people was stronger and stronger. Change was beyond hope for an Indian in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. People satisfied themselves by going into the temples, worshiping idols, paying penance, and attending festivals. But what had happened to Hinduism in the nineteenth and twentieth century? Did Hinduism really change? What are the areas where her culture has really changed beyond recognition? Were these changes only skin deep? Were they long lasting? Do they have far reaching results?

Importance and Objective of the Study

In the process of change Christian missions, especially Protestant missionaries, played a significant role. They established schools and colleges; they established orphanages and hospitals; they went into the Indian villages and served the poor and needy, the sick and feeble, the famine-hit and homeless in many ways. They made Christian ethics and principles relevant to the Indian people. Christian ethics challenged Hinduism and forced it to abandon many social evils. Hundreds and thousands of outcastes and Untouchables became Christians and their lives were transformed.

²Ibid.

But now, due to the changes in Hinduism, the preaching of the gospel is becoming harder and harder. Conversions are comparatively few, and in some States conversion is being prohibited. Hindus are becoming self-conscious. They have begun to make new claims about themselves.

In this situation how can the Christians make the gospel relevant to the changing theology of Hinduism and in the Indian social changes? What is the role of the Christians in this revolution?

Delimitation

The study of the impact of western culture on Hinduism will be limited to its origin and the cause of changes from the time of the coming of the British to the end of the British rule in India. The nature of the study is more or less a survey of the events and their effect upon Hindu society of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries in India. The periodic decisions and the laws the Government adopted with respect to many of the practices in Indian society have had far reaching consequences. The study is limited to "Hindu religion at the cross roads" in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. It is not the aim of the writer to analyze the western culture in this short survey.

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CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND AND THE HISTORY OF HINDUISM

THE LAND OF INDIA

"Historic India is not a country. It is a culture, one of the oldest and most consistent on earth. That culture has been a contemporary to almost all civilizations," said Lucille Schulberg.¹

India is generally called a sub-continent. She is guarded by the Himalaya mountains in the north. The west, the east, and the south boundaries are guarded by oceans. These oceans give India a long coastline. These natural boundaries divide India from the rest of Asia and the world. From Kashmir in the north to Cape-Comerin in the south, the sub-continent is about 2,000 miles long. From east to west, south of the Himalayas, India is about 1500 miles across.

Directly south of the mountain barrier lie two great river valleys. India's holiest and most important river, the Ganges, flows to the south-east, parallel to the mountains, through one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the world.²

The interior of the large southern peninsula is called the Deccan which is mainly the area of Western Ghat. Many of the Western Ghat mountains are as much as 5000 feet high. The area covered by the Deccan includes the inland sections of the states of

¹Lucille Schulberg, Historic India (New York: Time-Life Books, 1968), p. 1.

²B.P. Lamb, India, A World in Transition (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 7.

Maharashtra, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Kerala. This area has three main rivers, namely, the Godavari, the Krishna, and the Cavery. There are few hills rising to 4000 feet in Madhya Pradesh (Central Province) and Rajastan. These states are almost in the centre of India.

At present India is divided into eighteen states. This division is based on major spoken languages. "Drawn largely on the basis of language differences, these state boundaries are far more significant than those in the United States."³

The Himalayan region has cold winters with occasional frost and snow. The summer temperatures in the north are rather intolerable. The temperature of the Deccan varies less with the season. In the south the temperature is hot but never rises to that of the northern plains in the summer.

India's important season is the monsoon. On the west coast the monsoon prevails mostly from October to May. "It has often been said that the scale of natural phenomena in India, and her total dependence on the monsoon, have helped to form the character of the people."⁴ Due to the seasonal failure of the monsoon India faced several famines in the past.

³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴ A.L. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, I (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 3.

THE ANCIENT HERITAGE OF INDIA

On the bank of the Indus river in India there existed a highly civilized culture over two thousand years before Christ.

Nehru says that

the Indus Valley Civilization, as we find it, was highly developed and must have taken thousands of years to reach that stage. It was, surprisingly enough, a predominantly secular civilization, and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene . . . India must henceforth be recognized, along with Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt as one of the important areas where the civilizing processes were initiated and developed.⁵

He continues,

The Punjab and Sind, if not other parts of India as well, were enjoying an advanced and singularly uniform civilization of their own, closely alien but in some respects even superior, to that of contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt.⁶

It was an urban civilization where the merchant class was wealthy and evidently played an important role. There were signs of a municipal governing body for the control of the establishment.

Its authority was strong enough to secure the observance of town planning by-laws and the maintenance of approved lines for streets and lanes over several reconstructions rendered necessary by floods.⁷

The people of the coastal land were experts in navigation even at a very early period. "Those on the west coast developed

⁵J. Nehru, The Discovery of India (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959), p. 34.

⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁷Ibid., p. 37.

trading relations with the Arabs of the Middle East and through them with Ancient Rome."⁸ Many of the luxurious things we read in the Bible as being used by the ancient Kings in Babylonia and Persia were imported from India. "The original Hebrew word for ivory, cotton cloth, rice, sandalwood, peacocks, monkey and elephant teeth were all derived from either a Sanskrit or Tamil word."⁹

The Malabar coast had been noted for its spices and other products from time immemorial and there had been regular trade with the Greeks and Romans and Mesopotamians as well as with Arabs even before the advent of Islam. Foreigners, traders and scholars alike, were welcomed with open arms and treated with hospitality. Commerce was not confined to merchandise. There was in Kerala an intermingling of cultures and streams of thought which resulted in a cosmopolitan outlook and a catholicity of attitude long before Europe emerged from the Middle Ages.¹⁰

Certain coastal areas have their own national history. On the southern coast, the area around Madras early became the centre of a high southern culture. In the northeastern coast the areas around Orissa and Andhra Pradesh became centers of high culture perhaps as early as 200 B.C. On the west coast, two significant divisions are those occupied by the present day states of Gujarat and Kerala.¹¹

For centuries, even for millennia, the East had been the region of known and admired wealth. It was to the Orient that men

⁸V. Abdulla, "The Moplahs," The Illustrated Weekly of India, February 1, 1970, p. 6.

⁹M.I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India," India News, April 24, 1970, p. 3.

¹⁰V. Abdulla, op. cit., p. 6.

¹¹Lamb, op. cit., p. 10.

looked when they spoke of traditional forms of riches--gold and diamonds, precious ointments, rare spices, extravagant brocades and silks. In fact for over a thousand years, one of the great drives in the Western economy was to open trade with the wealthier East. One of the problems facing that trade--as far in the past as the days of imperial Rome--was the West's inability to provide very much in return.¹² There was a time when the Roman Emperor prohibited the gold drainage from Rome to the East, especially to India. India was known in the world of that day for her wealth, art, philosophy, and mathematics.

With respect to India's art it must be understood that it was basically religious in nature, but there were secular paintings and sculptures too. Indian art had much romantic and aesthetic content.

India's artistic sense is well illustrated through the remains at Ajanta and Ellora caves. There we can see a multitude of figures, divine and human, carved on the temple walls of the middle ages. These temple

. . . Gods and demigods alike are young and handsome;
 . . . We need hardly mention that all Indian temple sculpture, Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina alike, made full use of the female form as a decorative motif, always scantily dressed, and nearly always in accordance with Indian standards of beauty.¹³

With respect to Indian philosophy, the great German

¹² Barbara Ward, The Rich Nations and The Poor Nations (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1962), p. 39.

¹³ Basham, The Wonder that was India, p. 347.

philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, upon reading a very poor translation of the Upanishads, once said,

In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death. The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek literature.¹⁴

The Vedas of Hinduism and their Upanishads are the main sources of our knowledge of Indian philosophy.

In Indian philosophy the main stream of thought is directed towards metaphysics. The ideas of Light and Darkness, male and female gods, acceptance of life and abstention from life, high morality, family structure, man and woman relationship, the place of children in the family as well as in the society, etc., were specified in the Vedas. The basic idea of Indian philosophy was its stress on ultimate purpose of life. In Indian philosophy "there is an emphasis on truth, a dependence on it, a passion for it, in these early adventures of the Indian mind."¹⁵

With regard to science,

A large portion of the scientific and mathematical knowledge that poured into Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries was first discovered in India. The scientific and technological world of today could not exist without this underlying foundation of concepts and principles that the ancient Hindus had discovered.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mohammad I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India, India News, April 17, 1970, p. 3.

¹⁵ Nehru, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁶ Mohammad I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India," India News, April 24, 1970, p. 3.

The Vedic Aryans were the first inventors of geometry. They prescribed rules for constructing open air sacrificial altars. The Sulva Sutras, a treatise on practical geometry which was written in the eighth century B.C. or before, describes rules for constructing right angles, squares, rectangles, and circles. Professor Hopkins states, "Before the 6th century B.C. all the religious and philosophical ideas of Pythagoras were current in India."¹⁷

The Indian mind discovered the so-called Arabic numerals, the zero, and the decimal system. They are the founders of algebra which deals with the a priori non-empirical realm of mathematical formulae. These discoveries paved the way for the wonderful innovations of Algebra and astronomy in the succeeding centuries.

The new astronomy was adopted chiefly for purposes of prognostication; for the establishment of dates the old luni-solar calendar, based on simpler observations, was quite adequate. The older systems of prognostication were not forgotten, but from Gupta's time onwards they gave pride of place to astrology, which from that day to this has been implicitly believed in by nearly all Indians.¹⁸

In 662, the Christian astronomer monk, Severus Sebokht said,

I shall not now speak of the knowledge of the Hindus . . . of their subtle discoveries in the science of astronomy, discoveries ever more ingenious than Greeks and Babylonians, of their rational system of mathematics, or of their method of calculation which no words can praise strongly enough--I mean the system using nine symbols.¹⁹

The greatest astronomer and mathematician in the Arab world,

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Bhasam, op. cit., p. 490.

¹⁹ Mohammad I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India," India News, April 24, 1970, p. 3.

Al-khwarizmi (750-850 A.D.), wrote the first mathematical text in the empire. He called mathematics "Ilm Hind," meaning the Indian Science. This book was translated into Latin in the twelfth century. It remained the principal text book in European universities for 400 years.

The knowledge of medicine and special treatment for diseases were prescribed in the Atharva Veda and its supplement of Ayur Veda. This was India's Materia Medica which is older than the sixty century B.C. The book satapath Brahman gives an exact enumeration of the bones of the human skeleton. The Indian medical knowledge was able to treat and repair misshapened noses, ears, and eyes.

Their understanding of nutrition, diet, drugs, lithology, and their skills in setting broken and dislocated bones, performing operations in the abdomen and uterus regions and curing neuralgia was unequalled.²⁰

Alexander the Great preferred Indian physicians to Greek physicians in his court.

In technology, the ancient Hindus were unsurpassed in metallurgy, skin tanning, dyeing, bleaching, cement making, soap making, and glass making. They made medicines from iron, copper, mercury, lead, tin and zinc.²¹

In Delhi stands an iron pillar 230 feet in height for the past 1500 years. This pillar consists of a single piece of rustless iron. The Arabs called their sword Hindi because it was manufactured in India.

With regard to the knowledge in the field of music, Indians

²⁰ Mohammad I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India," India News, April 24, 1970, p. 3.

²¹ Ibid.

discovered the Hepatonic system of musical notation with its seven cardinal notes and three octaves over a thousand years before it was known in the West. By the beginning of the Christian Era, the octave was divided into 22 quarter tones.²²

The principle of gravity was known in India before Newton's birth. Swami Tattwanada in his book, Ancient India Culture at a Glance, states,

The discovery of the law of gravitation which immortalized Newton was known in India by Bhaskaracharya long before the birth of Newton . . . It is explained that the earth, planets, stars, sun, moon etc.--each of them is being dragged by the other with its respective power of attraction, and as a result of this attraction none of them is removed from its axis. (C/o Sidhanta Siromony).²³

Education in India was well known in the ancient days. The Vedas were the main subject of learning. Benares was a center of learning, and even in the Buddha's day it was old and known as such. There was an ancient and famous university at Taxila. This was particularly noted for science, especially medicine and art. Students came there to study from Afghanistan, Central Asia, and China. It was considered an honor and a distinction to be a graduate of Taxila. It was a place of Brahmanical learning.²⁴

In ancient India, according to Rig Veda, young men and women were permitted to inter-mingle freely. Women were not secluded and were permitted to study the scriptures and take up the religious life.

²² Mohammad I. Khan, "Science and Mathematics in Ancient India," India News, April 24, 1970, p. 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Nehru, op. cit., p. 72-73.

THE PEOPLE - GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The ancestors of the Indians came from a number of regions outside India far removed from one another. The dominant ethnic groups in India are of Mediterranean and Aryan origins. "In this sense Indians are more akin to Europeans than they are to the Chinese and other Asians to their East."²⁵ The Arabs and the Greeks, the Mediterranean and the Central Asian peoples made their contribution to the ethnic structure of India.

India has been called one of the greatest ethnographical museums in the world.

The reason lies in the many streams of invaders who have come through the mountain passes. An English anthropologist well expressed this fact when he declared: "The subcontinent of India has been likened to a deep net into which various races and peoples of Asia have drifted and been caught." Three of the main racial groups of the world, the so-called yellow, black, and white, are represented in India, . . .²⁶

India is one of the most complex and diverse countries in the world. The Cambridge History of India writes about Indians:

We now find, at one extreme of the social scale, communities whose members are contributing to the achievement of the literature, science and art of the twentieth century, and, at the other extreme, tribes still governed by their primitive constitutions, still using the implements and weapons, and still retaining the religious ideas and customs of their remote ancestors in the Stone Age.²⁷

²⁵ Lamb, India, A World in Transition, p. 14.

²⁶ T.W. Wallbank, A Short History of India and Pakistan (New York: The New American Library, 1958), p. 11-12.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

One language survey has found 178 languages and 544 dialects in India. India faces a language problem, though English can be used for official correspondence.

In ancient days India was the most important country in Asia. Here ancient man built up the great civilization and constructed the great religions of the world.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT
OF HINDUISM TO 1757

Prehistoric Period

In the dim background of history we catch misty glimpses of a great people which had a common culture, a common religion, and a common language, . . . In the language, religion, and life of their descendants we can still find traces of the common life lived so long ago by the Aryan race.²⁸

The Aryans were the ancestors of the people in India. These people had a vast number of gods, each of them supposed to oversee some distinct aspect of life. They had heavenly gods, representing Sky, Sun, Moon, Dawn, Wind, Fire, etc. They had a rudimentary kind of sacrifice and prayer. In both prayer and sacrifice true religious feeling mingled with belief in the occult power of charmed words and deeds. It was believed that special knowledge was required for both prayer and sacrifice. They used to offer food and drink for the gods to come and enjoy. They worshiped the spirits of their ancestors, also.

²⁸J.N. Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 15.

At the same time beyond the dawn of history, the Dravidians entered India . . . Or it may be that the Dravidians once inhabited Hindustan, and were driven Southward by the Aryans. Others hold that they had settled in Southern India long before the coming of the Aryans.²⁹

They were distinguished by their dark complexion and eyes, broad noses, and abundant hair. Their languages were quite different from any Aryan dialect.

They had a culture of their own. They ruled a powerful kingdom. They had overseas trade with Egypt and Western Asia. "At some early date Aryan missionaries entered the Tamil country, and the Dravidians partly adopted the Vedic gods and rituals, and also, with some modifications, the caste system."³⁰

From a very remote time wealthy cities existed in the South and many refinements and luxuries were common. Early Indian history cannot be viewed in true perspective until the non-Aryan institutions of the South receive adequate treatment.³¹

Aryan Invasion and the Origin of Vedas

The mighty family of Aryans was probably divided some time in the ancient days. We do not know when or where. One group moved over to the valley of the Indus river and the other group to Iran. From the Hindu Vedas and from the Avesta we are able to understand

²⁹ H.G. Rawlinson, A Concise History of the Indian People (Madras: The Diocesan Press, 1961), p. 11.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

³¹ V.A. Smith, The Oxford History of India (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 15.

their gods, such as Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, and Indra and along with them, Yama and Soma.

In India the Vedic theology made good progress. The home of the gods has been consistently believed to be the heavens and sacrifices have been offered to them. Ancestral worship also made considerable progress. Cremation has taken the place of burial.

The knowledge of the Indo-Aryan people comes from the Vedic hymns. They were collectively called the Rig Veda. The Brahmans memorized these hymns so that they could use them at the sacrifices. The period in which these Vedas originated and controlled the life of the people is called the Vedic period.

The social life of the people can be studied from these Vedas. They were ordinary peasants, and grew crops of barley. They raised cows and used milk, butter and meat. They made considerable progress in arts. Potters, weavers, carpenters jewelers and smiths were mentioned in Vedas. They practiced drinking strong drinks, and gambling. They placed great stress on the sanctity of marriage and family life. The women enjoyed more liberty than they do today.

Gradually the culture developed. The Aryans began to invade the East and won the natives by their superior knowledge and culture. The land was divided by Aryan kings and ruled by them.

The religious life has undergone changes. Sacrifices became important. Men sought to win the regard of the gods or to persuade them by sacrifice, hymn, and prayer to give their help. They insisted on accurate performance of sacrifices.

For this reason the priests were powerful. They were paid

for their services. It was at this time that the coronation sacrifice, the horse sacrifice, the human sacrifice, and other great sacrifices became famous.

The theology of the Brahman underwent a great change. A faith in one God, Creator, Prajapati, became important. Thus the ordinary gods became mortals and fell in the background while Rudra, Siva, and Vishnu became prominent.

Asceticism is another feature of this period. The ideal was to renounce the world and go to a forest and spend time in prayer. Probably by the influence of aboriginals, the trees, snakes, and pools received reverence and influenced the Vedic age.

Philosophical Period - Ending About 480 B.C.

"As the time went on and the Indo-Aryans continued to increase and multiply, they pushed farther and farther east-ward in search of fresh pastures."³² They crossed Ambala, Rajputana and occupied the fertile country known as the Madhyadesa or middle land, between the Jamuna and the Ganges. Our knowledge of this period comes from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana epics.

During this period the Brahmans continued their sacrificial work, and also carried on the great task of bringing the aborigines under the influence of Aryan culture. The intellectual men grasped the old pantheism and the idea of God changed from idol manifestations to an unchanging and actionless Absolute Reality. Karma (duty)

³²Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 19.

became the means of salvation and release from rebirth.

The Brahman was everywhere accepted as the divine teacher and sacrificer. The Hinduism thus far sketched developed as a religion with three points: 1) The one impersonal Reality, and the unreal phenomenal world, which undergoes cyclic change. All minor gods are gathered under the pantheistic All. 2) Transmigration and Karma, the explanation of the world. 3) The union with one Reality after release from Transmigration.³³

Hinduism by this time consisted in the authority of the divine priest, the inspired Vedas, and the organized caste system.

The Hindu custom of using idols in worship and practising child marriage were generally accepted. About this time widows were permitted to remarry.

As the days went by the thinking men of India came to a conclusion that Release (Moksa) is the fruit of knowledge

and others put stress on Sacrifices or Vedic study, and many declared that the true means was tapas, austerity. So many went out to the old hermitage and sought by indescribable self-torture to reach the end of birth and sorrow.³⁴

This period saw the philosophical result of their thinking; the idea of the world soul Brahman had emerged. The great affirmation was made.

My self is the infinite Self. The soul of the Universe dwells in me. The great phrase used was "Thou art That."

³³Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism, op. cit., p. 41.

³⁴Ibid., p. 47.

I am Brahman, and "I am He." This is the vedanta philosophy in its earliest form.³⁵

The philosophical period saw the emergence of the Hindu Scripture--the Upanishads. And also in this period Buddhism and Jainism emerged as two reform movements. These movements denied the existence of God. Buddhism founded its doctrine on suffering and Jainism on asceticism. They denied caste, priest and rituals. But finally, the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, became the gods of these sects.

Scholastic Period - 480-184 B.C.

This period was mainly important for the spread of the Aryans and the Aryan religion into South India. The Brahmans may have played the chief role in Aryanizing South India.

By this time the Brahmans were recognized everywhere as representatives of the gods. Hindu worship and rules were regulated. The caste system was hardened and it divided the Indian population into four closed compartments. The priests of Hinduism were the authorities who pronounced right and wrong and formulated rules and regulations with exactness in well-arranged manuals; everything was classified and arranged in groups, numbered and labeled.

Images and temples rose during this period. The appearance of gods, their dresses, weapons, and ornaments became definitely fixed. Aşoka gave much inspiration for arts, literature, social

³⁵Ibid., p. 48.

welfare, hospitals and education. The Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana appeared during this period. Bhagavad Gītā, the laws of Manu, the codes of Yajnavalkya; the Minor Upanishad, and some earliest puranas also belong to this period.³⁶

As a result of education and the improvement in Hinduism, sacrificial Hinduism became theistic. The concrete theistic elements developed around the great gods Vishnu and Siva. All the gods and goddesses which belonged to the religion of the people in various parts of the land were easily incorporated into the Hindu pantheon and represented as different aspects of the Supreme Spirit.

The three most important functions of that Spirit, the creation, preservation and destruction of the World, were associated with the great gods Brahma, Viṣṇu and Siva. Thus arose the doctrine of the Hindu Trinity, the Trimurthi.³⁷

Asoka to Gupta - 184 B.C.-320 A.D.

Religion under Aṣoka flourished far and wide in Asia. He became a Buddhist and Buddhism was favoured. But the great empire fell and Sungas came into power at Magadha.

One important change which occurred during this period in Hinduism was the worshipping of Kriṣṇa and Rama as gods. They were human heroes at the beginning of the fifth century B.C. Certain of the old Vedic myths have been transformed as stories of the activities of Viṣṇu. The Siva school (cult) became important. The

³⁶Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism, p. 64.

³⁷J.N. Banerjee, "The Hindu Concept of God," The Basic Beliefs of Hinduism (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1955), p. 33.

sacred bull became his companion, the trident was connected with him, the phallic symbol, the linga, was adopted for his worship.

During this period the six systems of philosophy were worked out in detail. Each had its own teachers. Sutras were spelled out during this period. The dharmasutra was written during this period. The great epics, the Ramāyana and the Mahābhārata, were added with a few other books and received their full length as we see them today. The Bhagavad Gītā is one among these additions.

Gupta to Harsha Empire - 320-650 A.D.

The students of Hinduism call this period the Puranic Age. This was a golden age for Hinduism. The expansion of Hinduism was remarkable in this period.

But a sectarian spirit began to appear in Hinduism. This had already begun in the epic period and became more aggressive in the puranas. The literature produced by Hindu writers during this period was a mirror of the Hindu view of life. The followers of each god, namely, Siva, Vishnu, used extravagant language to praise their gods. The mythology of the time was wild and extravagant. There was an attempt to reconcile Brahma, Vishnu and Siva into one Trinity. The stories about Krishna underwent changes during this period and several mythical stories were added.

This was the period when numerous festivals originated. The worshippers of Sakti, divine power, personified her as a goddess. In the early literature of Sakhism, Aryan and non-Aryan cults were blended together and the non-Aryan cults of the Mother Goddess were

taken up, purified, united, and incorporated into the Vedic religion. A number of tribal deities were brought under one supreme goddess called Durga. She was spiritualized and brought under Vedanta philosophy. Thus the goddess became the center of Vaishṇava and Saiva sect.

In the literature of this Sakti sect, the goddess was identified with the Absolute, as Vishnu and Siva were in the sects named after them, and a whole system of philosophy, theology and ritual came into existence.³⁸

The King of Kanauj, Harshkandhara, who built his empire in North and Central India, encouraged poets and dramatists. He himself was a poet and dramatist. The most scholarly work in drama, poetry, rhetoric, grammar, astronomy, and romance were produced during this period.

Harsha to Muslim Invasion - 650-1200 A.D.

There are not many outstanding events during this period. The main changes were among aboriginals in India. Foreign races continued coming into India and the aboriginals were gradually absorbed and assimilated by the old Hindu people. Numerous tribes were transferred into castes and their leaders were supplied with a mythical genealogy.

This was the period when modern Hinduism was conceived and born. Ancient sacrificial Vedic religion faded away and the affections of the people turned to temple worship, and annual festivals.

³⁸Ibid., p. 35.

Animal sacrifices were prohibited in the temples, but in many places aboriginals continued the practice. A good number of temple prostitutes were kept as servants of gods.

The Saivites and the Vaishnavits had kept their prominence in the realm of religion and had developed their doctrine and worship completely. The difference between these two sects was that Saiva was usually represented by the phallic symbols, the linga and the yoni, and that Vishnu was always represented by an image. They differed in details.

During this period the Bhakti movement arose. In South India the Alvars sang praise to Vishnu and offered salvation to every caste through Vishnu. Adiyars of Saivaism did a similar work. They also offered salvation to all. Their work is called Devaram. Bhakti was the teaching of all of these schools. There were teachers who were sanyasis as head of a school or the chief priests of a sect.

It is believed that during this period suttee began. The women who dared this cruel act were considered great and praised in the Garuda Purana.

Muslim Invasion to British East India Company - 1250-1757 A.D.

With the coming of Muslims, Islam also came. Islam was a crusading religion and an alien culture which could not be assimilated or overcome.

The Hindus suffered terribly on account of the fanaticism of the Muslim conquerors. There were forcible conversions, destruction of temples and desecration of holy places. During this time the Hindu teachers resolutely clung to their own

ideals and their own religion and became more and more conservative in their social philosophy and customs and manners.³⁹

In the name of Allah, Muslims persecuted Hindus. However, they could not uproot the Hindu religion. On the contrary, ". . . the crushing of Hinduism, of the temple, and the scholars led to the outbursting of a simpler and more helpful faith from the heart of the people itself."⁴⁰ This was a period when the Bhakti movement had its full popularity.

The religious movements of the north during these centuries fall in three groups, Ramaite, Krishnaite, and Deistic. These people accepted other gods and people and offered salvation to men of all castes, demanding faith and bhakti toward the Lord. They used the vernacular, and participated in a sacramental meal. Each sect had its own order of ascetics as well as its congregation for the laity.

These sects were led by Ramananda, Vallabhacharya and the Guru Nanak respectively. They all emphasized bhakti in place of Karma for salvation.

The Muslims had great influence on Hinduism. The presence of Muslims caused Hindus to organize themselves for self-defense. This was the period Hindus began to seclude women and follow the purdha system. The zenaha system also dates from Muslim times.

³⁹ Banerjee, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴⁰ Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism, p. 136.

CHAPTER 2

A SHORT SKETCH OF HINDU FAITH UP TO THE RENAISSANCE

ORTHODOX FAITH

Hindu religion has no personal founder. Unlike the other major religions Hinduism includes a variety of faith which ranges from monotheism to atheism. However, there is a basic unity in it.

In Hindu faith the expressions of religion are filled with intuitions, awakened at the very dawn of civilization, to the inexhaustible mystery that is implicit in life. This led to speculations, which in turn led to theories of existence and life. All this is found in Hindu sacred writings.

Another feature in Hindu religion is its code of moral behaviour. As in Christianity, in Hinduism there is a necessary conflict between what men do and what men ought to do. Although the usages are different in Hindu practice, they are based on the Hindu concept of the nature of the universe. The Upanishads reveal its doctrine of the all-pervading God, while the ideal of selfless work is preached by the Bhagavad Gītā. This is close to Christian moral teaching.

As the basis for the teachings of Hinduism there are several written documents which are the subject of this chapter. Hindu orthodox faith depends on these sacred writings.

The Vedas

The invasion of Aryans into India left no historical record.

Students of ancient civilization date this event anywhere from 4000 to 1000 B.C.

"By Vedas we generally mean the Vedic samhitas which are collections of prayers and ritual formulae."¹ The word Veda means knowledge which consists of three parts--the Samhitas, the Brāhmanas, and the Upanishads. The Samhitas consists of a collection of hymns in praise of gods (the Rig Veda), a collection of melodies connected with the hymns (the Sama Veda), a collection of sacrificial formulae (the Yajur Veda), and a collection of magical formulae (the Atharva Veda).² The oldest among them is the Rig Veda.

The Vedic gods could be divided into three classes, the heavenly gods, the gods of the atmosphere, and the gods of the earth. These gods are sun, moon, fire, sky, storm, air, water, dawn, rain, and so on. Indra, the god of rain and thunder, seems to have enjoyed an importance greater than the others.

The Vedic society also was divided into three classes; Brahmans (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), and Vaisyas (farmers). In this division we do not find a place for the out-caste. This unfortunate group became distinguishable in later years.

The Brahmanas

"They consist of prose texts dealing with sacrifices and rites to be performed by priests and treatises on their significance."³ In

¹K.M. Sen, Hinduism (Maryland: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 45.

³Ibid.

other words, they are the exegetical materials of the complicated rituals which should be performed in the rites and sacrifices.

The word Brāhmana is from Brahman which originally meant "a prayer." This includes a little of Hindu philosophy. But they are mainly the sacred rites on the sacrificial formulae and action. In addition to providing a running commentary on sacrifices, the Brahmanas "preserve much mythological matter concerning the origin of the universe and its development from undifferentiated chaos into an orderly cosmos."⁴ It shows creation as a sacrificial act.

The Upanishads

The traditional view holds that the Upanishads are revealed texts. The teachings in the Upanishads centered around the doctrine of the Brāhman and the Ātman. The Vedic religion, with its elaborate sacrifices, gradually gave way to the doctrine of the Brāhman and the Ātman of the Upanishads. The date of the Upanishads may be placed at about 800 B.C. The main message of the Upanishads is the identity of the Ātman with the Brāhman. There are many Upanishads. Each of the four Vedas has its own Upanishads.

The Upanishads emphasize a fundamental doctrine which may be called monistic idealism or idealistic monism. Some of the teaching in the Upanishads matches the Platonic Dialogues.

⁴R.C. Zaehner, Hinduism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 38.

The Bhagavad Gītā

This is a development from the Upanishads which is an extraordinary religious achievement. Its content also could be summed up in one sentence: The all-pervading Brahman is identical with the Ātman. But the emphasis here is on moral behavior and action.

Bhagavad Gītā means "The Song of the Lord," or "Celestial Song." This is a part of Mahābhārata, a war epic. It is a conversation between Krishna, the incarnation of God and Arjuna the warrior.

The Bhagavat Gītā is the most important book for Hindus who follow the Bhakti movement in Hinduism. The message of the Gītā finds its way to the hearts even of the unlettered people. Those who follow the Bhakti marga claim that the Gītā offers them the comfort and help that they sought for. Ghandhiji considered the Gītā equal to the sermon on the mount in the Bible and used both for his Ashram devotion.

Mahābhārata and Ramāyana

These are the longest epic poems in the world, written between the fourth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D. Mahābhārata is a war epic and Ramāyana is a wild life epic. Mahābhārata is an encyclopedia of tradition, legends, ethics and philosophy.

These epics reveal human nature, and especially moral and ethical obligations of man and woman to each other. Krishna in Mahābhārata and Rama in Ramāyana are associated with Vaishnavism, a sectarian movement in Hinduism. These epics are very influential in

guiding life and thought within Hinduism.

The Laws of Manu

Among Hindus right behavior in life is a subject which receives much consideration. The Dharmasutra deals with the subject of dharma, or right behavior. They were written in poems. The poem thus produced was called Dharmasastras. The greatest of all these law books is the Manava Dharmasastra, or law book of Manu, which is believed to have been founded on the Manava Dharmasutra. It assumed its presence by 200 A.D.

"One of the momentous changes in Hindu life which this fresh code enables us to realize is that all widows, even virgin child widows, were by this time forbidden to remarry."⁵

According to the Code of Manu, women were treated as inferior creatures and dependent on men. The caste system also was prescribed by the laws of Manu. Manu was the cause of a major disaster in the free life of the people in India.

PHILOSOPHICAL FAITH OF HINDUISM

There are six systems of philosophy in Indian philosophy. They are Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva-Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Each of these will be dealt with separately in the following pages.

Nyaya

The sage Gotama is the founder of Nyaya school. He lived in

⁵J.N. Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 88.

the third century B.C. This school is predominantly intellectual, logical and epistemological.

It is called Tarkashastra or the science of reasoning, pramanashastra or the science of logic and epistemology, hetuvidya or the science of causes, vaḍavidya or the science of debate, and anviksiki or the science of critical study.⁶

Nyaya and Vaisesika schools represent the analytical type of philosophy.

Nyaya literally means that by which the mind is led to a conclusion. We are led to conclusions by arguments or reasoning. These arguments are either valid or invalid. "Nyaya" in popular usage means "right" or "just" and so Nyaya becomes the science of right or just reasoning. It is in a wider sense, the science of demonstration or correct knowledge.⁷

According to Nyaya philosophy there are four sources of knowledge. They are perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana), analogy (upamana) and credible testimony (sabda). The principle of causation is accepted by the Nyaya school. It discusses the process of reasoning in detail. The analysis of the process remarkably resembles the syllogistic analysis of Aristotle.

The Nyaya believes in teleological creation. The material cause of this universe is found in the eternal atoms of earth, water, fire, air and the efficient cause is God. Nyaya advocates atomism, spiritualism, theism, realism, and pluralism.

Creation means basically a combination of atoms. The innumerable eternal atoms and the innumerable eternal souls are both beyond

⁶C. Sharma, Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey (London: Barnes and Noble, 1962), p. 179.

⁷S. Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 356.

creation and destruction. God can neither create them nor destroy them. God is not the real creator of the universe, as He is not its material cause.

The individual soul is regarded as the substratum of the quality of consciousness which is not its essence but only an accidental property. The soul is a real knower, a real enjoyer and a real active agent and an eternal substance. Soul is different from God who is the Supreme Soul. Nyaya accepts the metaphysics of the Vaishesika school.

Vaisesika

This school is decidedly pluralistic. This is mainly a system of physics and metaphysics. It emphasizes that diversity is the soul of the universe. The founder of this school is Kanada.

This school claims that all material objects are made of four kinds of atoms. Different combinations of these atoms of earth, water, fire, and air make different materials. It gives nine substances: space, time, ether, mind, and soul. They comprise all corporeal and noncorporeal things. It adopts a six-fold classification of the objects of experiences. They are substance, quality, activity, generality, particularity, inherence, and non-existence. Out of these, three exist in objective reality and the others are the products of subjective intellectual discrimination.

There are innumerable souls and each is an independent, individual, eternal, and all-pervading spiritual substance.

It is the substratum of the quality of consciousness. Consciousness is not the essence of the self . . . It resides in the self. Other important qualities possessed by the self are desire (ichchha) and volition (yatna). Jnana, ichchha and yatna are cognition, affection and conation respectively.⁸

The second category is Guna or quality. It inheres in a substance and depends on the substance for its existence. The third category is Karma or action. It also cannot exist separately from its substance. The fourth category is samanya or generality. It is class-concept, class-essence, or the concept of universals. Universals reside in substances, qualities and action. The fifth category is Vishesa or particularity. It sees the difference of things. Each individual is different and unique. Atom, soul, space, time, and manas all have their particularities. The sixth category is Samavaya or that inseparable eternal relation called inference. It is an independent category. The seventh category is abhava or non-existence. This is negative.⁹

The Vaisesika school believes that things are composed of invisible eternal atoms which are incapable of divisions. There are four kinds of atoms: earth, water, light and air.¹⁰ These atoms have different natures. They differ in quality and in quantity. Each exists as a separate reality.

Atoms and souls are co-present and co-eternal with God. God

⁸ Sharma, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

controls this unseen power. "He is responsible for the first push, the original impetus, and then the atoms go on combining."¹¹

Sankhya

The founder of this school is Kapila who probably lived in the seventh century B.C. This is a dualistic system which recognizes two basic categories in the universe: subject and object.

"The purusha consists of selves or spirits, eternal entities of consciousness. The prakriti represents the potentiality of nature, the basis of all objective existence."¹²

This system is notable for its theory of evolution, which is accepted by many other Indian systems, and for the reduction of the numerous categories of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems to the two fundamental categories of purusa and prakriti, subject and object.¹³

The word "Samkya" means right knowledge as well as right number. Right knowledge is the knowledge of the separation of the purusa from the prakriti.

Sankhya believed in satkaryavada. All material effects were held to be the modification (parinama) of prakriti. They pre-existed in the eternal bosom of prakriti and simply came out of it at the time of creation and returned to it at the time of dissolution. Prakriti is pure potentiality.

"Unintelligent, unmanifest, uncaused, ever active, imperceptible, eternal and one Prakriti alone is the final source of this world

¹¹Ibid., p. 173.

¹²K.M. Sen, Hinduism, p. 80.

¹³Radhakrishnan and Moore, op. cit., p. 424.

of objects which is implicitly and potentially contained in its bosom."¹⁴

Prakriti, the first cause of the universe is one and complex; and its complexity is the result of its being constituted of three factors each of which is described as guṇa. They are named sattva, rajas and tamas. Each of them stands for a distinct aspect of physical reality.

All things as products of prakriti, consist of the three gunas in different proportions When the three elements are held in equipose there is no action. When there is a disturbance of the equilibrium, the process of evolution begins.¹⁵

The other of the two co-present, co-eternal realities of Sankhya is the purusa, the principle of pure consciousness. Purusa is the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject, the knower. Purusa excites the activity of prakriti, and, thus upsetting the equilibrium of the gunas in prakriti, passively starts the evolutionary process. The union of purusa and prakriti is compared to a lame man of good vision mounted on the shoulder of a blind man of sure foot.

Mahat is the first product of the evolution of prakriti. It is beyond time and space and beyond change and activity. Next to Mahat is Ahamkara or self-sense, which develops out of Buddhi. It is the principle of individuation.

In this process of evolution the inactive purusa and the non-intelligent prakriti co-operate to save the end, and this union

¹⁴Sharma, op. cit., p. 141.

¹⁵Radhakrishnan and Moore, op. cit., p. 424.

disturbs the equilibrium of the gunas and lead to evolution.

Sankhya believes that bondage and liberation alike are only phenomenal. The bondage of the purusa is a fiction. It is only the ego, the product of prakriti, which is bound. And consequently it is only the ego which is liberated.¹⁶

Sankhya has been described as an atheistic philosophy. This may not be fully correct. Sankhya philosophy does not assume the existence of God, yet it does not deny it either. The original Sankhya was monistic and theistic. The classical sankhya became atheistic.

Yoga

The philosophical basis of the Yoga is the same as that of the Sankhya, but in Yoga a personal God is introduced. Patanjali is the traditional founder of the Yoga system. The word Yoga literally means union, i.e., spiritual union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul. However, Yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through right control of the body, senses, and mind, and through right discrimination between purusa and prakriti. Sankhya and Yoga are the theoretical and practical side of action.

Yoga is defined as the cessation or the modifications of chitta. They are of five kinds: right cognition, wrong cognition, verbal cognition or imagination, absence of cognition or sleep, and memory. Right cognition is of three kinds: perception, inference,

¹⁶Sharma, op. cit., p. 152.

verbal testimony.

Yoga advocates control over the body, the senses, and the mind. For the control of mind and body, yoga advocates eight-fold paths of discipline. They are abstention, observance, posture, breath-control, withdrawal of the senses, fixed attention, contemplation, and concentration. These disciplines come under the system of Astanga Yoga.

This school should not be confused with magic, tantra, and self-hypnotization. Those who practice Yoga claim some kind of supernatural powers to do abnormal tasks.

Purva-Mimamsa

This school is based on Vedic authority. There are two schools; one upholds the teachings contained in the earlier portions of the Veda, and the other, contains the later portions of it. For this reason they are called Purva-Mimamsa and Uttara-Mimamsa.¹⁷

Jaimini is the author of Mimamsa-sutra.

The central problem of this system is the investigation of dharma (duty) as stated in the Veda. This school believes that the Vedas were apprehended by the Seers and transmitted by them to men, and thus called them (and other sacred writings) Sruti, or "something heard." They were not regarded to be created by God.

The Mimamsa recognizes two kinds of knowledge: immediate and mediate. Perception is regarded as immediate knowledge. There are

¹⁷M. Hariyana, The Essentials of Indian Philosophy (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 129.

two stages in perception: indeterminate and determinate.

Mimamsa assumes the reality of selves following Vedas. The self is distinct from the body, the senses, and the understanding. The reward in the other world is based on the work each man does in this world.

Liberation for the Mimamsa is life in heaven. Prabhakara defines liberation as the absolute cessation of the body caused by the disappearance of all dharma and adharma. For Kumarila it is the state of the self free from pain. The Mimamsa Sutra does not argue for the existence of God. However, later Mimamsakas admit the reality of God.

Mimamsaka's contribution in the field of logic and knowledge is noteworthy. The system advocated six means of valid knowledge. It accepted the usual four means of Nyaya plus another two: viz., arthapath (postulation) and knowledge by abhava (absence, negation, or non-existence). It holds the theory that all knowledge is ipso facto true. Thus what is to be proved is not the truth of a cognition but its falsity. This establishes the unchallengable validity of the Vedas.

For Mimamsaka Dharma is the supreme duty, the "ought," and the categorical imperative. This is revealed only by the Vedas, and action is the final import of the Vedas.

Actions are of three kinds: obligatory, optional and prohibited. Right action leads to heaven and the prohibited action leads to sin and hell. The seeker for liberation has to rise above both merit and demerit, above both heaven and hell. Obedience to the Veda is an end in itself and is of ultimate value.

Vedanta

This is the most influential system among India's philosophical schools. Its central thesis is the Upanishadic doctrine of Brahman. The founder of this system is Badarayana and its most famous exponent is Samkara.

There are three kinds of Vedantic schools; namely, Advaita, Visistadvaita and Dvaita. These schools are predominantly associated respectively with the names of Samkara, Ramanuja, and Madhava.

Samkara's Advaita. Samkara, who lived between 788-820 A.D., is the greatest thinker of this philosophical school. He followed Gaudapada who was a believer in strict monism. Samkara's monism is based on his interpretation of the Vedanta

While expounding the Vedas, Samkara

. . . asks whether there is anything in experience which may be foundational. Our senses may deceive us; our memory may be an illusion. The forms of the world may be pure fancy. The objects of knowledge may be open to doubts, but the doubter himself cannot be doubted. "All means of knowledge exist only as dependent on self-experience and since such experience is its own proof there is no necessity for proving the existence of self." It cannot be proved because it is the basis of all proof.¹⁸

The self is self-established. It has being in itself.

Brāhman is the Absolute Reality and there is no other reality but Brāhman. He is pure existence-consciousness-bliss as one identical essence without any distinction or difference. The world is not created by Brāhman. It is maya or illusion. The appearance of the

¹⁸ Radhakrishnan and Moore, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 506.

world is taken as real by the ignorant. The wise see only Brāhman who is the only reality. .

The world is only a manifestation of the Brāhman . . . The world is an appearance based on the existence of the Brahman. The precise relationship between the Brahman and the world is inexpressible and is sometimes referred to as maya.¹⁹

There will be no world without the Brāhman but the existence of the Brāhman does not depend on the appearance of the world, just as the appearance of the serpent depends on the existence of the rope but not vice versa.

Brāhman cannot be described from a purely philosophical or transcendental standpoint. Brāhman in his transcendental aspect is called Parabrahma, the Supreme God or the Absolute. From this standpoint the world is real and the Absolute is considered to be the Creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world. He is an omnipotent and omniscient Being. This aspect of absolute is taken for granted when the world is considered real. Otherwise there is no real world or real creator. This is not a kind of atheism. For Sankara, being an absolute monist, there is only the Absolute.

Sankara rejects all distinction between objects and object, the subject and the object, the self and Brāhman, as unreal and illusory. For him the self man is identical with Brahman.²⁰

Liberation from bondage is attained through the realization of

¹⁹ K.M. Sen, Hinduism, p. 83.

²⁰ S.C. Chatterjee, Hindu Religious Thought, p. 186.

the self's identity with Brāhman. The means to liberation is the study of Vedānta under a teacher who has himself realized Brāhman. The liberated soul can continue living in this world. He attains the life divine and lives and acts for the good of mankind.

Ramanuja. He was a Vaishnava philosopher belonging to the eleventh century who developed a monistic system of religious thought. He did not follow Sankara. For him God was not absolutely different from the individual self. Brāhman is really embodied in the self and the world, and there is identity between Brāhman as absolute and Brāhman as embodied. He said that the world, the Atman, and God are distinct though not separate. Individual souls and the concrete world are like the body of God, and Isvara possessed of the two is the Brāhman. Everything is in Brāhman but still individual souls are different from Isvara. He stresses devotion to Isvara. From him the Bhakti movement took much inspiration.

For Ramanuja salvation is a release from limiting barriers. One self cannot be dissolved into another. God is superior to man all the time. Man should owe reverence, worship and adoration to God. Liberation is fully under the control of Brāhman who is pleased by devotion and complete self-surrender.

He gives his grace and lifts from bondage the man who flings himself at the mercy of the supreme Being and constantly remembers Him as the only object of love. Absolute self-surrender to God, coupled with complete faith in His mercy and power, is sometimes regarded by Ramanuja as alone sufficient to lead at once to liberation.²¹

²¹ Ibid., p. 178.

Madhava. Madhava believed in the dualism of the Brāhman and the jiva (the individual soul). He accepted the existence of the physical world. God directs the world. God is considered transcendent and imminent. He is the inner ruler of all selves. He is the supreme person who is called Narayana, Vishnu, or Hari. He is the Lord of all being and the creator, preserver, and destroyer of all things. He controls the universe.

Madhava's system is noted for its doctrine of five fundamental differences: between God and the individual self; between God and matter; between individual selves; between selves and matter; and between individual material substance.²²

For Madhava everything on earth is a living organism but they are not created by God. They are dependent on God. They are conscious and active but not identical with God. Individual selves are finite and eternal entities.

For an individual self liberation from bondage to the world is the highest end of life. The root cause of man's bondage is ignorance about himself and the Brāhman. The first step for liberation is the realization of God's infiniteness, greatness and goodness. It is the consciousness of his dependence on Brāhman that can save man's self and liberate him from bondage.

However, this realization is not a sufficient condition for salvation. Brāhman's grace is the basic means of salvation. Hence, man's sincere devotion to, and pure love for, the Lord is most

²²Radhakrishnan and Moore, op. cit., p. 508.

important in the religious life. To develop this nature man should keep himself in the service and worship of God. "He should devote his body and mind, his thought and speech to the cause of goodness and truth, and to the study of the holy scripture."²³

²³Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 174.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL HINDUISM

India, called by many a great land, has her greatness dimmed somewhat when you look into the lives and practices of the common people. The superstitions, the beliefs attached to religious practices, the distinctions between the lettered and the unlettered, between poor and rich, and many other factors in the lives of the common people make it difficult to understand and categorize the people of India.

India has been described as a land of contrast, and in nothing are the contrasts more marked than in Hinduism, in which the differences between the beliefs and practices of the cultured classes and those of the masses, mostly unlettered villages, are so great that they almost seem to be differences of kind rather than of degree.¹

Hinduism, the predominant religion in India, claims 87 per cent of the people of India, supplies ingredients to this vast difference. It is a mixture of orthodox Hinduism and the primitive form of religions known as Animism. Each village has its own local deities.

The people in Hinduism are in different stages of development. The aboriginals living in interior villages are far away from the common means of transportation and communications. They still live in the primitive stages of civilization. Among these people Animism has a better hold than Hinduism. The people living in big cities like

¹L.S.S. O'Malley, Popular Hinduism (Cambridge: The University Press, 1935), p. vii.

Delhi, Bombay and Madras are in the more advanced stages of civilization.

Taking into account all of these differences among the Indian people, there are many factors one must trace to understand the reformation that is taking place in the Hindu religion and the impact of western civilization upon the social characteristics of traditional Hinduism. Hence it is necessary to trace the traditional characteristics of Hinduism before dealing with the reform movement which took place in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

The ancient Hindu family had a complicated organization, and there was a deep sentimental relationship between their members. The father was the head of the family. He expected absolute obedience from his family members.

Almost all the primitive religions believed that the human soul is distinct from the body and separable from it by death. They believed that the soul survives death and lives a new life apart from the body and that after death human souls are dependent on material things for their continued existence. So, ancient man used to give food and drink to the departed souls. If they did not get the attendance and care from the living relatives it is believed that they became wandering and harmful ghosts.

This belief evolved in India into a form of worship because the family of the dead¹ expected love and care over the family from the dead. This is called ancestor worship. This practice was common

among the descendants of the Aryan people.

In the worship the father of the family is the priest. He controls the worship of the ancestors of the family in all details. He alone knows the rituals which were traditional in his family, and which had to be maintained unchanged if the favour of the dead was to be retained. He alone had the right to pass it on to his son, generally to the eldest son in the family. As long as the father lived he supervised family affairs and provided the needs of the family. In this way the patriarchal family evolved.²

This form of family arrangement produced moral results of very great value. The family thought in terms of their oneness and unity. There was no proper place for selfishness. Each one thought for the good of the family.

"To act worthily of the family, to bring no disgrace upon one's ancestors, to do everything to build up and strengthen the heritage of the family, became a motive of superlative strength."³

"The importance of carrying on the rites was so great that it was conceived to be the duty of every man to marry in order that he might have a son to follow him in his priestly work."⁴ Since it was his obligation to provide a successor to take care of the rites after the death of the father, and only sons could carry on these duties,

²J.N. Farquhar, The Crown of Hinduism (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 79.

³Ibid., p. 80.

⁴Ibid.

man was exalted and woman was regarded as inferior. Where there was no son in the family the Aryan families used to adopt sons from some other families. The adopted son held completely the position of a real son. The concept of Hindu family came from their concept of ancestor worship. The present joint family system among Hindus is a continuation of these ancient practices.

THE HINDU JOINT FAMILY AND RITUALS

"Caste and Village Community--these institutions have played a very significant role in moulding the values, attitudes and beliefs of the people of India from times immemorial."⁵ Almost everything that relates to a Hindu is one way or another related to his religion and family.

Under the Joint Family system the property of the family was held in common. The brothers and sons of the family lived together under the same roof. "Property was inherited by coparcenary, and not by succession."⁶

The joint families required that certain important principles be observed by the members of the family. First, the father is the high priest, and he conducts family worship and rituals. In his absence the eldest son officiates at worship and the rituals. The boys of the family will be considered an asset and the girls will be

⁵P.D. Devanandan and M.M. Thomas (eds.), The Changing Pattern of Family in India (Bangalore: CISRS, 1960), p. 36.

⁶K.M. Panikkar, Common Sense About India (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1961), p. 77.

ignored. In upper class families the boys would be sent to Brahminical schools to receive religious education. There was no provision for the education of girls.

When a boy got married he brought his wife into the paternal mansion. The authority of the husband over his wife was absolute. All the male descendants lived together, even to more than four generations if the father was long lived. They ate from the same kitchen. This showed the Hindu family consciousness.

There were several positive results which sprang from this particular type of family organization. Each contributed to the welfare of all. All the earning members would give money to the needs of the family. It was the family that counted, not the individual. The old and the sick had a place in the family. The children were taken care of. The old were extremely helpful in taking care of the grandchildren when their parents were at work. Each member of the family was wanted.

The domestic ceremonies connected with births, deaths and marriages are of more importance in popular estimation than temple or domestic worship, and they are certainly observed more generally. A man may neglect the worship of the gods, but he will not neglect the ceremonies on which his status as a Hindu and a member of his caste depend.⁷

In general these religious observances differ from village to village. But they are very important for a Hindu.

"For the twice-born castes the most essential is the upanayan or investiture with the sacred thread, which takes place in a boy's

⁷L.S.S. O'Malley, Popular Hinduism, p. 112.

eighth, eleventh or twelfth year according to his caste."⁸ This indicates that the boy has ascended to religious responsibilities. For the most part women do not undergo any such ceremonies, but in some castes there is a period of isolation during menstruation. For women, marriage is the most important sacrament.

The village people offer sacrifices to their gods when they are troubled by small pox, cholera or other epidemics to quench the anger of that particular god. Each of these occasions takes the time, energy and resources of the Hindus. These ceremonies and marriages often leave a Hindu poor forever.

THE PLACE OF WOMEN AND SUTTEE

Hinduism has been severely criticized by the civilized world for its cruelty to women. The Hindu Vedas and the Laws speak about the subjection of women. The Code of Manu which exercised a great authority over the Hindu social life declares that a woman is always in subjection to her father, to her husband, or to her sons; she can never have independence. Hindus believe that woman is an inferior being.

The Satpatha Brahmana says that the man must not eat with his wife. This rule has been in full force in the Hindu household.

The emergence of this extraordinary rule at this early date, the seventh or eighth century B.C., shows that already the power of the father was growing, and that woman was being relegated to a far lower place than that which she

⁸ Ibid.

held in the times of the Rig Veda.⁹

Hindu girls were not admitted to schools. At the same time the law developed that a girl should be married before she reached the age of puberty. Farquhar speaks with surprise that

. . . the father who does not see that his daughter is married before the menses appear commits sin; and in most of the books the sin is said to be equivalent to abortion. Clearly the ancient Hindus believed that to fail to give a girl at puberty the chance of bearing a child was, so to speak, to prevent the birth which ought to come and therefore, was as sinful as destroying an embryo.¹⁰

The next degradation of the status of women came when the Hindu laws prohibited the widow to remarry. The reason for this, as the Code of Manu says, is that, when a Hindu woman marries, she is not married merely in this world but for the next world too. There is believed to be a marriage in heaven among both gods and men. "This belief gave point to wifely loyalty and faithfulness; for unless a wife proved a good woman the faithfulness to her lord, she could not expect to join him in heaven."¹¹

Another reason also contributed to this practice. When a woman was married to a man she was incorporated into his family, Then, if he died, she could not go back to her father's family and be accepted there. To a Hindu she no longer belonged to the ordinary society.

⁹J.N. Farquhar, The Crown of Hinduism, p. 93.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 96.

¹¹Ibid., p. 97.

A Hindu woman's virtue came to be summed up in life-long loyalty to the man to whom her father had given her, whether he was alive or dead. If she was left a widow, it was her duty to set her whole heart on her coming union with her lord in heaven.¹²

This kind of deep conviction and devotion of a Hindu woman is not applicable to a Hindu man because he is potentially a polygamist.

The next step in this extreme devotion to man on the part of the Hindu woman led the Hindus to the practice of "suttee" or widow burning. This was well known from 400 A.D. Probably it was introduced by the willing woman who could not tolerate the sudden death and departure of her beloved husband. She might have cremated herself on her husband's pyre willingly. But there were unwilling victims also. Rammohan Roy saw his own brother's widow burnt to death despite her attempt to escape. Abbe J.A. Dubois reports several cases where Hindu priests nominated and insisted upon the suttee of one or more widows in cases of the death of husband who had several wives. Those who obeyed would be highly honored and would be considered one among the saints in Hinduism.¹³

This discussion has tried to show the misery and suffering of the Hindu woman. However, this is not the whole story. The faithfulness, devotion and love of the wife and mother, the humility and willing ministry of the devoted woman to her husband, obedience and affection of sons and daughters are often of real worth and beauty in

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Abbe J.A. Dubois, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 355.

a Hindu family. The Hindu mothers are respected by all Hindus. They are treated with supreme respect by both the husband and children, and they live lives of great influence and usefulness. The high caste women, though illiterate, are cultured, thoughtful and capable. They know the Gītā by heart. The husbands rely on the judgments of their wives. They exercise great influence in their homes and in society.

CASTE AND TABOOS

Generally caste is attached with certain limitations or taboos, such as untouchability, eating with a man from another caste, eating meat, etc.

Apparently there is no existing institution older than the caste system of the Hindus. Greek and Latin authors who have written about India concur in thinking that it has been in force from time immemorial; and certainly the unswerving observance of its rules seems to me an almost incontestable proof of its antiquity.¹⁴

Hindus believe that the author of caste was the God Brāhma, to whom they attribute the creation of the world, and who is said to have established this system when he peopled the earth. The Brahmins were the product of his brain; the Kshatriyas or Rajahs issued from his shoulders; the Vaisyas from his belly, and the Sudras from his feet.¹⁵ The allegorical significance of this legend is one from which one could distinctly trace the relative degrees of subordination

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁵ Ibid.

of the different castes. It would seem, however, that any intelligent man could understand the folly of this assumption.

Farquhar in his book The Crown of Hinduism traces the origin of the caste system to natural evolution. He says that there might have been a kind of tribal organization among the primitive people in the ancient world. There were struggles for life between tribes. Fights between the villages were common. There was thus in the circumstances very little intercourse with men of other groups. The tribal customs kept each tribe in isolation. In this situation to eat together was regarded as a thing possible only for those of the same blood. The women were supposed to be absorbed into the tribe of their husbands.

This tribal organization had a religious basis, and each tribe regarded its own society sacred. These tribal groups had no moral content in their social life comparable to modern understanding of moral and social life.

Based on these divisions one group took up agriculture and another carpentry, protection of the village and the performance of religious rituals. The one who was entrusted with religious rites was highly honored because he was the visible god on earth.

The introduction of agriculture led the tribal people to a settled life and a growing desire for peace. The enmity among tribes faded away and various forms of intercourse sprang up without interfering with the ancient tribal organizations. This prepared the way for new forms of social life and the creation of a larger unity.

In this stage "ethical ideas made very large progress. They now have a wider scope within the racial group, and have begun to influence men very deeply outside their own particular clan."¹⁶

Among these groups priests made the greatest advance. The hymns themselves are very clear proof of their intellectual progress; rituals and sacrifices were becoming more and more elaborate. The priesthood naturally tended to become hereditary. So did other kinds of skilled jobs like carpentry, laundry, barbering and so on. This shows one of the several forces which combined to produce castes.

But the caste system in India is unique with regard to its religious basis, especially the doctrines of Karma and Samsara or rebirth. According to these doctrines each man was born in high or low caste depending upon actions in his past life. If he fulfills all the religious duties prescribed in his caste he may become, in his next birth, a Brahman; if he is a step lower, he is born a Kshatriya and so on. Thus for the Hindu, caste is an infallible index of the state of his soul. By the close of the sixth century B.C. the caste system in India had its full hold on the Hindus.

Though there are many castes in Hindu society they could be reduced into five groups, namely, Brahmines, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and Panchamas. According to the census of 1901 there were 2378 different sub-castes in India. Marriages between these castes are prohibited. Year by year these castes multiply locally according to the religious rites of the people. Therefore, there may be some 3000 different sub-castes in India by now.

¹⁶J.N. Farquhar, The Crown of Hinduism, p. 157.

With the religious life of a Hindu there are hundreds of taboos and superstitions. The writer dare not go through all of them and explain them in this paper. However, it is proposed to present a short survey of them.

1. The crude practice of bathing in the Ganges to wash away sins is one of the important religious practices in Hinduism. This custom is not only nonsense to the Christian but seriously immoral. By this the Hindus encourage the commission of sin by holding out the hope of cleansing through the holy water of the Ganges.

2. Hindus practice hook-swinging, tongue extraction, thigh-piercing, and the impaling of animals. These are for the sake of religion.

3. The previous pages show the nonsense of several practices, including suttee, the Hindu religion places upon women. Religious suicide was not infrequent in India.

4. A Hindu utters the name of his god several hundred times a day expecting that practice to win him favour.

5. The Brahman priests are believed to be the visible gods of Hindus. The people consider that the Brahmans have supernatural powers.

6. The Hindus offer sacrifices to the village deities. This may be an expression of his desire to be friendly to his god and make atonement for his sins.

7. In most modern Hindu sects the disciple bows down before his guru and places some of the dust of his feet upon his head. This

shows the reverence he has for his teacher.

8. A Hindu is not supposed to cross the ocean. Hindus believe in the sacredness of cows, bulls, monkeys, rats, snakes, certain kinds of trees (especially banyan trees), idols, sacred vegetables, and they do not eat meat.

9. The passion of a Hindu for purity is one of his most notable characteristics. Unfortunately this passion is mainly dependent upon external formalities and beliefs rather than upon internal purity.

10. It is shameful, yet it is true, that some Hindu mothers dedicate their daughters as devadasis for sacred prostitution. One of the concerns of Pandita Ramabai, an outstanding convert from Hinduism to Christianity, was to save the chastity, life and future of these innocent girls.¹⁷

"It is a realm of wrong and shame, of superstitions and folly," said Farquhar. The light that was shown in darkness was hidden by these outward expressions. There is good in Hinduism. But that will remain worthless until Hindus see the light in Christ which is able to put away darkness.

THE HINDU SOCIAL LIFE AND CEREMONIES

As has been mentioned before, Hinduism is more a way of life than a religion. The life of a Hindu is very much more restricted by

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 166-168.

numerous "do not's" than "do's." There are happy seasons as well as seasons of mourning. There are numerous festivals and religious days for Hindus. Without entering into any details of these festivals, this discussion now seeks to deal with some of the common and nationally significant festivals of Hindus.

The days and months of a year are important to Hindus. To him some days are good and some are bad. Monday is the special day of the god Siva, and some devout Brahmans observe the day as a fast for all their lives. In regard to shopping, the proverb says, "Buy cloth on Monday, and it will soon wear out, buy cloth on Tuesday and it will catch fire, buy cloth on Sunday and you will never be able to afford to buy more."¹⁸

In this way each day has its own prohibitions. Tuesday cannot be called an auspicious day, for it is named after mangala, the planet Mars. Wednesday, the day belonging to Mercury, is an auspicious day, but nothing sorrowful should be done during that day. It is not good for the sraddha festival. Though it is a good day for a wedding the bride must not leave her father's house on that day. The best and the luckiest day in the week is Thursday. "There is, however, a cautionary thought even for this auspicious day, for if a man washes his clothes, or has his hair cut he will be poor all his life."¹⁹

¹⁸Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, The Rites of the Twice Born (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 252.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 255.

Friday is not considered unlucky in certain areas in India. But generally it is not an auspicious day. Saturday is bad for almost everything. It is a special day for worshipping Hanuman, the monkey god. Sunday is a mediocre day--neither very good nor very bad. It is a day of the mother goddess.

Hindu festivals are divided according to the solar and the lunar systems. Each has its own seasonal festivals. People used to spend all that they earned during the interim period from one festival to another festival to celebrate the festival as best as they could. Each festival is attached with one or more gods and goddesses. The worship of these gods is an important part of the ceremonies. The Samkranti, New Year's Day, Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, Ittu Puja, Holi, Madana Trayodasi, Kama Trayodasi or Ananga Trayodasi, Narali Puranima, Ganesa chaturthi, Gawri festival, divali are a few of the nationally important festivals. These festival seasons demand too much from a Hindu. They exchange gifts among relatives and neighbours feed the poor, decorate their houses, buy new and valuable clothes for family members and servants, and prepare costly meals for a few days. Generally, one could say that the festivals leave Hindus poor.²⁰

ASCETICISM

In a late hymn of the Rg Veda we read of a class of

²⁰M.M. Underhill, The Hindu Religious Year (Calcutta: Association Press, 1921), pp. 38-74.

holy men different from the Brāhmans, the "silent ones" (munis), who wear the wind as a girdle, and who, drunk with their own silence, rise on the wind, and fly in the paths of the demigods and birds.²¹

In the later years this concept of Brahmins became a sect of religious leaders or ascetics. By the time of Upanishads (about the eighth century B.C.) asceticism had become very widespread. They were called Sadhus, Sanyasis, Bairagis, Gosains and Yogis.

Some of these men were very well educated and some of them were cowards and rascals. These sunyasis usually went to the festivals. They would be given special considerations at festive seasons. Other times of the year they lived in huts and made their food from begging. Hindus considered it a great honor to give alms to sunyasis.

According to an estimate there were 230,000 ascetics in India in 1931.

Beside these there were 800,000 priests, ministers, etc. making a total of over a million supported by religion . . . In 1921 there were half a million monks, nuns and religion mendicants and 1 1/2 million priests, ministers, etc. The figures for beggars, vagrant and prostitutes (who are grouped together), were three million in 1921 . . .²²

Probably this ideal staging of life has a religious origin. The life of a Brahmin has to be considered under four important stages. First, the Young Brahmin who has been invested with the temple cord, and who is from that time called Brahmachari. Second,

²¹A.L. Basham, The Wonder That was India (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 243.

²²L.S.S. O'Malley, Popular Hinduism, p. 211.

the Brahmin who has married, and who is thenceforward, but especially after he has become a father, called Grahastha. Third, the Brahmin who, renouncing the world, retires into jungles with his wife, and who is then known as Vana-prastha (or dweller in the jungle). Fourth, the state of Sunyasi, or that of the Brahmin who decides to live entirely in solitude, apart even from his wife, a mode of life considered even more edifying, than Vana-prastha.²³

The ascetics are the religious leaders of Hinduism. They are the seekers for transcendent knowledge. They claim that when they get this knowledge they are completely, utterly free. They claim that they have found the ultimate salvation, the final triumph of the soul. "The ascetic who reached the goal of his quest was a conqueror above all conquerors. There was none greater than he in the whole universe."²⁴

Because of this teaching of Hinduism there are more beggars in India than any where else in the world. Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism emphasize asceticism. The observance of Yoga teachings are very helpful for ascetic life. Yogi wears yellow robes and uses ashes to color the body. They are generally vegetarians and fast several times a week.

The Government of India has been taking steps to find out the true ascetics of the group and make the indolent work and contribute

²³ Abbe J.A. Dubois, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, p. 160.

²⁴ A.L. Basham, op. cit., p. 245.

to national life. In modern days, due to reform movements and the revival in Hinduism, the number of ascetics is decreasing year by year.

CHAPTER 4

THE EFFECT OF WESTERN CULTURE ON TRADITIONAL HINDUISM

Thus far the inquirer has been dealing with the history of India, the development of Hinduism from time immemorial, the literature that produced religious piety, reverence, and strength in Hindu doctrines and belief, the philosophical systems in Hinduism, and the social characteristics of traditional Hinduism which shows unity and strength in Hindu society. Several factors have contributed to the evolution in the social structure of Hinduism. The invasion of many races, such as the Aryans, the Mongolians, the Muslims, and Westerners from various parts of the world, from prehistoric times to the twentieth century, and the ideas they brought along with them have contributed greatly to shaping society in India.

"Neither politics nor war provides a key to the meaning of Indian history," writes Percival Spear. "Instead in society and culture are to be found the processes which give significance to India's past, and its present."¹

Among these invaders and conquerors the greatest contributor to Indian society was the western rationalism which came to India through English education. The British have been in India for a long time and have ruled India for more than a century. Before the coming of the British, India was under several local rulers and Rajas.

¹Percival Spear as quoted in the book by Charles H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 3.

These kingdoms were almost like watertight compartments without much intercourse or communications with each other. Enmity and fights were the usual medium of contact. Each Raja kept his subordinates under his subjection. There was no national rule over all the territories of India. Though the Moughol Government ruled from Delhi they never covered the whole sub-continent. With the coming of the British there appeared a great change on the Indian political scene, as well as on the social scene. They conquered the local Rajas and consolidated the sub-continent. Hence it is for this discussion to survey the history of the British in India from 1757-1947. The period prior to that was referred to in the first chapter.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE EVENTS BETWEEN 1757 AND 1970

Farquhar calls this period the "Period of Western Influence."

At the beginning of this period the British won the battle of Plassey. Nehru speaks about the battle in the following words:

In Bengal, Clive, by promoting treason and forgery and with very little fighting, had won the battle of Plassey in 1757, a date which is sometimes said to mark the beginning of the British Empire in India. It was an unsavory beginning, and something of that bitter taste has clung to it ever since. Soon the British held the whole of Bengal and Bihar, and one of the early consequences of their rule was a terrible famine which ravaged these two provinces in 1770, killing over a third of the population of this rich, vast, and densely populated area.²

"Violence and confusion continued long after the battle of

²Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959), p. 179.

Plassey; . . . Since then the whole political history of India is summed up in the gradual extension and consolidation of the British power . . ."³

In South India, the British had to fight against the French who had arrived there previously. Finally, because of their superior techniques and power the British triumphed. The French were almost eliminated from India.

After the elimination of the French power from India there were three powers to contest for supremacy in India, namely, the Marathas, Haider Ali in the South, and the British. But by 1799 the British fought against the Southern power and triumphed. In 1806 Charles Metcalfe wrote, "India contains no more than two great powers, British and Mahratta, and every other state acknowledges the influence of one or the other. Every inch that recedes will be occupied by them."⁴ The disunity among the chieftains of Mahrattas turned into the advantage of the British. They fought separately against each one of them and triumphed. The British became, then, the unchallenged sovereigns of a great part of India, governing the country directly or through puppet and subsidiary princes. Gradually the British took over the whole sub-continent. The independence of the United States of America is more or less contemporaneous with India's loss of

³J.N. Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 179.

⁴J. Nehru, op. cit., p. 181.

freedom.⁵

The Hindu religion at this time, as the result of many decades of devastation and chaos, had fallen very low. The rituals and the ceremonies continued. The spirituality was centered around temples and shrines. The people were exploited by the Brahmans. The more repulsive features of the religion, such as gross idolatry, immorality, infanticide, suttee, hookswinging, and other tortures, were very much in evidence.

This was the period when the Hindu reform movement took place and became active. It had been influencing the Hindus from inside while the educated group of Indians began to speak against the superstitions, idol worship and the illegal practices in Hinduism. This was the period when active missionary work, efforts for education, big hospitals, and other philanthropic efforts were planned, and established. This period saw the great awakening of the masses, and the uprising of Indian nationalism. These movements stood for the application of science based on reason and the use of new ideas in every day living of the Hindus.

As a result of all this, Hinduism had to give up certain of its traditional practices. The most important of these were suttee, female infanticide, child marriage, and untouchability. The Government passed new resolutions prohibiting many of these irrational social evils.

⁵Ibid., p. 197.

Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru and many other outstanding leaders India gained independence in 1947. This was achieved through a unique means which is called "non-violence." Not a drop of blood was shed to achieve independence. President Eisenhower said on his arrival at Palam Airport,

. . . India won its freedom and its independence through peaceful means. This in itself . . . has challenged the admiration of the entire world. But more than that, India, determined to live in peace, has devoted her entire efforts, all her treasure, all her talent, all her brains, to raising the standards of her own people, to give them a better chance for a better life. . .⁶

Since her independence India has successfully passed twenty-three great and useful years. There have been victories and failures in her life. She had to face border disputes and had to fight against aggressions. She had to solve several internal and external disputes. She kept up her deputation in the international sphere and kept her inner unity. Every five years India, the largest democracy in the world, goes to the polling booth to elect her leaders for the next five years. In India one can observe a great experiment in democracy and the principle of self-government.

India has achieved great progress in the realm of science, politics and economics. She has some of Asia's largest dams and irrigation projects, factories and atomic energy stations. India is the second largest industrial nation in Asia. All of these have been

⁶Creighton Lacy, The Conscience of India (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 4.

achieved through the application of reason, science and technology. Though no detailed survey is possible in this paper, the writer would like to concentrate on the influence and changes the Hindu religion derived from these innovations and the progress through technology.

THE STIMULATION FOR MODERN SOCIAL REFORM

When one speaks about the reformation that took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the reader should be aware of the fact that it had begun before the nineteenth century. There were reform movements in Hinduism in almost every century from the days of Buddha. The Vedanta philosophy and its exponents, namely, Sankara, Madhava and Ramanuja, were real reformers. Their teachings emphasized monism in place of idol worship and polytheism. They rejected unscientific social practices. But among the traditional reform movements the Bhakti movement had greater importance because of its emphasis on devotion and the rejection of idols and the caste system.

Tulsi Das, Kabir and Ramananda were some of the outstanding personalities in the Hindu Bhakti movement. These men did not change their belief in Siva or Rama. However, they led many Hindus from the ritualistic observances of the Hindu practices to a devotion to God, the creator.

At the end of the thirteenth century the impulse to this new glow of religious emotion was given in the Maratha country by a practical exposition of a Maratha Brahman called Jnaneswar. But the great name in Marathi Bhakti movement was that of Tukaram (1608-1649)

whose songs still echo all over central India. His songs are the praises of Vithoba which keep the flame of devotion alight among all classes of the people. In Bengal there was an outstanding individual known as Cahitanya (1486-1530). He spent the years of his "sainthood in a continuous frenzy of devotion to Krishna." His "life," says one Bengali admirer, "was a course of thanksgiving, tears, hymns, and praises offered to God."⁷ Vaishnavism was the important religious sect in the Bhakti movement.

Sir George Grierson, who has studied this sect in all its phases, claims that it brought about the greatest religious revolution that India has ever seen--greater even than that of Buddhism, for its effects have persisted to the present day.⁸

The main literature of this movement was the Bhaktamala, the Acta Sanctorum. These records were compiled in the sixteenth century.

This stream of devotion has flowed continuously through the centuries in almost every religion of India from Kerala to Kashmir, bringing quickening wherever it has gone. It bears within it what we may claim to be the real heart of Hinduism.⁹

The main gods in the Bhakti movement were the incarnations of Vishnu, Krishna and Rama. The Maratha's god Vithoba was identified with Krishna. Siva was exalted by the southerners into the form of a savior and "upon him also has been bestowed this worship of loving

⁷ Nicol Macnicol, The Living Religions of the Indian People (New Delhi: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1964), p. 66.

⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

⁹ Ibid.

devotion."¹⁰ The chief of this group in the south was Manikkavachakar. "No cult in the world," writes Dr. L.D. Barnett, in reference to this bhakti of Siva, "has produced a richer devotional literature or one more instinctive with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling and grace of expression."¹¹ Dr. Appaswamy says of Manikkavachakar, "From generation to generation devotees in the Tamil country have sung and wept over his hymns."¹²

Namdeve was another great poet among these Bhaktas. "Purity of heart, humility, self-surrender, forgiveness, and the love of God, form the sum and substance of the teaching of Namdeve."¹³ These poets have produced some of the outstanding lyrics and hymns which rival devotional hymns in every religion in the world.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagor wrote,

It is the sorrow of separation that even melts and flows in song through my poet's heart. That sorrow comes to us like the shrill cry of a lost child down the winds of the centuries from the days when Namdeve clanged his cymbals and sang his heart out in Ghuman or in Pandhari.¹⁴

Looking back from the present perspective, it may not be easy to see much which has resulted from these reform movements. Many of the leaders of these movements have become small gods in the movements. They were not able to speak for widow remarriage, nor stand against suttee, idolatry, caste, female infanticide, and the seclusion of women.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68

¹¹Ibid., p. 69.

¹²Ibid., p. 70.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 71.

Why did not these religious movements affect the social structure of Hinduism? Was there a motive behind these movements? Yes, there was, but it did not work for various reasons. C.H. Heimsath gives three points in answer to these questions. He quotes from Neera Desai's book Women in Modern India.

1. The bhakti movements fostered equality only in the religious sphere, not in secular life. 2. Although criticizing certain social practices the movements offered "no alternative program of social and economic reorganization of Indian society. . . ." "In fact their appeal was emotional rather than rational. They felt the unreality of caste and they appealed to the people for equality in the emotional songs but they could not argue it out on rational principles." 3. The movements never built up organizations which could carry out any positive social program, even if they had had one; at best they produced individual, not collective, opposition to the status quo.¹⁵

W.B. Patwardhan gives another reason for the failure of the Bhakti movement. He says,

It was their flexibility of doctrine and tolerance of opposition which prevented them from becoming practical instruments of revolt and change . . . The fact is that the saints of the bhakti school were of a pacific turn of mind and did not love controversy or contest. . . . Their principle was the principle of conciliation. . . . They disarmed opposition and contest by assimilation.¹⁶

There was an urge and an urgency among the people (a few at least) for change even before the British came. The willingness of Hindus for toleration and the capacity of Hinduism for assimilation of any theory or practice in its fold were other factors which played against reformation. But when the British came they brought an alien

¹⁵C.H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, p. 34.

¹⁶Ibid.

culture with a resisting attitude to this assimilating power of Hinduism. Christianity and its teachings, secularism based on common sense and reason, scientific knowledge and the value of education were antithetical to the Hindu ideals. They demanded basic changes and freedom from superstition. It was a challenge and, in a way, a threat to the Hindu traditions. It was, rather, an imposition of western culture on Hinduism.

But the British power in India did not bring reform overnight. Like other mercantile companies, the East India Company came into India

solely for profit and trade, and the rule they sought to establish in India was one designed best to further their own aspirations. They did not wish to transform India into a mirror-image of England, but rather to learn the intricacies of Indian cultures and habits so as to be able to manipulate them for selfish advantage.¹⁷

Robert Clive and Warren Hastings were notable leaders holding this opinion. But men

like Cornwallis, wanted to see India raised up to the British standard of administrative excellence . . . By the first decade of the nineteenth century a substantial segment of influential British opinion insisted that Great Britain's primary business in India was fostering education rather than trade, and saving souls more than making profit.¹⁸

These ideals penetrated into the minds of the British, though the results were not visible immediately. Gradually they began to do certain things that were necessary for the improvement of India. These

¹⁷S. Wolpert, India (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 87.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 87.

ideals and ideas were put into practice. They made reformation possible.

The reform movements in India can be divided into three aspects; namely, personal, social and national. Out of these divisions, the personal and the social aspects are very much interrelated, so they will be dealt with under one division and the national aspect separately.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES OF WESTERN CULTURE IN INDIA

J.N. Farquhar in his book Modern Religious Movements in India divides the British period in India into four different sections. They are 1800-1828, 1828-1870, 1870-1895, and 1895-1913. He wrote his book in 1913. Since 1913 the history of India is centered around the struggle for independence which was obtained in 1947. After 1947 many of the British institutions continued in India. However, India was led by Indian leaders.

The Educational Institutions

Up to the Nineteenth century the influence of Christianity upon Hinduism had been indirect; but after the advent of the British rule it soon became the predominant new religious factor, and ushered in a Reformation.¹⁹

By the beginning of the nineteenth century India was very much influenced by the Hindu elite who had their education in England and in English. There were men like Raja Rammohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen,

¹⁹C.F. Andrews, The Renaissance in India: Its Missionary Aspect (London: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1912), pp. 106-107.

M.G. Ranade, and many other outstanding leaders who had been connected one way or another with the British. They began to raise voices against existing superstitious customs and social practices in Hinduism. The reformation took place only under the influence of western methods of organization and the reformers "recruited their supporters from men who were English educated or who had imbibed western ideas indirectly."²⁰ These elite saw the inconsistency in the Hindu doctrines. They spoke for

the spiritual equality of men and women and people of different castes, the injustice arising from economic exploitation, the cruelty of suttee and female infanticide, and the absurdities of many religious rituals.²¹

They supported and emphasized the western ideals of individualism, natural rights, the ethical duties of an individual to society at large, and the possibility of progress through hard work. They urged the use of reason as the standard of judgement. These points of revolt "coupled with organizational devices derived from European and American patterns, were the distinguishing features of the modern social reform movements. . . ." ²²

The second factor that contributed to reformation was the introduction of English education in India. This was the vehicle which transmitted the ideas of English social thinkers and politicians. English education exposed India to the outside world. It began to

²⁰Ibid., p. 46.

²¹Heimsath, op. cit., p. 46.

²²Ibid., p. 46.

show the need of struggle for survival in the international realm.

The outstanding man in this field on the side of the British government was Lord Macaulay. He was appointed President of the General Committee of Education. His report on English education reads:

the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that the funds appropriated to education would be best employed in English education alone.²³

Lord William Bentinck who was Governor General in India at that time supported the resolution and decided to bring the idea into effect. This was done in 1835 before he was retired. About this Mr. Bouglar wrote,

the momentous decision to make the English language the official and literary language of the Peninsula represents the salient feature of his [Lord William Bentinck's] administration, and makes his Governor Generalship stand out as a land mark in Indian history.²⁴

Sir John Seeley wrote,

Macaulay's minute remains the great landmark in the history of our Empire considered as an institute of civilization. It marks the moment when we deliberately recognized that a function had devolved on us in Asia similar to that which Rome fulfilled in Europe.²⁵

In the same month the resolution passed, Lord Bentinck saw the foundation of Calcutta Medical College, one of the first medical colleges in India. Almost all main centers in India began to take

²³V.A. Smith, The Oxford History of India (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 670.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵C.F. Andrews, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

advantage of this new resolution. Schools and colleges were established to teach the illiterate in India.

These new ideas and the new institutions faced great opposition from Hindu leaders and even from the Western rulers.

From the point of view of government policy they had no wish to disturb the old ideas of the East. Their scholars also were under the spell of the newly discovered treasures of Sanskrit literature. As Seeley puts it, they were "Brahmanised," and would not hear of admitting into their enchanted enclosure either the Christianity or the learning of the West.²⁶

This opposition was understandable because the common people generally do not like a radical change from a long cherished idea. Gradually, these policies and the opposition were given up.

The Protestant Missionary Work

Protestant missionary work in India began with the Danish Mission. They did a very remarkable work in the Tamil country. But it was William Carey and his colleagues that roused first Britain, and then America and the Continent to a sense of their obligation to the non-Christian peoples of the world.

When William Carey came to India the East India Company did not give him entrance into their territory. After much wandering he settled as an indigo-planter near Malda in North Bengal. There he studied Bengali and Sanskrit. He began the work of translating the Bible into Bengali. In 1800 he settled in Serampore under the Danish flag, and in the same year he began to teach Sanskrit and Bengali in

²⁶Ibid., p. 31

Lord Wellesley's College in Calcutta. By this time his teammates Joshua Marshman, the charity schoolmaster, and William Ward, the printer, arrived in Calcutta.

The object of their work was stated by Stephen Neill as follows:

1. The widespread preaching of the Gospel by every possible method;
2. the support of the preaching by the distribution of the Bible in the languages of the country;
3. the establishment at the earliest possible moment of a Church;
4. a profound study of the background and thought of the non-Christian peoples;
5. the training at the earliest possible moment of an indigenous ministry.²⁷

These objectives were considerably accomplished by these hard working men.

He compiled a Sanskrit grammar for use in his classes. The translation of the scripture and the publication of tracts in different languages continued. Carey and his colleagues opened schools and established a printing press. In 1819 the Serampore College for the instruction of Asiatic, Christian, and other youth in Eastern literature and European science was established. It opened with thirty-seven students, nineteen of whom were Christians and eighteen non-Christians.²⁸

During this period the whole attitude of the English toward India changed due to the evangelical awakening in England under John Wesley. Many outstanding men came to India with sympathy and Christian

²⁷Stephen Neill, Christian Missions (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 263.

²⁸Ibid., p. 265.

piety. Some of the men were David Brown, Thomas Thomson, Daniel Corrie, Charles Grant. These men advocated a change of attitude towards the new British dominion in India and the spiritual welfare of her people.

In the field of education a great awakening came with the arrival of a young Scotsman, Alexander Duff. The Serampore missionaries were absent from Calcutta when he came. Dr. Duff plunged at once into the turmoil of the "young India" of those stirring days. He founded an English school in Calcutta on his own account.

In 1833 the Governor General and his Council accepted Duff's point of view. The great reformer in Hinduism, Raja Rammohan Roy, sided wholly with the new missionary teacher, and the Bengali young men hailed Duff as the champion of the program. He was the leader of the new movement in the English side. Duff expressed his conviction through his action. "Christian civilization is in one sense the embodiment of the Christian faith," C.F. Andrews writes about Duff's conviction.

This Christian civilization must be given to India, as well as the Christian message itself, if it is to become intelligible. English education, which expresses that civilization, is not a mere secular thing, but steeped in the Christian religion. English literature, English history and economics, English philosophy, carry with them of necessity Christian conceptions of life; for the atmosphere in which they have been produced has all along been Christian.²⁹

²⁹C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p. 33.

Duff's second battle was fought over the question of the education of women in India. He requested and insisted upon educated young women missionaries from the West to work in the field of education in India among women.

In those days men missionaries were not permitted to go into the zenanas of Hindu religion. Duff's aim of bringing women missionaries from abroad was to send them to zenanas of India and to teach the women in girl's schools. Finally, after great opposition women missionaries began to come to India.

Students in India began to study English literature, science and culture. English was the medium of instruction. As English education continued the national languages also developed. Within the government territories educational institutions were established. The most efficient of these were the Fergusson College, Poona; The Dayanand College, Lahore; the Central Hindu College, Benares; the Isabella Thoburn College for Women, Lucknow; and the Muhammedan College, Aligarh. Later some of them became universities.

Alexander Duff's work was greatly successful. Many high caste Brahmans became Christians. By the middle of the nineteenth century universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Wealthy Hindu families began to send their children to Christian schools and colleges. The knowledge of science helped the Hindu students to give up several of the superstitious beliefs of their traditional faith. About this the Oxford History of India records that,

Contact with a dead body, . . . had for twenty centuries been considered a mortal pollution by the Hindoos, and it was traditionally affirmed that native prejudices were invincible. But these anticipations, when brought to the test of actual practice proved as usual, to be the phantasies of a morbid imagination. Natives of high caste were found to resort freely to the dissecting room, and to handle the scalpel with as much indifference as European students . . .³⁰

Needless to say, the attainments of physicians and surgeons of Indian birth were equal to those of any westerners of those days. The above quoted comment was made by Marshman in 1867.

The missionary societies and the governments encouraged and established hospitals and orphanages. The suffering of the women in India led the Christians to make medical aid available to them.

Men could not enter the zenanas, and yet in them much of the tragedy of Hindu pain and death took place. Such was the origin of the woman medical missionary, one of the most precious forms of help ever sent to India. Orphanages, widows' homes and famine relief were all used to some extent during these years, but their full development comes later.³¹

From the very beginning of missionary work in India there have been men and women who gave their lives to toil among the outcastes. Whenever India was hit by famine missions stretched out their helping hands. Everywhere missionaries threw themselves into the work of saving lives. M.N. Srinivas comments,

Christian missionaries played a notable part in humanitarian activity, especially in providing education and medical aid to sections of Indian society most in need of them--Harijans, women, orphans, lepers, and tribal folk. Equally important were their criticisms of such Hindu

³⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 671.

³¹Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), p. 21.

institutions as caste, Untouchability, the low position of women, child marriage, and polygamy. The British-Western attack resulted in a reinterpretation of Hinduism at both the ideological and institutional levels, and the conversion of the lower castes (especially Harijans) to Islam and Christianity was an important factor in producing a changed attitude among the Hindu elite toward caste and Untouchability.³²

Mission institutions were considered the best. The Hindus preferred to send their children to Christian schools rather than to government or Hindu schools. Commenting on this, Mr. Anjilvel V. Mathew, an Indian Christian, reported that

Missionary institutions, though their number has not been large in comparison with the total requirements of the country, have always been looked upon as models even by those who do not approve of the religious motive that lies behind their social service activities.³³

. . . It was Christianity that almost for the first time in the history of the country brought the people to a consciousness of their own backwardness and degeneration . . .³⁴

Even before the introduction of English education in India the rich literature in Sanskrit had been made available to many studious Westerners.

The rise of orientalism in contemporaneous with the beginnings of good government in North India and with the development of the new mission propaganda. It was Warren Hastings who took the steps which led to Europeans becoming acquainted with Sanskrit and Hinduism.³⁵

³² M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 49-50.

³³ Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, p. 52.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁵ Farquhar, op. cit., p. 7.

A simple code of Hindu law was put together and translated into English in 1776. In 1785 the Bhagavadgītā was translated into English by Charles Wilkings; and Sir William Jones published his translation of Sakuntala. Hamilton taught Sanskrit to several French and German scholars. The discovery of Sanskrit led a revolution in the science of language. A great mass of books on oriental lives were published by occidental scholars during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. Among them are: The Sacred Books of the East, Trubner's Oriental Series, The Harvard Oriental Series, The Light of Asia and The Song Celestial. In 1875 a dictionary of Pali was published, which laid the foundation of the scientific study of the literature of early Buddhism.

Many western scholars produced books on biology, ecology, archaeology, studies on birds, geography and on many other subjects on India. This has given a sense of wonder about India's past and the need of renewal for the future of India. The people in India, especially Hindus, had little sense of history. Their religion does not believe in a continuing process of history. Hence they seldom kept a systematic record on Indian history. The new awakening gave them a sense of need for scientific research and study. These studies opened the eyes of the educated elite in Hinduism with a new awareness of renewal.

"It must be confessed," observed D.S. Sarma, "that the emphasis which our religious leaders, especially those belong [sic] to the Samaj movement and the Ramakrishna Mission, have laid on social service is due to the object lesson provided by Christian missions." It may be mentioned

here that some of the greatest social and religious reformers in India like Swami Vivekananda were educated in Christian colleges.³⁶

The missionaries went into several tribal areas in India and worked among the tribal people. They taught them hygiene and the cause of diseases. They reduced several dialects into written languages and translated the Bible or portions of the Bible into these languages. Speaking about the efforts of missionaries in India Nehru said,

The printing of books and newspapers broke the hold of the classics, and immediately prose literatures in the provincial languages began to develop. The early Christian missionaries, especially of the Baptist mission at Serampore, helped in this process greatly. The first private printing presses were set up by them, and their efforts to translate the Bible into prose versions of the Indian languages met with considerable success.

. . . The desire of the Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into every possible language thus resulted in the development of many Indian languages in this respect, as well as in the collection of folklore, it has undoubtedly been of great service to India.³⁷

Chandavarkar said about these efforts that they were "accomplishing silently what no law could have accomplished--unsettling people's minds, raising controversies . . . and thus forwarding the cause of social progress."³⁸ Again, Srinivas noted,

evangelical Christianity is regarded as characteristically Western, and it is indisputable that Christian missionaries played a crucial role in India's "modernization." But

³⁶K. Damodaran, Indian Thought (London: Asia Publishing House, 1967), pp. 339-340.

³⁷Nehru, op. cit., p. 229.

³⁸Heimsath, op. cit., p. 47.

Christianity, like all other world religions, had its origin in Asia.³⁹

The social reform movement was uniquely a result of English education and its leadership was almost entirely drawn from men formally or informally exposed to it. Reformers began to raise criticism against social evils, argued for social justice, and advocated human rights based on a reasoned inquiry into the nature of man. These arguments appeared in Indian writings for the rest of the century. Comte's philosophy was put before Indian eyes by John Stuart Mill in his books On Liberty (1859), Considerations on Representative Government (1861), Subjection of Women (1869), August Comte and Positivism (1865). Indian reformers took Comte's arguments and began to publish these ideas in daily newspapers and in books.

Underlying the substance of these philosophies was the principle that reason, rather than tradition or authority, should determine ethical norms and define human relations. As in Europe during the Enlightenment, so in India in the 19th century, acceptance of that principle released men's minds for an objective look at society and aroused excited speculation and enquiry into possible new ways of organizing social life. In intellectual terms, that new freedom to evaluate the foundations of social institutions marked the beginning of India's modern development . . . the acceptance of reason as a guide to individual conduct and social policies were acknowledged by the educated leaders of India in the early decades of the 19th century. Western rationalism had found a new home.⁴⁰

There were many other less important western writers who insisted on human rights and good society. Herbert Spencer's ideas

³⁹ M.N. Srinivas, op. cit., p. 52.

⁴⁰ Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, pp. 48-49.

on the evolution of society showed that change is a necessary element for progress in society. It need not be violent. It could be directed by human hands. The social reformers in India practically used this ideology and made it a point to apply it in Indian society. Based on Spencer's thesis the Indian reformers "often warned their listeners that Indian society had to meet the standards of social efficiency in order to be fit for survival." Once the Indian Social Reformer wrote,

In the history of Indian social reform--when it comes to be written--the pages that will be devoted to the influence of Mr. Spencer cannot be pages of indiscriminate panegyric . . . his picture of the social organism had the greatest charm to the Indian mind, prone to take delight in contemplating consequences detached and isolated beyond the mind and vision from their actual and natural causes.⁴¹

The challenge of the Christian ethics directed against the Hindu social evils is another point to consider when one thinks about the reformation in India. A recent student of Indian reform movement, Ronald W. Scott, carefully concluded that modern Indian religious and social reform has been, in large part, a response to the ethical challenges of Christian doctrine and to the "concept of human personality as expressed primarily in the Christian religion." Some of the great men in the political realm are reluctant to acknowledge the contribution of Christian missions and educationalists in India. But seeing the abused and degrading enslavements of individuals in the early seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, especially in Bengal,

⁴¹Ibid., p. 50.

Nirmal Kumar Bose wrote, "It required the challenge of Christian missionary activity to rouse Bengal from her slumber . . ." ⁴² In

The Precepts of Jesus Rammohan Roy wrote,

This simple code of religion and of morality is so admirably calculated to elevate man's ideas to high and liberal notion of one God, . . . and is so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves and to society, that I cannot but hope for the best effects from its promulgation in its present form. ⁴³

The leader of Arya Samaj, Lajpat Rai of Punjab openly admitted that the organizational knowledge of the Indian people came from their contact with the West and from the examples of Christian missionaries.

These Christian missionaries influenced the government officials to enact legislation against social evils and to provide help for poor and famine-hit areas. Their efforts have helped to lift the poor and the outcaste from their lowly state, liberate women from their seclusion, and in general provide freedom from ignorance. The presence of foreign people in India gave the people of India an awareness of the outside world and the constructive progress made in other lands.

K.M. Panikkar, speaking on the contribution of the West to Indian society said that the West revived a sense of criticism in the Indian mind. The very basis of Hindu institutions came under examination. He continued by saying,

⁴² Ibid., p. 51.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

every one of the social institutions to which the Hindu people had attached importance in the past and which the outside world had come to consider as the special characteristics of Hinduism had been quietly give up or reformed beyond recognition. . . . There was no aspect of Hindu society which was not subjected to popular criticism.⁴⁴

Panikkar again pointed out that the critical attitude was best reflected in the prevalent tendencies in regional languages. A century ago dramatic literature in these languages was modelled on Sanskrit. Today both the regional and national languages in prose and poetry follow the lead of the West.

The most significant creative activity which one sees in modern India is in the realm of short story, novel and drama. The inspiration--at least in regard to form--for these comes from English, French and Russian.⁴⁵

The same attitude and influence could be observed in painting, sculpture and other arts.

THE REFORM MOVEMENTS AND THE ABOLITION OF SOCIAL EVILS

There are several reform movements to be discussed under this rubric. All over India the Hindus caught new life and vision and an urgency for renewal. P.D. Devanandan says that the Hindu reform was "due to the Hindu awakening to the broader situation, the impact of forces from without, and the consequent shock of renewal within."⁴⁶ In a world of rapid changes, the claim of men's traditional religions

⁴⁴ K.M. Panikkar, The Foundations of New India (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 62-63.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ P.D. Devanandan, The Gospel and Renascent Hinduism (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 8.

to supply effective and valid inner resources of strength for living with courage and hope was being put to a severe test by powerful factors, and Hinduism had to reckon with that fact. Hinduism was shaken to its foundation by revolutionary forces. It was forced to reckon primarily with three distinctive factors that condition the modern world temper.

There is, first, the general acceptance of the scientific, secular outlook which gives precedence to the material things of life as contributing to the common good, and the welfare of man in particular. In the second place, priority is given to the repatterning of human relations in society with a view to ensuring the worth of individual men and women, and to safeguarding the total good of the community. Thirdly, there is widespread interest in the need for achieving a true sense of human solidarity so that the basic unity of the world of nations may not be endangered by war.⁴⁷

These factors found expressions and reactions from the educated Hindu intellectuals. The reform movements and reform organizations are the result of these expressions and reactions. One cannot deal with all reform movements in detail because they are too many in number. Farquhar gives a list of about twenty-five different reform organizations. But one should here mention a few which have contributed most in the drama of reform movements in Hinduism.

The earliest of these reform movements was the Brahmo Samaj founded in 1828 by Raja Rammohan Roy. By making use of Islamic and Christian theology he developed a modern and cosmopolitan outlook in

⁴⁷Ibid.

the Brahma Samaj. Using his central concept of a formless God, Roy built up a lofty monotheistic creed that could live easily with the Unitarian faiths of foreign origin.

The background of this new theology came from his contact with the Serampore missionaries. Under their influence he spoke against widow burning (suttee) and polygamy, and pled for the abolition of these practices.

His efforts proved fruitful in several directions. The agitation against the burning of widows, in which he had taken a great part, found its conclusion in Lord Bentinck's famous order of the 4th of Dec. 1829 forbidding the cruel practice.⁴⁸

The turning point of his religious life came in 1811 when he was obliged to witness the suttee of his brother's wife. He tried to save her, but the orthodox Hindus did not listen to him. Finally he was criticized for his unorthodox belief. He answered them in the following words:

The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. Observe what pain, what slighting, what contempt and afflictions their virtue enables them to support. How many Kulin Brahmins are there who marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of their money? They never see the greater number of them after the day of their marriage. Still, amongst these women most continue to preserve their virtue. And when Brahmins and others bring their wives to live with them what misery do the women not suffer? . . . They are treated as worse than inferior animals . . . All this pain and affliction their virtue alone enables them to support. When a husband takes two or three wives to live with him they are subjected to mental miseries and constant

⁴⁸J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), p. 33.

quarrels. Even this distressed situation they virtuously endure . . . What I lament is that, seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death.⁴⁹

If Roy had not broken the ground and prepared the way, the British government would not have been able to pass the law against suttee so early. He is called the Father of the Hindu Reformation.

The principles which guided Roy were two: first, he took his theology from the Upanishads; second, he got his moral teachings from Christianity.

The consequence of long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and more adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge. . . . As a youth I acquired some knowledge of the English language. Having read about the rise and progress of Christianity in Apostolic times, and its corruption in succeeding ages, and then of the Christian Reformation which shook off these corruptions and restored it to its primitive purity, I began to think that something similar might have taken place in India and similar results might follow here from the reformation of popular idolatry.⁵⁰

From his studies he discovered and repeatedly emphasized the basic unity of mankind as the goal of human research on the intellectual plane and the welfare of society as the dominant consideration and the ultimate goal of our moral endeavour.⁵¹

Rammohan Roy's effort toward social reform reached several

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 109-110.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

⁵¹ H. Bhattacharyya, The Cultural Heritage of India, IV (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission, 1956), p. 616.

areas in India. By mid-century the intellectuals in India, especially English-educated young men, rose against social evils. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), a Bengali follower of Rammohan Roy, illuminated for all who could read or cared to listen the social state of Hindu widows, a subject which received little or no attention from Roy.

Women! (he wrote in 1856) In India, thy lot is cast in misery! . . . How miserable is the present state of India! It was once known to nations as the land of virtue. But the blood dries up to think that it is now looked upon as the land of depravity . . . From a view of its present degradation it is vain to look for a speedy reformation.⁵²

The Bombay Parsee community was the first to adopt the western style of living. The leader of the community wrote,

We want the English language, English manners, and English behavior, for our wives and daughters; and until these are supplied, it is but just that the present gulf between the Englishman and the Indian should remain as wide as ever.⁵³

Brahmo Samaj was the first religious organization to be formed as a reform movement. Many intellectual men took refuge under the organization. They spoke against the anti-rational basis of many religious rituals; unjustifiable caste restrictions on inter-dining, diet, and overseas travel; they protested malpractices in the management of temples and religiously-sanctioned prostitution; they deplored the degrading treatment of low castes and untouchables and infanticide.

⁵²Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, p. 14.

⁵³Ibid.

There were several other samajas established locally and working in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta.

Keshab Chandra Sen, the successor of Rammohan Roy, was a great orator. He admired Christ throughout his life. But he never became a Christian in the popular sense of the word. He loved India. His speeches were filled with love and concern for the people of India.

"What we see around us today," he alarmedly exclaimed, "is a fallen nation--a nation whose primitive greatness lies buried in ruins. Its national literature and science, its theology and philosophy, its industry and commerce, its social prosperity and domestic simplicity and sweetness, are almost numbered with the things that were. As we survey the mournful and dismal scene of desolation--spiritual, social and intellectual--which spreads around us, we in vain try to recognize these in the land of Kalidas--the land of poetry, of science, and of civilization."⁵⁴

Sen was the last of the great Bengali assertions of the religious and social needs of all Indians until Vivekananda appeared at the end of the century.

These men wrote several books on Christ and his teachings. Keshab Chandra Sen organized the Samaj under Christian tradition with worship and singing, and he called himself a prophet of the "New Dispensation." He combined Eastern religious passion with western rationalism in his organization. He even went "so far as to soak the very core of the Brahma creed with the Christian ideals." In the creed of Brahmo Samaj they wrote,

No graven images, sculpture, statue, carving, painting,

⁵⁴Heimsath, op. cit., p. 16.

picture, portrait, or the likeness of anything is to be admitted within the Samaj premises; no sacrifice, offering, or oblation of any kind or thing is to be ever permitted therein.⁵⁵

The second in the category of Samajas in the Arya Samaj which was founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi (1824-1883) from Punjab. This is an organization which stood firmly by the Vedas and returned the critical attacks of Christian missionaries on Hinduism with sledge-hammer blows on Christianity. The founder was opposed to Islam as well.

In Dayananda's reformation the influence of "Christianity has been far less direct, though the power of Western Renaissance has been one of the chief factors in the movement." He renounced idols and attacked the authority of Brahmans. His appeal was to the educated Hindus. These Hindus were all educated in the secular philosophy and the western utilitarianism of the century. John Stuart Mill transmitted Bentham's ideas to several generations of Indian civil servants who were educated on his History of British India at the East India Company's College at Haileybury. Thus the educated Hindus were ready to respond to the call of Dayananda. Many of these Hindus did not want to become Christian but they wanted to shake the superstitious practice of Hinduism.

By calling themselves Aryas, and still retaining their faith in the Vedas, they could continue to be Hindus and yet dissociate themselves from the grosser abuses of their old religion. Swami Vivekananda's method exactly

⁵⁵C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p. 113.

corresponded with their requirements, and they flocked eagerly into his Arya Society.⁵⁶

This religious movement also was accompanied by sweeping changes in social customs. The caste system as a religious institution, was abolished; the monopoly of the Brahmanas over the Vedas was denied; women were liberated from a number of social disabilities. Besides, enthusiasm for a wide range of philanthropic activities including the spread of education, became a remarkable feature of the Arya Samaj.⁵⁷

Bombay was another center of reformation and among the men who led the reform movements were M.G. Ranade (1842-1901), Kashinath Trimbak Telang (1850-1893), Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925), and Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar (1855-1923).

Ranade was a justice in Bombay. He came closer to Raja Rammohan Roy in his leadership for reformation. He believed that "religion was as inseparable from social reform as love to man is inseparable from love to God." He provided an intellectual basis for social criticism which marked the proceedings of the National Social Conference. In the National Social Conference in 1893 he asked,

Are we or are we not conscious that many of us, under the narcotic influence of custom and usage, too often violate the feelings of our common human nature and our sense of right and wrong, stunt the growth of our higher life, and embitter the existence of many of those who depend on us. . . ? Are we prepared to point out any single hour of the day when we do not unconsciously commit injustice of a sort by the wide of which municipal injustice is nothing; when we do not unconsciously sanction inequities by the side of which the most oppressive tyrants rule in mercy itself? .

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁷ H. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p. 655.

. . We should take due care to set our house in order, as no mere whitewashing and no plastering would remove these hidden sources of our weakness. The whole existence must be renovated. The baptism of fire and not of water must be gone through by those who seek a renovation of heart such as this.⁵⁸

His plea for moral and social justice was very stern and uncompromising. In the twelfth conference of the same society he again raised his voice strongly against the injustice people practiced day by day. He said,

All admit that we have been deformed. We have lost our stature, we are bent in a hundred places, our eyes lust after forbidden things, our ears desire to hear scandals about our neighbors, our tongues lust to taste forbidden fruits, our hands itch for another man's property, our bowels are deranged with indigestible food. We cannot walk on our feet but require stilts or crutches. This is our present social policy, and now we want this deformity to be removed. . .⁵⁹

Bandarkar made constant comments on the caste system as the root of all India's ills, and Chandravarkar was inclined to agree. For Chandravarkar caste, even in its purified form, was a formula for social disruption, weakness and immorality.

Like Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen and Ranade believed that Christian civilization from the west was the greatest of all the factors which were to change the discipline of Indian life and make it more worthy.

Ranade was very much appreciative of British rule, although many Indians did not agree with him. He spoke about the Bible and

⁵⁸ Heimsath, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

the people who brought the Bible into the land of India. Ranade wrote as follows:

The book [Bible] which treats of the moral, social and religious advancement of our great country with the help of western science, under the paternal rule of the British nation, is indeed a sacred book . . . who can deny that Victoria is an instrument in the hands of Providence to elevate this degraded country in the scale of nations . . . [He advised the educated country men] to be loyal to the British Government, that came to your rescue, as God's ambassador, when your country was sunk in ignorance and superstition and helpless jejuneness, and had since lifted you to your present high position.⁶⁰

He appreciated the disciplined administrative system of the British people. He hoped that India would gradually observe the disciplines of the West.

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. The President of the second session, Mr. Naoroji, who was one of the reform leaders in Bombay, said,

It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declaration made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God.⁶¹

This may not be a representative opinion of the common people in India fifty years since, but the educated elite felt the insurmountable nature of the Hindu superstitions and they were willing to comment against them and in favor of the work the British did against them.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 21.

⁶¹Stephen Neill, Colonialism and Christian Missions (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966), p. 103.

There were some other reform movements among Hinduism which were predominantly for the revival of Hindu faith and the renewal of the Vedas. The main one among them was the Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blavatsky, a Russian lady, and Colonel Olcott, a former army officer of England. They published extensively the Hindu scriptures with translations. Mrs. Annie Besant did uphold the use of charms, spells, incantations, astrology, idolatry, caste and all sorts of other evils for "magnetism." The water of the Ganges was pure and holy for the Theosophists. "Yet no one has been more strenuous and active an opponent of child-marriage than Mrs. Besant, and few have worked harder for the education of Indian girls. . ."⁶² But now one can scarcely find the influence of the Theosophical Society in India. In spite of its decline, however, the society has done some good for India.

The next reform movement which deserves our attention is the movement which took place under Swami Vivekananda. He was a great exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, but his concern for social reform was greater than any one before him. He was a well educated Brahman. He had his education in Christian colleges. He followed Rammohan Roy in the matter of social reform. He spoke vehemently against social evils and the people gave him support. His description about the people in India is as follows:

Moving about here and there emaciated figures of young and old in tattered rags, whose faces bear deep cut lines of the despair and poverty of hundreds of years; . . . feeble

⁶² Andrews, The Renaissance in India, p. 149.

physique; . . . worn-out huts by the very side of palaces, piles of refuse in the near proximity of temples, the Sunnyasin clad with only a little loin cloth, walking by the gorgeously dressed, the pitiful gaze of lustreless eyes of the hunger-stricken at the well-fed and the amply-provided;--this is our native land! Devastation . . . three hundred millions of souls such as these are swarming on the body of India, like so many worms on a rotten, stinking carcass;--this is the picture concerning us, which naturally presents itself to the English official!⁶³

He was an outstanding Indian religious leader who had his reputation all over the world. He represented India at the World Parliament on Religion in Chicago. He exhorted against the passive nature of the Indian people and said about Europeans,

Always of active habits being possessed of a tremendous Rajasika (aggressive) nature, they are gathering with great enterprise and youthful ardour the comforts and luxuries of the different countries of the world, and enjoying them to their heart's content. And we are sitting in a corner with our little bags and baggages, pondering on death day and night, and singing, "Very tremulous and unsteady is the water on the lotus-leaf, so is the life of man frail and transient." with the result that it is making our blood run cold and our flesh creep with the fear of Yama, the god of death. . . .⁶⁴

He accused the people and said,

We are just don't touchists. Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is in the cooking pot, and our religion is "Don't touch me, I am holy." If this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in a lunatic asylum.⁶⁵

His aim was to reduce the social evils from Hindu society. He said that the people in India had too much religion, and that it was of

⁶³ Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, pp. 25-26.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

the wrong kind. C. Lacy writes,

Today Vivekananda's organization reaches across the country with a two-fold purpose. One branch is the Math (or Order), providing retreats for study and meditation, and in urban centers a weekly discourse which draws the largest "congregations" of any religious function. The other branch is the Mission, which conducts at least ten hospitals, seventy dispensaries, schools and colleges and libraries, famine relief and Narijan welfare projects.⁶⁶

Swami Vivekananda organized the Ramakrishna Mission.

In later years, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the reform movement was combined with the struggle for independence under the Indian National Congress and its outstanding leaders were Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, and many others. During these years nationalism took priority over social reform. It shall be dealt with in the following pages.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ITS EFFECT ON HINDU

SOCIAL AND FAMILY LIFE

The invasion of the mercantile economy of the western world produced vast changes in the power struggle and social regime of Indian society, and especially Hindu society. When the East India Company assumed responsibility for the government of India, new classes began to struggle for mastery. The Mughul Empire was aristocratic and military minded. Under the British government and its educational system, the people in India received new life and renewal. In this upsurge of Indian people the old social systems and

⁶⁶C. Lacy, op. cit., p. 236.

customs of Hindu society began to crumble.

In this survey of social changes, the traditional structure of the joint family should naturally be the first point of consideration because it is one of the oldest systems in Hindu society. The joint family life still persists in India, especially among the more conservative sections of the Hindus. From time immemorial traditional understanding of social rights and obligations has been conditioned by the growing importance of the joint family. The other very closely knit pattern of social custom in Hindu society is the caste system. "Everything connected with the Hindu people outside their religion is related to these two institutions."⁶⁷

There are several reasons for the continuation of the joint family system. In the joint family

children . . . grow up with a sense of security in an atmosphere of affectionate concern. Similarly the old and infirm members of the family have the comforting assurance that their needs will be taken care of. The son grows into his father's profession, acquiring confidence and skill through an almost life-long association with his male relatives engaged in the family business.⁶⁸

As was mentioned in the third chapter, the joint family is probably a continuation of the patriarchal family of the ancient days.

There are three main characteristics in the joint family system.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁸ P.D. Devanandan and M.M. Thomas (eds.), The Changing Pattern of Family in India (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. xiv.

1. As a family they have no common property holding. 2. The entire family pooled together their seasonal earnings which were paid them in kind. 3. The religious sanctions for the joint family associated with the periodic shraddha rites for their dead ancestor spirits. This conception is under threat and change since the spread of technology, monetary economy, popular education and the democratic way of life, other types of associations such as the trade union, the recreational club and the like provide for the emotional and economic need for security in belonging. The trend is for the family to increasingly become a smaller unit consisting of the father, the mother and two or three children.⁶⁹

Since the coming of modern technology the rural families in India have been undergoing a transition. It should be borne in mind that the rural family is basically the joint family. The lower castes are not usually land-owning castes. The upper castes own the land and the lower castes provide the agricultural labour.

By the introduction of the modern monetary system and a uniform currency by the British, the traditional jajmani system tends to disintegrate the joint family among the lower castes. The labourers used to get the wages of their labour previously by kind, but now it is paid in cash and is a fixed amount depending on the amount of work done. The laborer does not have to trust his landlord or his parents to buy his clothes or food for him. The money economy introduced the principle of demand and supply in regard to the exchange of goods and services produced within the village.

Moreover, the joint family system was maintained on the superstitious belief that the family rituals can be observed only

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. xiv-xv.

when the joint family maintains its unity. But by the introduction of education and the application of reason in every life situation the traditional concepts of religious observance come under the inspection of reason and judgement.

Besides this, the application of technology has also had its share in the process of revolution. A boy who was born and reared in a village and who has passed his fifth standard might be earning two hundred rupees a month for his physical labour in an industrial center. He lives with friends from different castes; cooks and eats his food with his untouchable friends and shares his apartment with them. When he works in the factory he does not think about the untouchability or pollution which he observed back in his village. He meets these people every hour of his day. There he meets a girl of a different caste. He decides to marry her without any religious rituals because he does not have time to go home to have elaborate religious rituals at his wedding ceremony. He does not have time to go home to observe his father's death anniversary. His life in an industrial city changes his attitude to all of his religious rituals and observance. A.R. Desai says that,

During the last hundred and fifty years, the traditional joint family and the familistic rural framework have been undergoing a qualitative transformation. The basis of rural family relationships is shifting from that of status to that of contract. The rule of custom is being replaced by the rule of law. The family is being transformed from a unit of production to a unit of consumption. The cementing bond of the family is being changed from consanguinity to conjugality. Further, the family is ceasing to become an omnibus social agency, it being shorn of most of its economic, political, educational, medical, religious and other social and cultural functions. Instead it is

becoming a specialized and affectional small association. From a massive joint-family composed of members belonging to a number of generations, the family is increasingly shaping as a tiny unit composed of husband, wife and unmarried children. Familism, too, is gradually dropping off. The rural society is acquiring quite a new gestalt.⁷⁰

M.M. Thomas, an Indian sociologist, calls it "The Struggle for New Societies."⁷¹

The problem of untouchability is another changing factor in the Hindu social life. The Indian constitution abolished untouchability and made it a penal offence.

Mahatma Gandhi called the untouchables "Harijans" (the children of God) and he wished to be born as an untouchable in his next birth so that he might "share their sorrows, sufferings, and the affronts levelled at them,"⁷² in order that he might endeavour to free himself and them from that miserable condition. He was an ardent fighter against untouchability in Hinduism. By the achievement of independence a great renewal and change in the position of the Harijan community has come about.⁷³

Ghandiji regarded untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism. Today the Hindu society is at a crossroad.

Under the combined onslaught of political changes, upheaval among the Harijans themselves, and it must be added, the social consciousness of high-caste Hindus,

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 29-30.

⁷¹ M.M. Thomas, The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 35.

⁷² M.K. Gandhi, The Removal of Untouchability (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1959), p. 3.

⁷³ K.M. Panikkar, Hindu Society at Cross Road, p. 51.

both the theoretical basis of the parallel society, and its practical working have begun to give way.⁷⁴

Since the missionaries began to work among the untouchables there have been a good number of conversions to Christianity. The Christians were willing to give them equality and love, and permitted them to go to school and be educated. Due to these factors there was a big uprising among the untouchables. The high caste Brahmans saw this uprising and understood that Hinduism would lose all the untouchables if they did not act quickly. Thus the Hindus consented with the government to give them the privilege to worship in the temples. Since the independence of India the constitution gives them the right to vote and reserves for them seats in the Village Panchayats. These provisions have made them conscious of their strength and identity in the society. K.M. Panikkar said,

The absorption of the Harijans and the tribal people into the general body of Hinduism will mean the disappearance of Chaturvarnya even as a conception. Hindu society such as we have known it at least from the time of the Buddha would then have undergone a transformation more radical than that which the Buddha adopted and more comprehensive than that which Sankara conceived.⁷⁵

The Christians could boldly claim that this comment was made possible only through the influence of Christian ethics which taught that every man is equal before God and that the man next to you is your brother.

When the Government of India passed the law against

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 56.

untouchability it was a radical step in the direction of reformation for Hinduism. Many of the Hindus did not approve it. The Constitution reads

The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to -

- a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or;
- b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens . . . The enforcement of any disability arising out of "Untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law.⁷⁶

Some of these rights provided to the low castes and the untouchables are new. However, the basis of this law goes back to the days of the British rule in India.

With their new awareness of equality, castes and sub-castes are trying to push themselves up in a number of ways. This power is called "Sanskritization" by M.N. Srinivas, an Indian sociologist.

This process depends for its success on every member of the particular sub-caste giving up the old ways and adopting the new ones, from becoming vegetarian to prohibiting the remarriage of widows, from introducing dowries and child marriage to giving up the traditional occupation of leather work and taking to clean occupations.⁷⁷

These days more and more sweepers go on strike in the villages, and

⁷⁶Taya Zinkin, Caste Today (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 59-60.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 43.

where strikes have lasted long enough for the caste villagers to have had to handle their own refuse and dead cattle, the belief in pollution has been weakened, and with it some of the feeling against the sweeper has gone.⁷⁸ The public no more segregates untouchable children to a corner of the public school because they are untouchable. Integrated schools and colleges have been established by the Christians first and then the government. The Hindu reform movements served the purpose of educating Hindus in modern thoughts.

The Hindu understanding of women, and the position they gave to women are still rather low as has been mentioned elsewhere. It has been noted that most of the reform leaders spoke against it. Nehru, speaking about purdah, said,

Among the unfortunate developments that took place in India was the growth of purdah or the seclusion of women. . . Purdah seems to have grown in India during Moghul times, when it became a mark of status and prestige among both Hindus and Moslems. This custom of seclusion of women spread especially among the upper classes of those areas where Moslem influence had been most marked . . . I have no doubt at all that among the causes of India's decay in recent centuries, purdah or the seclusion of women holds an important place. I am even more convinced that the complete ending of this barbarous custom is essential before India can have a progressive social life. That it injures women is obvious enough, but the injury to man, to the growing child who has to spend much of its time among women in purdah, and to social life generally is equally great. Fortunately this evil practice is fast disappearing among the Hindus, more slowly among the Moslems.⁷⁹

Gandhiji called this practice a "vicious and brutal custom." The

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Nehru, The Discovery of India, p. 144.

strongest factor making for the liquidation of the pardah system was the nationalistic movement in which women had an active part.

In the nineteenth century the British government passed regulations against suttee, the low age of marriage, the widow remarriage laws, the consent bill, equal share to the daughters in the Hindu families, and many other existing social evils. These regulations shook the foundation of the social life of the Hindus. These forms of legislation have revolutionized the basic concept of the Hindu family.

In fact, the Hindu orthodoxy undermined its own citadel when it permitted the education of women. Female education spread over all castes by the arrival of women missionaries and the establishment of women's schools in several parts of the country.

The rise of new social classes in India based mainly on Western education put a premium on educated women even from the point of view of marriage. Naturally, educated women cannot be forced to believe in the ideal of patidevata and to be content with the faith that the service and worship of the husband, however degraded, immoral and unmanly he be, is equal to worship of god himself. The ancient Hindu ideals of womanhood therefore came in for examination and criticism in the light of reason and common sense.⁸⁰

By the independence of India the women in India began to assume responsibilities as cabinet ministers, ambassadors, state governors and many other executive responsibilities.

But the significant thing in India is not the distinction achieved by a few women of genius but the change that has taken place in the villages in the rural areas, among

⁸⁰ Panikkar, Hindu Society at Cross Roads, pp. 61-62.

classes and castes, so far considered as orthodox or backward, where also women have been released in a very great measure from the social bondage that custom and conservatism had imposed on them.⁸¹

The education of women and their political awakening have sharpened the axe with which to clear away the wild growths of Hindu social life. Education involves new moral and ethical conceptions and an unchanging moral code laid down two thousand years ago or based on the growth of local customs cannot satisfy an educated mind.⁸²

In this, women themselves took initiative for change and challenged the Hindu society at the point of the relevance of certain social practices in present day society. This may be the greatest challenge the Hindu society faces today. The impetus of the challenge comes from the most conservative section of society, women, and it is they who provide the driving force behind the demand for social changes.

This awakening demands a reorganization and revision in the moral and ethical basis of the traditional Hindu society. The acceptance of equal rights of daughters to inheritance, freedom of divorce and right of civil marriage, and laws against devadasi (temple prostitution) are creating a revolution in Hindu society,

establishing for it a modern code of laws, a new morality and a new principle of social relationships. The system of joint-family (the sub-caste) would disappear; the institutes of ancient law-givers would give place to rational codes; customs and practices which exist on the pretended sanction of religion but which are merely the results of social reaction would be discarded. The modernization of Hindu life and its re-invigoration may

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁸²Ibid., p. 65.

therefore legitimately be said to depend on the claims to social equality put forward by women.⁸³

This has already taken place through legislation by the Indian Parliament. This has given an impetus to a major revolution in Indian society.

WESTERN IMPACT ON THE NATION

Colonialism is a complicated problem which both large and small countries face even today. India was the largest colonial country Britain possessed.

It was a projection of an earlier phase in European development. It belongs to the time when the East, the fabulous East, had so many of the products which poor, impoverished, backward, uncivilized Europeans wanted that they were constantly going out to try desperately to secure pepper and spices for their winter meat, the silks which they could not make at home and the gold and the jewels which they could not procure anywhere else. At that time, the whole lure to a backward Europe was precisely the technological and cultural advance of the East, in fact, many of the trade problems of those days lay in the fact that there was very little which the West could sell back to the wealthy Orient.⁸⁴

The East India Company had a hard time providing bullion in return for the goods they bought from the Orient. The aim of the company was to buy oriental goods and make a profit by selling them in the Occident. But by and by, they took possession of India through the might of gun powder. There are several sad stories on

⁸³Panikkar, op. cit., p. 67.

⁸⁴Barbara Ward, Towards a World of Plenty (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 49.

the process of making India a colony of England. However, the whole story is not dark; it has a bright side too, which will be discussed later.

British Trade and Exploitation

In his book India Today Raju Palme Dutt mentions that there are three main periods in British rule in India. The first is the period of Merchant-Capital, represented by the East India Company. The second is the period of Industrial-Capital which established a new basis of exploitation of India in the nineteenth century. The third is the modern period of Finance-Capital, developing its distinctive system of the exploitation of India on the remains of the old. In each of these three periods India was exploited.⁸⁵

"Thou shalt not kill but needst not strike officiously to keep alive. This is an excellent description of a good deal of the British government's attitude towards the development of Indian industry."⁸⁶

In 1760 the Nawab of Bengal was complaining impotently to the Company about the Company's agents.

They forcibly take away the goods and commodities of the Ryots (peasants), merchants, etc. for a fourth part of their value, and by ways of violence and oppression they oblige the Ryots, etc. to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee.⁸⁷

⁸⁵M.D. Lewis (ed.), The British in India (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1965), p. 41.

⁸⁶Ward, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 43.

Several kinds of petty trade, like looting went on in the areas where the British had their control.

But when the administration of the territories went into the hands of the British, the taxes they levied were beyond the capacity of the people. Clive's letter to the Directors of the East India Company states that the revenue hereafter will at least amount to 20 or 30 lakhs more.

Your military expenses in time of peace can never exceed 60 lakhs of Rupees; the Nabob's allowances are already reduced to 42 lakhs, and the tribute to the King (the Great Mogul) at 26; so that there will be remaining a clear gain to the Company of 122 lakhs of sicca rupees or £ 1,650,900 sterling. Clive himself returned home with a fortune estimated at a quarter of a million pounds, in addition to an Indian Estate bringing in £ 27,000 a year; he reported that "fortunes of £ 100,000 have been obtained in two years."⁸⁸

In 1766-68 the exports amounted to £ 6,311,250 while imports amounted to only £ 624,375, ten times as much as taken out of the country.

The British step-motherly attitude to India is evident from the following fact. The next step the British took in the beginning of the nineteenth century was to destroy the production in India and help the technological revolution in England.

In the parliamentary enquiry of 1840 it was reported that, while British cotton and silk goods imported into India paid a duty of 3 1/2 per cent and woolen goods 2 per cent, India's cotton goods imported into Britain paid 10 per cent, silk goods 20 per cent and woolen goods 30 per cent.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 43-44.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 47.

Between 1815 and 1832 the value of Indian cotton goods exported fell from £ 1.3 million to below £ 100,000 or less. At the same time English cotton goods imported into India rose from £ 26,000 to £ 400,000. "By 1850 India, which had for centuries exported cotton goods to the whole world, was importing one-fourth of all British cotton exports."⁹⁰ The export and import policy shattered the hope of the Indians, who have been engaged in spinning and weaving, and left them poor. Most of them returned to their old farming. As the national wealth was drained away to England famine crept into several states in India and it is estimated that between 1851 and 1900 at least 20 million people died from starvation. About this Nehru said that wherever the British ruled, the people were left poor. Even in spite of famines, the British government insisted the people pay their taxes in cash. In 1878 a Famine Commission was appointed to consider the problem of the growing famines. Its report, published in 1880, said,

At the root of much of the poverty of the people of India and of the risks to which they are exposed in seasons of scarcity, lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass of the population, and that no remedy for present evils can be complete which does not include the introduction of a diversity of occupations, through which the surplus population may be drawn from agricultural pursuits and led to find the means of subsistence in manufactures or some such employments.⁹¹

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 48.

With regard to the "gift" of railways the students of Indian affairs were of one opinion that it was to open up India for more complete commercial penetration. This required the building of a net work of railroads, the development of roads, the beginnings of attention to irrigation, the introduction of the electric telegraph, the establishment of a uniform postal system, an anglicized education for the supply of a number of clerks and subordinate agents, and the introduction of a banking system. But, to tell the truth, all these had been done with Indian money, and, finally, the national debt had risen from £ 70 million to £ 224 million by 1900. By 1934 the national debt of India was raised to £ 884.2 million. Thus the British capital investment in India was in reality first raised in India from the plunder of Indian people, and then written down as debt owed by India to Britain, on which she had thenceforth to pay interest and dividends.⁹² Toward 1940 the total tribute of India to the British crown had amounted to £ 150 million. The exploitation of India was vivid from the situation which prevailed when India got her independence. In 1947 India's national debt was far bigger than any other period in her history and the national treasury was left almost empty. That India is still a poor country is due to these factors.

It is true that the British government brought peace and order in India from her internal fights and lawlessness. But it has

⁹²Ibid., p. 49.

produced another side effect on India. Barbara Ward says,

Decade after decade of internal peace brought a steady increase in India's population. There are no accurate statistics, but a rough estimate is that it may have doubled between 1780 and 1880. Thereafter it rose more rapidly--from over 200 millions in the last decades of the century to nearly 360 millions by the time of independence. More people in a still static economy meant more pressure on the land. . . .

In 1939, after a hundred years of British investment, peace, order, and modern commercial law, after nearly a century of modern railways, ports, and exports industries, after eighty years of Indian enterprise in a vast internal market of 300 million souls, India still had an industrial establishment of only 2 million workers, a steel output of less than a million tons, and a population which still depended for as much as 80 per cent of its livelihood on a static, overcrowded, agrarian economy.⁹³

Another contribution the British gave to India was communalism. This resulted from the policy of divide and rule which the British adopted. Even the partition of India into two sections was a direct result of communalism.

In India from ancient days, in trade unions and peasant groups, members of the Hindu and Muslim communities used to work together. Their cultures influenced each other. Toleration was a unique quality which the Hindus exercised from time immemorial. Islam spread in India by conversion. In every part of India and Pakistan Hindus and Muslims have been alike physically. They can be distinguished only by externals, such as dress, treatment of facial and head hair, sectarian markings, customs of eating, drinking or other. Moreover, in every locality both parts of the population used

⁹³Ibid., pp. 58, 63.

a common speech.⁹⁴

Socially, both communities have similarities in their observances of wedding ceremonies and in sharing each other's religious festivals. These communities live like brothers in many places. Moreover these two communities have much in common historically. From the Kings to the servants they had good relationship with each other. Muslim rulers have often used Hindus as civil administrators and Generals and Hindus have done the same with Muslims.

All through Indian history Hindus played the major part in commerce, trade, and wealth. When the Indian Mutiny occurred it was considered by the British to be the responsibility of the Muslims. The Indian princes involved were Muslims. Because of this fact, the British laid the heavier part of the penalty upon Muslims. Thus the Muslim community in India was unhappy. It held no such political supremacy as they enjoyed under Mughal.

The growth of Indian nationalism during the twentieth century brought more communal riots and clashes between Hindus and Muslims. By the time of the partition of Bengal these rivalries increased intensely. In 1906, with the blessings of the Viceroy Lord Minto, Muslims organized the Muslim League, as a political organization.

The communal spirit grew up more as a result of the

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 96.

Morley-Minto Reforms which gave a communal representation in the Legislative Councils. The National Congress resisted this reform.

But

In the two successive constitutions granted India after the Morley-Minto Reforms, namely those of 1919 and 1935, the principle of communal representation was extended instead of curtailed, and it thus became the most poisonous single feature of Indian politics in this century. . . .⁹⁵

Since then the Muslim community has gained a part of the sub-continent through independence and partition in 1947.

The effect of the communal feeling still continues. Many of the political parties in India are the result of the communal spirit which was begun and nourished by the British government. The R.S.S., Arya Samaj, and other parties were founded to revive Hinduism. But now these parties have started to cry for a separate Hindu State with other religious minorities as second class citizens. As we have seen before, the root cause of the revival of Hindu consciousness began, no doubt, at the time of the British rule in India.

India Becomes One Country under One Government

After the Great Rebellion, which is called the First Struggle for Independence, the British crown took over the direct government of India in 1858. The British government ruled India through local Rajahs and Governors. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharajah of Mysore ruled over 100,000 square miles in the Deccan tableland, while, in the south the rich coastal area was under the rule of the

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 98.

Maharajah of Travancore and Cochin. These Rajas, of course, paid tribute to the British Crown. The British introduced law and order in India based on reason. The criminals were to be punished on the basis of the evidence of their crime. They would no longer be judged on the basis of their caste.

The great codes of civil and criminal law with their complementary system of procedure and evidence, which undoubtedly constitute the most enduring as well as the most magnificent achievement of British rule in India.⁹⁶

By this, in spite of all the caste disabilities and discriminations, the educated elite began to assume responsibilities and leadership in their respective areas. Though it was with fear and trembling, in 1885 the Indian National Congress, a political and national organization, was founded. Its members were businessmen, journalists and lawyers. To them the rule of law was the basis of all society. The social ideas of their class gave momentum and dynamic to their onward march. Their nationalism at that time went toward participation in the administration of the country, in the civil services, and in the judiciary and toward the establishment of a parliamentary system. Thus they compelled the British government to listen to their opinions whenever it was necessary. These men were generally practicing advocates, social reformers, and social service leaders.

By the introduction of law and order and the suppression of theft and other crime, it was possible for this educated elite to involve themselves in journalistic activities. Though the British

⁹⁶Panikkar, Hindu Society at Cross Roads, p. 80.

did not give freedom to the press in India, there were about 200 papers and journals before 1885. The origin of all these could be traced from the day of William Cary. An Indian intellectual hints eloquently with gratitude at the scope of revolution brought to Indian life by the activities of a few of the early Protestant missionaries in the country.

Carey and his associates started the first college of a University grade in India; they introduced for the first time the teaching of experimental science into India; they brought the first printing machine into the land and began printing literature for distribution; they introduced the first power machine to the land; they started the first newspaper, which became subsequently one of the leading dailies of the country and continues to be so even today; they planted the first botanical gardens in the East; they introduced the translation of Western books into the Indian language and vice versa.

Carey wrote the first Bengali grammar, and Bengali developed so quickly subsequently that it can today claim to possess one of the richest literatures in the world.⁹⁷

By these techniques the broad middle class emerged into a position of strength which took advantage of the new opportunity available to them. This was the beginning of the Indian nationalism. By this time "the country was united, peace reigned over its length and breadth." The government introduced a cash monetary system and a stable and uniform currency replaced the numerous coinages in different states.

India's transportation was developed by this time by the introduction of railways, and communications were developed through

⁹⁷Creighton Lacy (ed.), Christianity amid Rising Men and Nations (New York: Association Press, 1965), p. 43.

post and telegraph. Through these means an immense demand for goods was the immediate result, and Indian merchants in consequence entered on an era of prosperity.⁹⁸ Since the application of technology in travel and the emergence of new urban areas, traditional Hinduism has been forced to forget and give up the caste restrictions and untouchability.

By the end of the century a great middle class with a general unity of vision, a competent leadership and a body of social ideas had come into existence. Liberalism was their creed: self-government and economic freedom was their political objective, the regeneration of India, organized as a progressive, forward-looking community accepting freely from the West its sciences and its New Learning was the great ideal they placed before themselves.⁹⁹

By the rise of the Indian National Congress to undisputed pre-eminence, the British began to yield to the claim of the people and offered participation in the government administration. There too, the middle class stepped in. A number of Indians entered into Indian Civil Service.

As early as 1882-83 Lord Ripon established a form of self-government in India, and in it almost all outstanding men served as administrators. To these people the English language was the means of world knowledge. They took pride in knowing this language. The political philosophy of great thinkers in the field of politics came through English. English was the medium of instruction and communication. Main newspapers in India were published in English. The

⁹⁸ Panikkar, op. cit., p. 81.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

liberal traditions of England and the parliamentary democracy came to be known by Indians through English. The English language opened the eyes of India to the outside world and gave them access to it.

As for English history, it appeared to Indians, as it doubtless did to many contemporary thinking minds everywhere, the broadening of freedom from precedent to precedent. . . . The contrast between an England governed by a parliament based on popular sovereignty and an India governed under the authority of the same parliament, by an alien bureaucracy which denied the right of the people and restricted their liberties, was glaring. To the middle classes of India in the 19th century such action was "Un-British" and their appeal was always to the libertarian traditions of England, against the autocracy of its agents in India. . . .

The Indian National Congress was an army fighting for liberation from a foreign regime through peaceful means. Its basis was the moral and ethical principles. In this also the Indian National leaders accepted the 18th century liberalism . . . Even in great independence struggle the main doctrines of liberalism--freedom of the individual belief in legislation as a process of betterment, moral suasion as the basis of political action, separation of religious matters from the range of the State--these continued to be deeply rooted in the Indian mind.¹⁰⁰

Among the Indian leadership there are several men who have contributed both for social reform and for independence struggle. Until the establishment of the Indian National Congress, and even after a score of years, the national leaders appeared as reformers of Hinduism. But after the establishment of the National Organization, the nationalistic movement received priority and we see leaders speaking more for freedom of the land than for social reform. However, many of these leaders spoke against the superstitions and anti-social

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 85.

practices in Hinduism.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai were the leaders at the close of the nineteenth century. They were among the radical groups of leadership. In 1902 Tilak advised the people to rise against imperialism. He said to the people,

You must realize that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration in India is conducted . . . It is you who manage the railroad and the telegraph, it is you who make settlements and collect revenues, it is, in fact, you who do everything for the administration, though in a subordinate capacity, you must consider whether you cannot turn your hand to better use for the nation than drudging on in this fashion.¹⁰¹

All other leaders in those days were the advocates for the mass movement against the British rule.

During this period the British divided Bengal for administrative reasons. This incensed the Bengali patriots, and the campaign they launched spread throughout India. "Boycott became a political weapon. The labourers in India for the first time joined the political struggle."¹⁰²

Due to the struggle of these leaders and of the people, the Minto-Morley reforms (1907-08) were adopted which for the first time admitted Indians to a share in the central government and liberalized the representative institutions. The side effects of these bills have been dealt with elsewhere.

¹⁰¹Damodaran, Indian Thoughts, p. 394.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 396.

By this time the British government passed certain legislation which had far reaching consequences in the lives of the Hindu people. Representatives of this legislation is the Sarda Act which raised the age of marriage to fourteen in the case of girls; made legal the civil marriage act validating marriage between Hindus of different castes, and passed the Earnings of Learning act.

In the leadership of the Indian independence struggle next to the above mentioned leaders a frail figure stands as an undisputed leader who was called "Mahatma." He was in leadership before the first world war. But his name became famous only after 1920. He was conscious of the power of the masses and their role in making history. He was a firm believer in Truth and the universal application of ethics and morality. He experimented with ethics in the national and political struggle for independence.

Though he was an orthodox Hindu he was deeply influenced by many religions, especially Christianity. He was an ardent admirer of Christ and his Sermon on the Mount. He was educated in England in a Christian environment and his life was moulded in the Christian schools in the West.

After returning from South Africa in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi familiarized himself with Indian villages. He was convinced that the freedom of India was the only solution to India's problems. He announced his new program for the immediate attainment of self-government of India.

It was a call to young India to cast aside all that it had so far cherished as essential for progress. Lawyers were to

give up their practice, students to turn their backs on colleges and institutions maintained or supported by Government, the public to withdraw their co-operation from Government and generally to organize themselves in villages and towns to live a life independent of British administration. Pressure on Government was to be exercised by a programme of civil disobedience, by the boycott of foreign cloth and refusal to pay taxes when the masses were organized and ready for it.¹⁰³

Mahatma Gandhi was well acquainted with the living conditions of the common man in India--his economic backwardness, political immaturity, religious outlook and social prejudices. Gandhi formulated his line of action in such a way as to appeal to the widest sections of the people, especially the backward classes, who were impelled to join the anti-imperialist struggles led by him.¹⁰⁴

He organized a constructive program for the villages.

The main items of this program were communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition of alcoholic drinks, the popularization of Khadi or handspun cloth, village sanitation, new education, the rejection of purdah or the seclusion of women and the organization of peasant labour.¹⁰⁵

His program was a success. He faced opposition from many quarters. But the masses were awakened and in villages all over India they rose to action.

Gandhiji's fight had an ethical content which attracted the people of India very much because they are basically religious minded. "He considered non-violence or ahimsa as the highest form of ethics,

¹⁰³ Panikkar, The Foundations of New India, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴ Damodaran, op. cit., p. 436.

¹⁰⁵ Panikkar, op. cit., p. 100.

for, a perfect vision of truth can only follow a complete realization of ahimsa." He wrote, "For me ahimsa comes before swaraj . . . Ahimsa must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible."¹⁰⁶

Non-violent resistance to evil involved suffering. Gandhi gave a religious and moral significance to suffering. "Things of fundamental importance to a people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased by their suffering."¹⁰⁷

His ethics and the practice of ethics went hand in hand. In 1943 when he came out of his last incarceration he enlarged the scope of his original idea when he said,

I have been thinking hard during the detention over the possibilities of Nai Tali (new education); we must not rest content with our present achievements. We must penetrate the homes of the children. We must educate their parents. Basic education must become literally education for life.¹⁰⁸

There were several other outstanding leaders who cooperated in the struggle for freedom. Some of them are: C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabai Patel, and Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. From this one could observe that the middle class which worked with Gandhi was the continuation of the same middle class which arose at the close of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁶ Damodaran, op. cit., p. 441.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Panikkar, op. cit., p. 104.

This middle class created the National Congress, gave expression to the political ambitions of the educated sections of the community, developed a press and public opinion in India and provided leadership for the social reform movement which grew up side by side with nationalism.¹⁰⁹

From the following list we could observe the social concern of the Indian National Congress and the Indian National Social Conference, which have passed the following resolutions:

Adjustment of birth, marriage and death fees according to ability to pay (1888); raising the marriageable age of children (1888, 1897, 1899, 1914); protection or remarriage of child widows (1888, 1897, 1899); approval of intermarriage, at least between subcastes which recognize interdining (1888, 1915); greater educational facilities for girls (1893); for outcastes (1895); for physical training of boys (1899, 1900); for moral and religious instruction (1897); the establishment of local movements against temple dancing and prostitution (1893); for temperance (1895); for orphanages (1900); opposition to penance for sea voyages abroad (1888); to dowry demands (1891); to the zenana or purdah system of female seclusion (1902); to polygamy (1891, 1913); the "fusion of sub-castes" (1902); "relaxation of caste restrictions and rigidity" (1908); and "abolition of castes" (1915).¹¹⁰

These resolutions have been directed to the Government of British India and even to "the Mother of Parliaments," between 1888 and 1915.

THE EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES ON HINDU THEOLOGY

Through the nationalistic movement and the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi "Christ on the Indian Road" became more significant than ever. The influence of Christians and their participation in the national liberation struggle was praiseworthy. The Hindus were

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 106.

¹¹⁰ Lacy, op. cit., p. 125.

confronted with a question of either/or in the matter of their decision for Christ at this period. Gandhiji's "Harijans" one by one or group by group began to embrace Christianity. This produced an uproar in Hinduism. In Kerala all the Ishava community decided to become Christians because the Hindus did not permit them to enter into Hindu temples for worship.

All of these factors have contributed to a renaissance theology in Hinduism. The thinking man in Hinduism saw the pressure upon him from liberal theology and the theology of other religions. Though Hinduism was a tolerant religion and willing to assimilate any thoughts and theological trends, the systems of thought from outside were unwilling to compromise with them. They showed a better rational thought fitting to the modern theology.

The beginning of this new theological trend has been visible from the time of Raja Rammohan Roy. As we have seen he was very much influenced by the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Based on his studies and conviction about Jesus Christ he wrote a book entitled The Principle of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness in 1820. In that he combined the Christian moral principles and the deistic rationalism together with a few elements from the Upanishads. In the introduction of his famous book he says,

I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system of idolatry, inducing, for the sake of propitiating their supposed Deities, the violation of every humane and social feeling, and to view in (this system) the moral debasement of a race . . . I pray that (Hindus may come to) a conviction of the rationality of believing and

adoring the Supreme Being only, together with a complete perception and practice of that grand and comprehensive moral principle: "Do unto others as ye would be done by."¹¹¹

The root of a syncretistic theology begins in Rammohan Roy.

The follower of Rammohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, was the one who made great advances in syncretistic theology. By this time the Brahma Samaj had received good publicity through the leadership of Sen and Prince Dwarka Nath Tagor. When the Samaj was founded it was not bound by organizational laws, or membership, or creed. The purpose of the Samaj was to welcome anyone to worship with them without idols or sacrifice, and with no sermon preached or hymn sung in the worship but

such as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue, and the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds.¹¹²

The Samaj formed a strong theistic creed and a basis for worship.

The people were enthusiastic to know of this new movement and flocked to listen to these great leaders of the Samaj.

K.C. Sen was the founder of the "Church of the New Dispensation." He accepted the scriptures of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. He had missionaries to propagate the ideals of the new organization. He formed men and women into orders of various kinds, and solemn vows were laid upon them.

¹¹¹M.M. Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (London: SCM Press, 1969), p. 3.

¹¹²Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, p. 35.

He announced his position in the following words:

Our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions; but that all the established religions of the world are true. . . . The glorious mission of the New Dispensation is to harmonise religions and revelation, to establish the truth of every particular dispensation, and upon the basis of these particulars to establish the largest and broadest induction of a general and glorious proposition.¹¹³

He called God Mother, adopted the homa sacrifice and the arati-ceremony into Brahma ritual. He found spiritual nourishment in the Durga Puja. He composed a liturgy for the Church. He adopted the Lord's Supper and baptism from Christianity. The character of Christ, the sense of sin, and the Christian attitude to social life were the "pith and marrow of Keshab's doctrine." He accepted Christ's divinity. However, he said,

Christ fulfills Hinduism. He comes to fulfill and perfect that religion of communion for which India has been panting, as the hart panteth after the water brooks, yes, after long centuries shall this communion be perfected through Christ.¹¹⁴

The next outstanding figure in the Hindu theological field is Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa. His religious life begins with the adoration of Kali. He thought of her as the mother of the Universe, and as his own mother.

He now began to look upon the image of goddess Kali as his mother and the mother of the Universe. He believed it to be living and breathing and taking food out of his hand. After the regular forms of worship he would sit then for hours and hours, singing hymns and talking and praying to

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

her as a child to his mother, till he lost all consciousness of the outward world.¹¹⁵

His "divine vision" is explained from the following words:

While intently watching the painting of the Madonna and child, he became gradually overwhelmed with divine emotion and breaking through the barriers of creed and religion, he entered a new realm of ecstasy. Christ possessed his soul. For three days, he did not set foot in the Kali temple. On the fourth day, in the afternoon as he was walking on the Panchavati, he saw coming towards him a person with beautiful large eyes, serene countenance, and fair skin. As the two faced each other, a voice sang out in the depths of Sri Ramakrishna's soul; "Behold the Christ, who shed his heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men. . . . It is he, the Master Yogi, who is in eternal union with God. It is Jesus, Love Incarnate." The Son of Man embraced the Divine Mother and merged in him. Sri Ramakrishna realised his identity with Christ, as he had already realised his identity with Kali, Rama, Hanuman, Radha, Krishna, Brahman and Mohammed. The Master went into samadhi and communed with the Brahman with attributes.¹¹⁶

He held that all religions are different paths to the same goal, essentially the same under different forms and names. The following sentence will reveal his idea about religions.

A lake has several ghats. At one the Hindus take water in pitchers and call it jal; at another the Muslims take water in leather bags and call it pani. At a third, the Christians call it water. Can we imagine that it is not jal, but only pani or water? How ridiculous? The substance is one under different names, and everyone is seeking the same substance; only climate, temperament and name create differences.¹¹⁷

Sri Ramakrishna did not hesitate to be associated with Christians,

¹¹⁵Farquhar, op. cit., p. 189.

¹¹⁶Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ, p. 112.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 113.

Hindus or Muslims in his religious life. He was a Hindu in its popular sense.

His follower Vivekananda was the most influential among the Hindu religious leaders during the renaissance of Hinduism. He was an exponent of the Vedanta philosophy and argued that it was the only universal religion. He said about other religions,

Your way is very good for you, but not for me. My way is good for me, but not for you. My way is called in Sanskrit my Ishtam. Mind you, we have no quarrel with any religion in the world. We have each our Ishtam.¹¹⁸

He opposed conversion. He said,

The Christian is not to become a Hindu or Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet perceive his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth . . .¹¹⁹

His conviction was that there cannot be a congregational religion.

The real religion is an individual's "own concern"; "a man's Ishtam is a private affair between man and God."

He said about Christ, that "It is one and the same Avatara that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving again rise in another place and is known as Christ."¹²⁰ In his approach the history and the personality of Jesus are accidental and non-essential. He criticized the Christian concept of the dependence of religion on historical facts

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

and he said the incarnation need not be single. He accepts the plurality of incarnation as an essential factor of religion. He considered that the world is Maya (illusion) and the purpose of the incarnation is to help man to be liberated from the whole Maya through the knowledge of his true nature of identity with God. He said,

Buddha and Christ are the two biggest "bubbles," the world has yet produced. Moses was a tiny bubble, greater and greater ones came. Sometime however, all will be bubbles and escape; but creation, ever anew, will bring new water to go through the process all over again.¹²¹

Vivekananda denied the idea of sin. He accepts the idea of "error" (avidya) suggesting the idea of corruption in the nature of man's relation to God.

Although his teaching of Maya and other factors have influenced the Hindus away from conversion, he gave much emphasis to social service. Today, along the banks of the Ganges you will find many empty Ashrams where once the hermits used to spend months and years for meditation. They all are engaged in social service, such as teaching in schools and nursing the sick in the hospitals. They have a project for helping the poor also. Vivekananda was the founder of Ramakrishna mission which emphasizes social service.

The syncretistic theology of the Hindu religion received its culmination in the theology and philosophy of Dr. Radhakrishnan who is known as Neo-Vedantist. He is one of the greatest living exponents

¹²¹Ibid., p. 122.

of Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism. He accepts a personal God, "the Absolute . . . who guides and directs the process by His Providence."¹²²

He accepts Christ as a mystic and he said, "Resurrection and 'the Kingdom of God' and 'eternal life' represent the goals of man in the Christian scheme, which, in their truly spiritual reality, are best seen in terms of Hindu faith."¹²³ He said, Christ's life on earth was not merely an event in history but,

Christ is born in the depth of spirit: we say that he passes through life, dies on the Cross and rises again. Those are not so much historical events which occurred once upon a time as universal processes of spiritual life, which are being continually accomplished in the souls of men. Those who are familiar with the way in which the Krsna story is interpreted will feel inclined to regard Christhood as an attainment of the soul, a state of inward glorious illumination in which the divine wisdom has become the heritage of the soul.¹²⁴

Radhakrishnan advocates universal religion. He maintains a consistent doctrine of the relation between religions. He considered that

all historical religions are different forms of the true religion of the Spirit at various stages of the march to the same mountain top of spiritual realization. Since Vedanta sees the formless one in all the different forms of religion it is not a religion but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance.¹²⁵

He very clearly stated that

In all lands, in all ages and in all creeds, the seers describe their experiences with an impressive unanimity. This is the Religion of the Spirit around which a fellowship

¹²²Ibid., p. 151.

¹²³Ibid., p. 153.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 154.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 159.

of religions becomes possible. . . . The "unchanging substance" of all religions is the evolution of man to the spiritual illumination in which the soul realizes itself. This is "the eternal religion behind all religions, this sanatana dharma, the timeless tradition; . . . it is our duty to get back to this central core of religion . . . Our historical religions will have to transform themselves into the universal faith or they will fade away.¹²⁶

The next outstanding character among the defenders of Hinduism and the syncretistic theology was Mahatma Gandhi. His religious discipline rests on three principles, namely, satya (truth), ahimsa (non-violence) and swedeshi (service of immediate neighbourhood). He accepted truth as God. Gandhiji said,

My uniform experiment has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. And the only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa--a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa. To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life.¹²⁷

In many aspects he was an orthodox Hindu, who believed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that is included in the Hindu scriptures. He believed in the protection of the cow in a much larger sense than the popular one, and in idol worship.¹²⁸ He did not want to eliminate the caste system but he wanted to purify it.

His concept of Truth as God rules out the possibility of a personal God. His doctrine of Staya (Truth) goes together with

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 161.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 193.

¹²⁸Damodaran, Indian Thoughts, p. 437.

Ahimsa. Man's nature is not himsa but ahimsa. Man's innermost conviction says that he is not the body but ātman, and that he may use the body only with a view to expressing the ātman, only with a view to self-realization.¹²⁹

He accepted Christ's sermon on the mount as the essence of the Christian message. He once said that the historicity of Christ is not a big problem to him. The sermon on the mount represents Christ and it would still be true to him even if someone disproves the authenticity of Christ's historicity. He never became a Christian in its popular sense. But

the example of Jesus suffering is a factor in the composition of my underlying faith in non-violence, which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal. Jesus lived and died in vain, if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal law of Love.¹³⁰

He made Christ more real among Indian people than any one else did in the past. The basis and the content of the Indian National Movement was Christian ethics. Mr. Natarajan wrote in his Indian Social Reformer . . . that Mr. Gandhi had in these years done more to bring Jesus Christ to India than all the missionaries had accomplished in three centuries. The people who responded to him were the products of the National Movement. But they were also the product of a thousand agencies and sufferings of Christians in the past century and more.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance, p. 195.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 252.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 229.

Equality of religions is one of Gandhi's cardinal beliefs. It is based first on the unfathomable and unknowable character of the One God who is over us all; secondly, on the neverending forms of divine revelation and human religious responses to them; thirdly, on the centrality of the law of non-violence enjoined by all the religions; fourthly, on the existence of errors and imperfections in all religions and; fifthly, on the conviction that all religions are in evolution towards fuller realization of Truth.¹³²

His conviction was that there is only one God but there are many paths to Him. They all converge to the same point. In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals. Gandhi paid equal homage to Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster and others. He used portions of the New Testament equally with those of the Gītā and the Quran.

Accept all religions as equal, for all have the same root and same laws of growth. . . . Religions are always growing.¹³³

Gandhi sees the relation between Religion and religions as similar to that between the Universal Soul and its bodies:

The Soul is one, but the bodies which she animates are many. We cannot reduce the number of bodies; yet we recognize the unity of the Soul.

"The one true and perfect Religion" becomes many as it "passes through the human medium." It is Gandhi's conviction that "the principle faiths of the world" are all based on "common fundamentals."¹³⁴

Many times these reformers were confronted with the fascinating personality of Jesus Christ. But they were unwilling to submit themselves

¹³²Ibid., p. 202.

¹³³Ibid., p. 204.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 134.

to Him and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour. From their personal diaries and autobiographies one could read and observe the experiences they have gone through and how they turned their faces against Him.

Now, more recently, Hinduism makes certain claims which it had not made previously. The Hindus say that Hinduism has the answer to the world's ill, which, it is broadly hinted, Christianity has failed to meet. So there is a new emphasis placed on a world message and on "missionary" work. They request peaceful co-existence with all religions because all religions are true and they all lead to the same God. Their repeated request is made for "mutual respect and tolerance."

But the sectarianism in Hinduism is visible in organizations such as R.S.S., Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, and several others which are not named here. None of their leaders were exposed to Western education or Christian teachings. Hence they do not know the beauty and the taste of Christian moral principles.

Sarvodaya is a movement which has received a lot of publicity recently. It was founded in 1907 by Mahatma Gandhi. Sarvodaya came into being due to inspiration received from John Ruskin's Unto This Last. Now Sarvodaya is led by Vinoba Bhave who accepts in principle

- a) that the good of the individual resides in the good of all;
- b) that every person has equal right to make his living by his profession, and that all professions are of equal value;

c) that the truest and highest pattern of living is that of a farmer or a labourer. It was the opinion of Gandhiji that the most important and central truth of life is contained in the first of these three statements and that Hindu monism furnished the best principle of life.¹³⁵

Sarvodaya does not claim to be a religion. It is only a social service organization. It advocates these three principles: truth, non-violence, and service. These could be realized only through self-sacrifice and from a change of heart. For scriptural authority the Hindus point to the Gītā.

In interpreting the Gītā and the relation of man to God they face difficulty. Hinduism has nothing to offer on this point. They have to be confronted with Christ who is the person who offered himself in relation to man and his need. In this confrontation a thinking Hindu has no other choice but to say "yes" or "no" to Him. There is no middle road. This process is going on every day in India.

¹³⁵ P.D. Devanandan, The Gospel and Renascent Hinduism, p. 18.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this study it has been the objective to trace the development, literature, philosophy, and the social characteristics of Hinduism in the first three chapters; and finally, a discussion of the impact of western culture on Hinduism. The various religious and social customs and the practices which Hinduism had long cherished have been changed beyond recognition. The reform movements, the Indian National Congress, the Protestant Missionaries and the British government played a notable part in the process. The need of reformation was a long felt need. And it has been seen that the reformation did take place.

The writer's intention in this section is to follow through certain conclusions which have been proposed in the previous chapters. Here the question to be asked is "What would Hinduism have been now if India had not been occupied by the British?"

WHAT WOULD INDIA HAVE BEEN NOW WITHOUT THE WEST?

In the political and cultural field, Westernization has given birth not only to nationalism. . . . but also to revivalism, communalism, "castism," heightened linguistic consciousness, and regionalism. To make matters even more bewildering, revivalist movements have used Western-type schools and colleges, and books, pamphlets, and journals to propagate.¹

¹M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 55-56.

Though there are facts in the above statement, it is a one-sided picture of the whole story.

In the process of social change there is inevitably a process of breaking up of the old structure and building up of a new structure on the fragments of the old. In this process there will be disorganization, confusion, and vacuums to fill in. There should be definite guide lines to follow the changes. Because there were no guidelines to follow, the reform movements in Hinduism from the time of the Buddha down through several centuries failed. Their ideals and concern were good and applicable. But they did not have anything to replace the old.

The British period and the reform movements during the period were successful because they offered a greater and stronger idea to replace the old.

The impact of the West on Indian life and thought and the awakening of the Indian people to a new nationalism are two events of great historical significance very closely related--in some ways as cause and effect.²

The British introduced rationalism, equality of human-beings, equal punishment for the same crime without considering Brahman or Sudra moral principles based on universal laws, and a force for dynamics and change in the society. These principles filled the vacuum. It was the educated elite oriented to Western education who became the champions of Indian national awakening.

²M.M. Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance, p. 239.

It found expression in the organization of the National Congress and its aspirations for political freedom and national community. In this context the Christian missions and Churches were faced with a new reality, with implications for religion, society and politics.³

With this in mind, many of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Social Reform leaders considered that the presence of the British in India was according to the Providence of God. Rammohan Roy considered that the British rule in India was due to a dispensation of Providence. The same thought occurred often in the writings and speeches of many leaders of the Indian National Congress. The second session of the Indian National Congress was chaired by Mr. Naoroji. His "presidential address consisted largely of an eloquent panegyric on British rule in India." He said

We are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of the Congress is proof in a nutshell. Were it not for the blessings of British rule I could not have come here today, . . .⁴

He goes on praising the gift of railways and the peace and order in India. Finally, he concludes saying that it was God's Providence that India was given into the hands of the British for rule.

The classical example of the idea of the Providence of God is found in the preamble to the constitution of the Servants of India Society, founded by Gokhale. It says:

(The Society's) members frankly accept the British connection, as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation

³Ibid., p. 239.

⁴Stephen Neill; Colonialism and Christian Missions, p. 103.

of Providence, for India's good. . . . The dispensations of Providence were inscrutable but still he believed the British connection was ordained for India's good. Above all, it had instilled into the Indian nature a love of freedom and self-assertion against authority that Indians used to lack.⁵

The Christian who believes in God's Providence and guidance in the events in history has every right to believe that God's providential grace worked in the rule of British in India. Ranade gives the best expression on this subject by saying,

If the miraculous preservation of a few thousand Jews had a purpose, this more miraculous preservation of one-fifth of the human race is not due to mere chance. We are under the severe discipline of a high purpose.⁶

Many foreign missionaries believed that the British rule in India was according to the Providence of God. Alexander Duff thought of it in terms of Christian missions and their activities and C.F. Andrews believed that it was God's Providence that Britain came to India. He was particularly aware of the part the British played in reviving the sleeping giant. He supported the Indian National Congress on the basis of it and he supported the Independent Movement. He said,

In the dry light of history it seems almost certain that the only method by which Western thought could enter India was that of conquest. Reform from within had become impossible and a strong external hand was needed to weld together again the broken fragments of a nation. . . .

⁵M.M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 241.

Already educated India is tingling with new life . . . Thought and literature also are experiencing the beginning of a renaissance.⁷

Many Government servants and missionaries in India were concerned primarily for the welfare of India. For that they were prepared to labour endlessly and with little hope of reward.⁸

The influence of the missionaries in India was great in many fields. Their cooperation with the Government and the national leaders was noteworthy. William Carey's association with the Government and with Rammohan Roy helped to abolish suttee. Alexander Duff's effort in the field of education, the effort of other missions in the field of medical mission and orphanages were worthy to be mentioned. In fact, India was the first major country which was opened for Christian missions in the modern age. From India missions spread to all South East Asia and to China. Seeing all of these events in the history of India it should be admitted that the Providence of God worked through the British in opening India to the modern world revolution. India served as a door to Asian revolution.

The side effect of this was the abolition of many social evils from Indian society. The British introduced railways and factories which encouraged urbanization, mobilization and communication.

N.G. Chandravarkar once said that the Parsi soda water seller at the Bombay railway station was known as "best because the most efficient social reformer in India, since by providing drinks to any buyer, regardless of caste, he was unostentatiously breaking down that barrier" . . . The

⁷Ibid., p. 242.

⁸Stephen Neill, op. cit., p. 107.

education of girls, their later marriages, increasing travel abroad, liberation of individuals from control by family and caste elders, and relaxation of prohibitions on intercaste relations were only a few changes that appeared to many as inevitable, with or without the conscious efforts of reformers to induce them.⁹

Would Hinduism come up to this stage without an outside force? With C.F. Andrews, the writer seriously doubts it. The general tendency of the people is not to change but to cling to their long cherished customs and practices. Moreover, the history of Hinduism teaches us that down through the centuries the evil practices in Hinduism received new interpretations and rules which have exercised more control over the people. They became rigid year by year in their practices and more and more uncivilized practices were incorporated in it. Hence the writer believes the chance of a renewal was dim and scanty without an outside force. At least it would not have come as soon as it had happened, in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Men's minds were imperceptibly altered by the words and deeds of reforms such as these (Ranade and Vivekanada), and thus the Spirit of modern India came into existence as one recognizes it today.¹⁰

They created a new awareness of values which demanded the breakdown of certain norms rooted in traditional life. Social reform brought about by the spread of this consensus of values that is an essential aspect of nationalism.¹¹

⁹C.H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, p. 339.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 341.

¹¹Ibid., p. 352.

The social reform movements were significant indeed to understand the history of Hinduism and the cause of India's independence and progress.

"THE INDIA OF MY DREAMS"¹²

The soul of India is religious in nature and the religion which dominates the people in India is Hinduism. To count the percentage of Hindus in India is to find only 87%, but the influence of Hinduism in India reaches one hundred per cent of the people. The government officials and the ministers, the executives and the administrators, the newspapers, and the journals are controlled by Hindus. Hence it is hard to bring a new idea into practice unless there is change in the basic conception of the people and they catch a vision for change. "An essential prerequisite of all construction is that the ground on which you wish to build should first be levelled and the foundations laid firm."¹³

Some of the major problems of India are superstitions among the religious people, poverty, communalism, population explosion, unemployment, and lack of efficient leadership. By exploiting these problems the communists are taking advantage and gaining more popularity among the illiterate, poor, unemployed, and the untouchables.

¹²Illustrated Weekly of India, August 2, 1970, p. 42.

¹³D.F. Karaka, "The India of My Dreams," The Illustrated Weekly of India, June 14, 1970, p. 31.

Therefore no step towards progress can be taken without stemming the growth of communism in our national life. Right now communism exists in an epidemic form in our political life, in industry, in educational institutions, in the press, in fact everywhere in India.¹⁴

In a democratic country the freedom of press and the freedom of speech is guaranteed. But if the use of freedom results in undermining the democracy of the country it is the responsibility of the government to eradicate that tendency even by taking the more drastic step of erasing it from the democratic pattern of life which the Indian constitution is committed to uphold.

There are several communal organizations in India. Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sang, Muslim League, Siva Sena and many other parties are trying to get hold of the Indian Government. They insist on favour, as they wish to serve as a block to progress. They seek seats in the parliament and exploit the religious sentiment of the people. This has led many times into violent riots and killing. Many times the communal spirit of the Hindus stood in the way of progress.

The doctrine of negation and the passive attitude to life has created slothful nature in the people of India. The writer wishes the people in India could catch a vision for progress based on a progressive economic program, creativity, and hard work. The willingness to experiment and the willingness to meet the consequence of failure is a required quality for progress. The Indian people should

¹⁴Ibid., p. 31.

be willing to sacrifice their old ways and should go all the way through the path of reformation. The reform movement did not complete the need of society. At the time of the rise of nationalism there was a mass movement under the leadership of Gandhi. Then there arose a hatred for untouchability, purdah, child marriage, female infanticide, caste and communalism. Since India gained independence the mass feeling of the villagers has subsided and, it seems, the people of India have gone back to their old ways.

The Indian villages, about 700,000 in number, still live according to the old ways. Some of them still live in the old Stone Age. A new mass movement is a necessity in India at present. The common people need to feel their responsibility for the building of a strong nation. There is at present no part given to the common people for the building of the nation in India. Moreover, the villagers are illiterate and slow of understanding. An organization of the common people, one for each five or seven villages, all over India under strong leadership with integrity for common good, is an urgent need in the Indian villages. These organizations could revive the illiterate mass of India. They could teach the illiterate villagers simple economics, banking, education, hygiene, family planning, agriculture and the problems of prevalent social evils.

India, even after twenty-three years of independence, still has to fight against untouchability (there are about twenty-five million untouchables in India), the strong hold of the caste system, child marriage, and many other social evils. The government needs to

take drastic steps through existing laws and the enactment of new laws to eradicate these social evils

India's fight against population explosion has done some good. The Hindu religion is a barrier in the progress of the family planning program. The simple villagers believe that the gift of many children is a blessing from Brahma. But the government of India is trying to change this conception. The family planning program "made three out of four married couples in the country aware that it is possible to limit the size of their families and one in eight in the reproductive age group adopt birth control."¹⁵ Considering the statistics it was a success during the period in which the family planning program was advocated in India. Now to improve the program, the Government needs 4000 doctors and nearly 8000 nurses, midwives, and female health visitors.¹⁶

While India needs many of these technical hands in the field of health and planning and technology, she loses many of her highly trained technicians from the country.

Lack of opportunity has driven many a talented and technically trained young man away from his country. Scores of our top scientists and brilliant technicians have left India to begin life in countries abroad. This is a criminal waste of our young generation and steps should be taken to see that the socialist pattern of society does not kill the desire of the top brains of our land to serve our country.¹⁷

¹⁵ "The Times of India, Family Planning," The Asian Student, October 10, 1970, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ D.F. Karaka, "The India of My Dreams," p. 31.

India needs a nationally integrated program for all the communities in India. The program planners should not think only in terms of one community and their demands.

The essence of national integration is the equality of involvement and opportunity for all individuals and communities and the willingness to adopt democratic, peaceful means for the attainment of all their demands . . . It means security, equality, honour and involvement. It also means that, . . . they still function as Indians in the larger interests of the country. Above all, no matter where they live and what faith they profess, they regard all others as fellow Indians and respect their persons and rights.¹⁸

India needs to recapture the national feeling of olden days. The reform movement should be continued and liberate the people from the grip of superstitions. More importance should be given to ethical values and liberal ideas. The people should be willing to face the consequence of changes. The younger generation should be given moral instruction.

A resurgent India has to start on a new life--a new life based on a firm foundation of tradition and national heritage . . . We have to pay the bill and stabilise ourselves lest we flounder and stumble in what is bound to be the chaotic eighties other wise.¹⁹

THE CHRISTIAN ROLE IN THE REVOLUTION

In the process of social changes there are unlimited possibilities for either good or evil. The long cherished social

¹⁸Nandini Satpathy, "The India of My Dreams," The Illustrated Weekly of India, June 7, 1970, p. 37.

¹⁹A.D. Mani, "The Nervous Seventies," The Illustrated Weekly of India, July 12, 1970, p. 17.

practices and ideals which once gave comfort become outdated.

Fixed structure of social existence, like the fixed location of residence, fixed occupation, fixed social status, fixed neighbours and fixed customs of behavior, were characteristic of the traditional order in all societies; but now technology has introduced mobility and dynamism, giving men and women freedom of plan for higher creativity and more dynamic social relations and morality.²⁰

These social changes due to technology, new ideals and ideas, education and the impact of an advanced culture on a static society create a complete loss of social and interpersonal structures leading to the atomized or the mass society.

"The state ceases to be concerned only with law and order, it also seeks to promote the reorganization of society and plan for the welfare of the people."²¹ For the first time in history the world has shrunk into a "global village" or into a "neighbourhood." India cannot escape the impact of mass media of communication.

The peoples of Asia and Africa are awakened and engaged in the struggle for political emancipation as a mark of their new sense of self-hood. They are fighting for their identity in the world of politics. They are also fighting against the narrow, exclusive solidarities of tribal, caste, ethnic, linguistic, and religious communalism, and are moving into a more exclusive idea of national community and seek liberation from foreign colonial rule into a new

²⁰ M.M. Thomas, "Peace and Radical Social Changes," Religion and Society, XV (June, 1968), p. 16.

²¹ Ibid.

independent nationhood.²²

India is still in the middle of this fight, and it has been shown before that the masses have awakened. The law guarantees equal freedom to all including the Untouchables and the Outcastes. These are taking advantage of it through education, employment, and other professions.

In this situation even in Hinduism there is a tendency for a new kind of secularism. This movement stresses three points:

. . . indifference to the classical scriptures and to all speculation about God and Reality, opposition to religious rites and priestcraft, and active effort to promote what may be called social justice and self-respect.²³

Today one can observe a strong communalistic tendency in Hinduism. The following words of Sri Golwalkar, the R.S.S. militant leader, is a vivid example of this:

The non-Hindu peoples in Hinduism must either adopt Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, or may stay in the country wholly subordinate to the Hindu nation, claiming no other, deserving no privileges, far less preferential treatment--not even citizenship rights. There is, at least there should be, no other course for them to adopt.

The conclusion is unquestionably forced upon us that in this country, Hinduism, the Hindu race with its Hindu religion, Hindu culture and Hindu language (the natural family of Sanskrit and her offspring) complete the Nation Concept.²⁴

In the light of this statement the Church in India has a

²²Ibid., p. 19.

²³P.D. Devanandan, The Gospel and Renascent Hinduism, p. 27.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 31-32.

responsibility. The Church should make it crystal clear that the Christians in India have no political ambitions, that they have no desire to consolidate their community to form a separate Christianistan. Moreover, the Christians should make it clear that Christianity is not a western religion but it was born and nourished in the East. However, Christians seek for the fellowship of the faith they profess across the borders and even across the oceans, and all over the world.

P.D. Devanandan gives three points for making the Christian message relevant.

1. We should revise our evangelistic methods so that we do not give room for the charge that we resort to questionable means for winning converts, and that our only purpose in making converts is to multiply the members of those who call themselves Christians.²⁵

Dealing with the people of other faiths should be based on love.

That was the new commandment Christ gave to his disciples.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.²⁶

2. The Church in India should build a cultural basis for national well-being, a sense of belonging in which we are emotionally aware as Indians of the tie that holds us all together in common loyalty to the land of our fathers.²⁷

3. Finally, evangelism should avoid all methods of propaganda which fall into the temptation of exaggerating

²⁵Ibid., p. 32.

²⁶John 13:34-35.

²⁷P.D. Devanandan, op. cit., p. 33.

the validity of Christian claims by deliberately minimizing the inherent worth of other faiths. . . In the proclamation of the Word, there should always be the dominant note of Christian charity which is so characteristic of the Great Evangelist, who came not to condemn mankind, but "to seek and to save that which is lost," recovering the fallen, restoring mankind to the status which they neither merit nor deserve.²⁸

It is the duty of every Christian in India to offer Christ's reconciling ministry to those who have not had the privilege to experience it.

As Zagorsk puts it,

In a sense the revolution in its basic human concern should be interpreted as an effort of the world to express historically something of the eschatological renewal of all things promised by God.²⁹

M.M. Thomas adds that

. . . in the revolutionary ferment of our time, we should see the hand of God in Christ, carrying history forward through judgement and redemption to the consummation of the Kingdom and calling the Church to participate with Him in it.³⁰

In making the Christian theology relevant to the Hindus, especially in India, the Church in India has adopted several methods and theories. One of the methods is to enter into dialogue with Hindus taking for granted that theology in nature is historically progressive and situational in context. Without losing the basic affirmation of Christian theology, namely, the centrality of Christ

²⁸Ibid., p. 33.

²⁹M.M. Thomas, "Peace and Radical Social Change," op. cit., p. 23.

³⁰Ibid.

and His ministry of reconciling man unto God, the Church must adapt Christian theology to the cultural background of India giving priority to the needs of the people concerned. In it the Christian theology has to adapt to the emotional character of the people as well as to their cultural background. This demands a new interpretation of Christian theology into the cultural context and in the actual confrontation of Christ with the world in preaching and teaching in each period and place. In this regard, churches in the newly emerging nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia will have much to contribute.

Since, theology is "the concern not of individuals but of the Church as a whole," the final criterion of validity for any theology is "its endorsement through the Church in its discerning members."³¹

The Bible should be the guide in this experiment. The main concern of the Christian is to communicate Christ to his brethren, the men on earth, without distinction of race, creed or condition. In this encounter, Christ, the Word of God should be the focal point. "It is an encounter in naked Faith, in pure Hope, in supernatural Love--and not a conflict of formulae, an expectation of getting them 'over' . . . "³²

It is in this process an indigenous Indian Christianity will come to birth, a Christianity indigenous to modern India and able to

³¹M.M. Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance, p. 316.

³²R. Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), p. 26.

communicate the message of the Gospel to modern Indians. Strong efforts should be made to make the Christian message intelligible to the world without sacrificing the depth of Christianity's unique message. When Christ becomes intelligible to the non-Christian faith He will become inescapable also. Speaking about the Church's role in this revolution of social changes, P.D. Devanandan said, "In so far as we identify ourselves with the will of God as revealed in Christ, we can be certain that we shall be working along the line of that purpose and not against it."³³

³³M.M. Thomas, The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution, p. 126.

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