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MYSTICISM in HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

The various opinions that are held as to what mysticism really is, are so diverse, that a wide field is opened up and many lines are suggested along which a consideration of the subject may appropriately be pursued. It is a simple thing for a person to define what, in his opinion, mysticism means, and to discuss in a superficial way what the term conveys to his mind, as looking over the history of the past, he perceives how the various mystical thinkers have striven to express the thoughts and fancies to which they have given birth, and observes how they have endeavoured to live out in practical experience the various suggestions that have made themselves manifest as a natural corollary to these thoughts. A much more difficult aspect, however, presents itself when an attempt is made to penetrate more deeply into the subject, and to make a detailed examination of what mysticism really means, and has meant to the men who through the past centuries have been endeavouring to link their lives to the infinite, and have been putting forth every effort to enter into that mystical communion with the unseen which alone can bring to them security amid the troubles and dangers that surround life's pathway. Corresponding to these two aspects of the subject are two classes of people; "Those who have but a very hazy notion as to what mysticism is; they only have an idea that something is meant which is very inferior, and they pass it by. But in the minds of thoughtful men, the name Mystic points to a special and recognizable tendency, that has been working in the world for ages:—Hindoo and Persians, Neo-Platonists and Schoolmen, Anabaptists and Swedenborgians<sup>66</sup> have all felt its force".

As we glance over the teachings of the mystics in various countries and at various times, it is noticeable that there is a dominant principle throughout. They were all actuated by the desire for "Union with God". It is true that many and widely divergent were the methods adopted and the means employed by which they wished to accomplish this end. Some by seclusion and asceticism and others by fantastic and extravagant self-mutilation: yet the one idea, that prompted all of them, was the thought that beyond their present vision, there existed an infinite spirit - an unseen force, with which it was possible for men to have communion; and so we have Mysticism defined as,

1. Introduction to Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics".

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"The immediate feeling of the unity of the Self with God; it is nothing therefore but the fundamental feeling of religion, the religious life at its very centre", or again, "The complete union of the Soul with God is the goal of all Mysticism", another writer has given the following definition, "Mysticism appears in connection with the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the Divine essence of the ultimate reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the highest. The first is the philosophic side of mysticism the second its religious side," while Evelyn Underhill points out, "Mysticism is an innate tendency of the human spirit toward complete harmony with the transcendental order, whatever be the formula under which that order is understood. This tendency in great mystics gradually captures the whole field of consciousness, it dominates their life and in the experience called 'mystic union' attains its end. Whether that end be called the God of Christianity, the world soul of Pantheism or the Absolute of Philosophy, the desire to attain it and the movement toward it - so long as this is a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation - is the proper subject of Mysticism," and so she has defined Mysticism as, "A belief in the possibility of a deliberate and active return to the 'divine fount of things' It aims to teach men to transcend the sense world and to live on high levels; the spiritual life"<sup>4</sup>.

Owing to a mistaken conception it has sometimes been stated that this Mystical Union and Pantheism are synonymous terms.<sup>2</sup> Possibly no single belief has had more influence in the moulding of Indian philosophic and religious thought, than the belief that 'God is everything and everything is God', or as it has been called 'Spiritual Pantheism'. The ignorant belief of the uneducated villager, and to a great extent that of the educated man, is dominated and controlled by the thought that the only real existence in the universe is God; all else is illusion. So greatly have some writers been impressed with this aspect of religious life that they have ventured to call it 'Pantheistic Mysticism', but if Mysticism is to be defined as  $\alpha/\beta$  "an attempt to realize the living God in the soul and in nature,"<sup>5</sup> then it is difficult to see how this attitude of mind, so common in India, can in any sense of the word be termed Mystical. It is not an attempt to come into con-

~~fact with~~  
fact with the living personal God, and into life giving communion with the Spiritual, but it is rather a forced belief that the final goal and good of all human beings is to be absorbed into that great impersonal principle, which is none other than 'Brahm'. While it is true that this far reaching belief has always been present like a dark background to the life and thought of the Indian people through<sup>out</sup> the ages, it is at the same time true that there have been rays of light, which though faint, show all the clearer in contrast<sup>s</sup> to the darkness. Men and sects have arisen, in whose life and teaching was manifested a desire after the 'only true God', and whose thought corresponded in some measure to what may be termed 'Christian Mysticism'.

This mystical tendency, which it is my purpose to trace, has appeared more or less clearly at various stages of Hindu philosophic thought. "For deep down in every human heart, beneath social customs and philosophic speculations, deeper than race or speech or thought itself, there persists an inextinguishable instinct that believes, and rejoices with trembling to believe, that he is not alone because Another is with him(1)". Even before the Upanishads- the period when philosophy first made itself felt as a reaction against the stupendous system of Brahmanical ritual- the process of reflection had begun, and, "It was chiefly the question of the origin of the world, together with the mystery of existence and of being, that gave rise to metaphysical contemplation (2)". "Just as Xenophanes in Greece puts above all the popular gods his one deity, who is nothing more than the universe considered as a unity, we find in the Rig-veda a remarkable seeking and inquiring after that one from which, as an eternal, unfathomable, unspeakable unity, all gods, worlds, and creatures originate(3)". There is a great difference of opinion, and consequently much controversy as to the exact date of the Vedic period, and the compilation and collection of the hymns of the Rig-veda from which the Vedic religion takes its name. "In Vedic times no expression was in current use by which any year but the present was distinguished from any other year; and any attempt to compute the age and duration of the Veda has been compared to watching the gradual and imperceptible changes that have taken place in the course of centuries in the starry heavens(4)". "For many reasons, however, which cannot be detailed here, scholars have come to fix on the year 1,000 B.C, as an approximate date for the collection of the Vedic hymns(5)". But as there is considerable evidence to show that even

1. Rev N Macnicol. "The Religion of Jesus". P, 23. 2. Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy. P, 13. 3. A Weber "History of Indian Literature". P, 233

4. Slater. Higher Hinduism P 23. Encyc Britannica Vol 24. P. 162.

then, not only had the text of the Hymns become corrupt, but they had become antiquated and imperfectly understood, there is good reason to believe that the period during which most of them were composed must have lain much further back, probably as early as 1,500 B.C. About this time the Indian branch of the great Aryan family swept down from the north and settled in the land of the Seven Rivers, now the Punjab, bringing with them their worship of the various forces of nature. They were not, however, allowed to possess the land without opposition. The Dravidians, a dark skinned race, who had occupied the territory previous to the arrival of the Aryans, were evidently hostile and even at times intensely bitter. In spite of their opposition they were compelled to bow before the Northern invaders, who having overcome all opposition settled down to agricultural and pastoral pursuits. They tilled the land, raised cattle, and enjoyed a life that was for the most part tranquil and dream like. The outward aspect of their life was not unlike that of rural India to-day. They had their farms, their huts of sun-dried mud for their homes and their mud-walled yards for their cattle.

The circumstances amid which they were now living were favourable, not only to the carrying on of the worship they had brought with them, but also to its development. The phenomena of nature were thought of as something more than mere powerful forces; they were looked upon as so many powerful agents, and hence we find in the Vedic hymns mention made of the various gods, which presented themselves as personalities to the mind of the worshiper. The Rig-veda in some places says there are thirty-three deities (1) of which eleven are in heaven, eleven on earth and eleven in the watery sphere. Elsewhere it states that there are three-thousand, three-hundred and thirty-nine deities (2), amongst which are Agni (the god of fire), as a cosmic principle born in heaven; Soma the personified juice of the Soma plant, and Indra, the most frequently invoked of all the gods, surrounded by the storm gods together with Mitra, Santra, Vishnu, Pushan and many others, all personifications of the various natural objects with which the people were familiar.

When we pass from the deities to their worshipers, it is noticeable that the religious life of the Vedic times centres in sacrifice, combined with prayer and praise, "The gods are propitiated and their vigour enhanced

1. Rig-veda, 1, 34, 11.      2. Rig-veda, 111, 9, 9.

by prayer and praise(1)". "Sacrifice is the axle of the world's wheel and the fecundating power of all things(2)". In outward appearance the Vedic sacrifice was simple. The open sward under the spreading heavens was sufficient for the altar, while the materials used were of the simplest- rice, ghee (clarified butter), water and a log of wood. The ~~characteristic idea was~~ characteristic idea was that of a bargain with the gods. Man is in need of the things which the god possesses; while the god is hungry and seeks offerings from men. Thus a feeling of kinship and communion was established between the gods and their worshipers.

Gradually, however, the simple worship and sacrifice of the Aryan people developed into an elaborate and burdensome ritual, with its minute formulae and hidden mysticism. It became a vast religious machinery, that could only be operated by a trained hereditary priesthood, who gradually assumed control; until, finally, with unrelenting selfishness, they became the exclusive guardians of revelation, the sole transmitters of the Vedic hymns, and the recognized officials at sacrifice. The members of that caste and they alone were qualified to superintend religious observances, and without them the intercourse between man and the gods could not have been kept up. At this period the Brahmanas or ritual treatises were compiled. Each collection of hymns had its Brahmana which was used for a twofold purpose; first, to interpret the words of the old hymns and to explain how, when used at the sacrifice, they possess the effect ascribed to them; second, they were primarily intended to be directories of worship for the priests, containing as they did all sorts of ideas about the sacrifices and their origin.

Of these Brahmanas particular portions, to be repeated only by the hermits of the forest, were styled Aranyakas, and to these were attached certain treatises setting forth, as a hidden wisdom, the sole reality of the all-pervading and all-animating self or Brahman. This hidden wisdom, the philosophy of the Upanishads, in contradistinction to the Karma-kanda or ritual portion, received the name of Jnanakanda or knowledge portion of the Sruti or everlasting revelation; so that now there were really two religions, the Karma-marga or path of ~~rites~~ rites for the people of the villages, living as if life with its pleasures were real; and Jnana-marga or path of knowledge for the sages who had quitted the world and sought the quiet of the Jungle,

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1. Rig-veda, v111, 12, 19. 2. Ibid, 1, 164, 34.

renouncing the false ends and empty fictions of common life, and intent only upon reunion with the sole reality, the self that is common in all things living. Faint traces of this same mystical philosophy are to be found in earlier Vedism, but it was only when the people became disgusted and wearied with the external rites of the Brahmanical priesthood that this reaction took place under the form of speculative inquiries and metaphysical investigation. "It is the purely spiritual doctrine of a universally diffused essence (Brahma), divested of all ritualistic incrustations, and carried into lofty regions of transcendental speculation(1)". For the most part these Upanishads, which <sup>form</sup> the third part of the Vedic literature, are written in prose and contain what are really the first definite attempts to comprehend the mysteries of existence. They <sup>form</sup> the link which connects the Brahmanas with the Puranas or regular philosophic systems. Through<sup>out</sup> there is a certain uniformity, although considerable divergence in detail. The views expressed in them by the various sages do not agree as to the nature of the Supreme (Brahma); whether he is personal or impersonal, possessing qualities or destitute of them. They appear to differ also as to the reality or unreality of the eternal world and the nature of the soul; whether it is finite or identical with the Supreme and therefore infinite. So varied indeed, are the ~~thought~~ thoughts expressed that gradually there arose a desire to arrange and classify them, and to make their teaching more definite and consistent.

As a result of this desire we have the gradual rise of what may be termed the official philosophy of India. This is contained in what are generally called the 'Six Puranas', which consist of the following works,

1. The Nyaya, founded by Gotama.
2. The Vaisheshika, founded by Kanada.
3. The Sankhya, founded by Kapila.
4. The Yoga, founded by Patanjali.
5. The Mimamsa, founded by Jaimini.
6. The Vedanta, founded by Badarayana or Vyasa.

"These Puranas belong to a division of the Hindu books called Smriti, and are, therefore, authoritative but not to the same extent as the Vedas or Upanishads(2)". The aim before the authors of these books was the systematizing

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1. Monier Williams, 'Religious Life and Thought in India', p. 25.  
 2. 'Philosophic Hinduism', p. 11. Compiled by J. Murdock.

of the principles laid down in the Upanishads, without in any appreciable measure, departing from Hindu orthodoxy. Hence we have the various philosophic schools agreeing in certain points, but irreconcilable in many others. "These systems are radically opposed to each other and are, nevertheless, all held to be orthodox(1)". They are usually divided into three pairs, as follows:- the Nyaya and Vaiseshika, the Sankhya and Yoga, the Mimansa and Vedanta.

Taking them in the above order it may be remarked that the word Nyaya signifies 'going into a subject', and is merely a system of logic. It aims to furnish a correct method of philosophic inquiry into all the subjects and objects of human knowledge, including amongst others, the process of reasoning and laws of thought. The author shows how false notions are at the root of all misery, and undertakes to communicate the true knowledge which alone will enable the soul to attain to perfect happiness- its true goal. "The Nyaya draws a clear line between Matter and Spirit and has worked out a careful and ingenious system of Psychology. It distinguishes between individual or living souls which are numerous, infinite and eternal, and the Supreme Soul, which is One only, the seat of eternal knowledge and the ruler and maker of all things(2)". The Vaiseshika may be called an extension of the Nyaya system. It goes very fully into the doctrine of atoms, and like the Nyaya it declares them to be uncaused and eternal. An atom is thus defined by Kanada as, "Something existing, without a cause, without beginning and end. It is contrary to what has a measure".

An examination of the Sankhya system reveals its dualistic nature. It holds that there are two primary eternal agencies, namely, Nature (Prakriti) which is the root of all things, except soul, and a plurality of souls (Purusha). These souls or selves are countless in number, individual, sensitive eternal and unchangeable. Beginning with the original rootless germ Prakriti, the Sankhya counts up twenty-three other entities which are all emanations from this material first cause, and which are carefully distinguished from a ~~xxx~~ twenty-fifth (Purusha). This process is thus stated in the Sankhya-Kanda, 'The root and substance of all things (except soul) is Prakriti. It is no production. Seven things produced by it are also producers. Thence come sixteen productions (Vikara). Soul the twenty-fifth essence is neither a

1. Murray. Mitchell, Hinduism Past and Present. P57.

2. Ency Brit, Vol, 24, P, 179.



production nor producer'. The souls have, from all eternity, been connected with Nature, and the union of these two, (Purusha and Prakriti), produce the universe. The soul seems to maintain an indifferent attitude, yet for the sake of fruition, it keeps connecting itself with Nature so as to bring about new forms of material existence. In this system, therefore, there is no ~~room~~ place for creation out of nothing.

The Yoga system, founded by Patanjali, is usually coupled with the Sankhya and is often styled the Theistic Sankhya. It agrees with it in general principles, but claims greater orthodoxy by directly acknowledging the existence of God. To the twenty-five principles of the previous system, the Yoga adds a twenty-sixth, the Nirguna-Purusha or self devoid of qualities, which is the supreme God. Underlying the Yoga practices there is the thought of man being made up of an individual soul, a subtle invisible body and a gross body. The soul is of the same essence as the All-Spirit, though for the time temporarily detached and is by nature incorruptible and unchangeable. The subtle body is connected with the gross body and is influenced by it. The dispositions thus engendered by these influences affect its nature so that even when separated after death from this natural body, it still retains something of the evil tendencies that have been developed in it during its earthly sojourn. These evil tendencies bring about the reincarnation of the invisible body along with the soul to which it is united. This is a most undesirable thing, and the ever present question is, how can it be prevented? Escape is possible if only the soul can wean the subtle body from all earthly desires. This can be done though it may take ages to accomplish it, but once the earthly impressions have been ~~erased~~ effaced, the subtle body will have no further tendency to return to this earth, but will be merged in the soul, and that again released from every hampering impediment will become reunited into the All-Spirit! This body (Sukshma-Saura or subtle body) is of course invisible, but without it the coarse body would be useless. It forms what we call our personality, and causes the differences in the characters of individuals, being itself what it has been made by former works. All fitness for reward or punishment attaches to it, not to the Purushas who are all alike and unchanging, and it likewise determines by means of its acquired ~~dispositions~~ dispositions the gross bodies into which it has to enter from life to life, till final freedom is obtained by the Purusha, and not only the gross body, but the subtle body also, is reabsorbed in Prakriti(1)". "The word 'Yoga'

means 'Union' and first occurs in the later Upanishads(1)"; or as Prof James puts it, "Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the Divine. It is based on persevering exercise; and the diet, posture, breathing, intellectual concentration and moral discipline vary slightly in the different systems which teach it. The Yogi, or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed *Samadhi*, and comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know(2)". It can easily be understood from the foregoing explanation, that the main object of the Yoga exercise is to enter on a course of meditation and concentration of mind which will tend to draw the attention of the human soul away from all connection <sup>with</sup> ~~which~~ and consideration of the human body, and by doing so lead it nearer to the great Spirit in which it will finally be absorbed and thus find its true resting place.

The next in order of the Six Systems is the Mimamsa to which little attention need be given, since it is not really a system of philosophy, "but rather a system of dogmatic criticism and scriptural interpretation". (3). Its founder asserts the absolute eternity of the Veda, and declares ~~that~~ that only eternally pre-existing objects are mentioned therein. ~~He~~ He further maintains that sound is eternal or rather that an eternal sound underlies all temporary sound. Its founder, Jaimini, did not deny the existence of God, but the tendency of his teaching was to allow no voice or authority to reason or God. The Supreme being might exist, but he was not necessary to the system.

Passing to the final system, the Vedanta, we find that it has long been the chief philosophy of India, and claims to be founded on the 'Upanishads and works auxiliary thereto'. "In its essential features it remains to this day the prevalent belief of Indian thinkers, and enters largely into the religious life and convictions of the people(4)". According to the Vedantins "Existence is of three sorts, true (Paramarthika), practical (Vyavahrika), and apparent (Pratikahshika). True existence is that of Brahma, practical that of Ether, and apparent that of Macrine silver and the like(5)". That which verily

1. Weber, Indian Literature, P. 259. 2. James, Varieties of Religious Experience  
3. Ency Brit, Vol. 24, P. 177. 4. Ibid, P. 179. 5. Vedanta Paribhasha, P. 18.

exists is true and its existence true existence; and this existence, according to the Vedanta, is predicable of Brahma exclusively. The second species of existence is called practical. The things to which it belongs do not really exist, only the mis-apprehensive or ignorant mistake them for existent and by means of them transact practical life. The third species of existence called apparent, resembles the practical in that it is false, but by mistake seems to be veritable; as for example, things seen in a dream or a bright shell that is mistaken for silver. It is of the utmost importance to the Vedantist that he establish Monism or non-duality; hence God (who is generally called Brahm), is proclaimed to be the sole reality, "Only the existent was here in the beginning, one only, without a second (1)". Apart from this is only appearance; it seems, but is not. According to this system of philosophy, then, the seeming existence of the eternal world is due to ignorance, otherwise called illusion.

This ignorance (Avidya) is not mere negation, but is <sup>possessed</sup> ~~possessed~~ of two powers - that of enveloping or concealing, and that of projection. The former hides from the soul its identity with God; while the latter projects the appearance of an eternal world and of individual souls. "The projective power can produce anything; even the whole eternal world (2)". There are four conditions of the soul, waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and a fourth state which is something higher (or deeper) than even dreamless sleep. By reason then of this Avidya, the living soul mistakes the world, as well as its own body and mind, for reality, but the moment it is set free from this ignorance by a proper understanding of the truth through the Vedanta philosophy, all the illusion vanishes and the identity of the living soul and of the whole universe with the Supreme Soul is established. The 'Great Sentence' is "Tat twamasi" (That (Brahma) art thou), and a man persuaded of the great underlying truth of this sentence obtains 'Mukti' or liberation.

The aim of the authors of these Darsanas was to systematize the principles of the Upanishads, and the result of their labor was a number of philosophic schools, whose teachings were in many points irreconcilable with each other. Yet the Hindu professes to accept all of them as authoritative so that if he really understands them he believes in contradictory propositions

1. Chhandogya, VI.2, 1.

2. Vedanta Sutra, Sec. 39.

Turning now to a consideration of the Bhagavad Gita (Song of the Holy One) which comes next in order, it is noticeable that the author, conscious of the many inconsistencies contained in the Durvasas, in this work endeavours to bring into harmony all these discordant notes. "Its great aim was to harmonize the doctrines of the chief systems of philosophy, the scientific principles of the Sankhya, the asceticism of the Yoga, and the idealism of the Vedanta(1)", combining with them the doctrine of faith (Bhakti) in Krishna, and of stern devotion to caste duties (Dharma). This Divine song is considered to represent the highest heights of Hindu philosophy and morality, and has undoubtedly exercised a powerful influence on the people of India. The Vedas are the recognized basis of faith; the Upanishads are much revered but little read; but the Gita is, at once, the object of unbounded affection and reverent study. "It consists of a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna, who was a very distinguished leader in the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and the deity Krishna. The armies were drawn up in battle array; the war shell had sounded; and the deadly strife was about to commence, when the tender-hearted Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief at the thought of imbruing his hands with the blood of men who, while opponents, were yet near relatives. His bow drops from his hands; he weeps; he cannot fight. The god Krishna, who has been acting as Arjuna's charioteer and giving him advice, here interposes with a rebuke of this faint-heartedness, and denounces his reluctance as 'disgraceful, despicable weakness'. And then, to prove the point, the deity plunges into the midst of metaphysical speculation and at length reaches the conclusion, - 'and therefore up; on to battle, Son of Bharata(2)'".

The poem is divided into three sections, each containing six chapters; the philosophic teaching in each section being somewhat distinct. The first section dwells chiefly on the benefits of the Yoga system, pointing out, however, that the asceticism and self-mutilitation of the Yoga ought to be joined with action and the performance of caste duties, and winding up with a declaration that the grand aim of all suppression is to attain that state which enables a man to annihilate his own individuality, to see God in everything and everything in God.

1. Slater's Higher Hinduism, P. 126.

2. Murray Mitchell's Hinduism Past and Present, P. 74.

In the second division the Pantheistic doctrines of the Vedanta are more directly inculcated than in the other sections. Krishna, here, in the plainest language claims adoration as one with the great universal Spirit, pervading and constituting the universe. He reveals himself to Arjuna as possessed of countless faces, countless mouths, countless eyes, and blazing like a thousand suns.

The third division aims particularly <sup>inter</sup> at weaving the Sankhya doctrine with the Vedanta; though this is done more or less through <sup>out</sup> the whole work. It accepts the doctrine of a supreme presiding Spirit as the first cause of the universe, and assents to both Prakriti and Purusha, - that is, the original eternal <sup>element</sup> and soul, - as both emanating from this Supreme being. Moreover it maintains the individuality of souls.

I have thus far traced, in a brief manner, the course of philosophic thought from the first faint glimmerings of reflection that were visible in the Vedas and Brahmanas to the more fully developed thought of the Upanishads, which came as a result of reaction against Brahmanic ritual. Moreover we have seen, that as the Dursanas were an attempt to classify and systematize the various lines of thought in the Upanishads, so the Gita of a later date was an attempt to reconcile certain speculations of the Dursanas. Underlying all these various philosophic ideas, that were formulated in the early Indian mind, was a recognition of the essential sameness, not only of individual souls, but also of the souls that were supposed to inhabit the vegetable world. The infinite diversity to be found among these individual souls, exhibiting as they did various degrees of perfection, led to the idea that all of them were the outcome of the Supreme essence, and that when existence on this universe came to an end, all of them would re-unite with that all-perfect being. But Indian speculative thought found itself confronted with yet another difficulty and that was, how to account for all this diversity, for all the imperfection and suffering that falls to the lot of each individual soul. Hinduism answers the question by saying that the universe is made up of innumerable souls and innumerable bodies. "The souls have existed from all eternity either as separate entities or as emanations from the Supreme; they are not created (1)". Bodies are of all kinds - divine, human, animal, vegetable and mineral - and they are all possessed of souls. But why does a soul occupy

1. Vedantra Sutra, 2, 111, 17.

a particular body at a given time, either higher or lower in the scale of creation? Because of some act committed, good or bad, in a former birth. The kind of body that the soul inhabits and the kind of life that it lives therein, are determined with absolute precision by the quality of the actions of their past lives. Thus we have established in Indian thought, the doctrine of Metempsychosis, - a doctrine which is never again called in question, but which remains a universally conceded principle of Indian philosophy. Companion to this thought is another, namely, how to cut short the eighty-four lakhs (8,400,000) of separate existences through which an individual soul is doomed to pass ere it attain liberation, and final and complete union with the Infinite. From this point onward there is practically no development in the history of Hindu philosophy, and these two theories, together with others of lesser importance that have been put forward in the Upanishads, Durassanas and Gita, have continued to be, in the main, the principle beliefs of the Indian people up to the present time.

The question that naturally arises at this point is, what traces are there, during this period, of a desire on the part of the Aryan people to come into life-giving touch with the Infinite? Was there a tendency amid all this philosophic speculation, to discover the one supreme personal God? 'Did the human mind endeavour to grasp the Divine essence of the ultimate reality of things'? Now in trying to answer these questions, it must be remembered that the trend of philosophic and religious thought was in the main pantheistic, "One only without a second (1)" (Ekam eva Advityam), which might also be rendered "all the universe is Brahma" (Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma), was the prevalent idea in the mind of the vast majority of the Hindu people, as it is even at the present time. But it must also be remembered that there are also evidences of a struggle after a clearer light, and that dim and vague though this light may have been, it was an unconscious striving to comprehend the Divine mystery of God. "There have been and are many religious systems, from the fetichism of the savage to the reasoned belief or unbelief of the Pantheist or Agnostic, but through and in spite of them all, insistent and prevailing, runs the cry of a personal need for a personal helper (2)". There

1. Chhandogya, v1, 1. 2. Macnicol, The Religion of Jesus, P. 18.

were in the early Vedic period, and particularly in the latter part of the Rig-veda, occasional hymns which seem to indicate that some of the people had a faint conception of God as One, not in the pantheistic but theistic sense; while during the latter history of Indian thought there arose certain men who appear to have grasped the idea of one sovereign Creator and Lord, immanent and at the same time transcendent. "The best Hindu philosophy is from first to last spiritual in aim and in much of its out working it is spiritual also(1)".

Turning then to the earliest times of which we have any record - the pre-Vedic period, it is evident that the Indo-European race, before it parted into five or six different branches, recognized the existence of a supreme Divinity - a being, ~~wise~~, powerful, wise and good. "The Indo-European race while still united recognized a supreme God, an organizing God, Almighty, Omniscient, Moral, who was originally the God of heaven(2)". This unseen being was held to be the avenger and ruler of all things, and was called Dyaus Pitar (heaven father). "If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the Nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line: Sanskrit <sup>1</sup> ~~ET~~ ET".

1905 (Heaven Father) Greek Zeus Πάτερ Latin Jupiter Old Norse YFR. Think what this equation implies! It implies and proves that the ancestors of Homer and Cicero had at one time the same faith as the people of India, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name - a name which meant Heaven Father(3)".

This mystical worship of the Heaven Father did not continue in its ancient purity, and as the Indo-Aryans swept down through the passes of the Hindu Kush and settled in the Punjab, they began to worship the forces of nature which were in operation around them. These same forces had exhibited themselves to the children of the pre-Vedic period, but had been looked on by them as manifestations of the one God, and were generalized under one simple but rather vague personification. In the Veda, however, this unity is soon lost, and the one deification ~~is seen~~ of the various forces of nature is replaced by a series of deifications, the principal of which are, Agni

1. J H Farquhar, Missionary Review of the World, April, 1912 .P, 249.  
 2. James Darmesteter, Contemporary Review .October, 4879 1879.  
 3. Max muller, Ancient Sanskrit Literature and Nineteenth Century, October 1885

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 (the earth, god of fire  $\Phi$ , Indra (the air born rain god), and Sarga (the sky born sun god) - one for each of the worlds, earth, air, sky, - while with these were associated the storm gods and various other solar deities. A review of the numerous objects of worship of this period leads at once to the conclusion, that the idea of God as One, is faint and vague if not altogether wanting. From the earlier Monotheistic conception there has been a descent, until it has been almost wholly replaced by a pantheistic nature worship. "It is a great mistake to call it Monotheism, Max Muller justly says, 'If we employ technical terms, the religion of the Veda is Polytheism not Monotheism'. At the best there are momentary glimpses of what seems almost Monotheism(1)".

It is just these glimpses of light, that flash out of the darkness, which lead us to inquire; was there not still some idea of the one God underlying all this Polytheism, - an idea which appealed to the old rishis and which filled them with reverence and awe? Was there not, amid all this diversity, a struggle after unity, and a faint conception of the mysterious God of creation, who demands homage and worship as the one true God? After reviewing the Vedic period, Monier Williams says, "In Vedic times there was as we have seen, a perpetual feeling after One Supreme Being, if hapily he might be found in sky or air. The hymn composers constantly gave expression to man's craving for some perception of the Infinite(2)". This same idea prevails among many of the educated Indians of to-day. If questioned regarding the apparent contradiction, the explanation given is that all orthodox Hindoos believe in the one universal Spirit, who is supreme Lord over all, and who at the same time, has taken various forms. These various gods may be propitiated with ceremonies and sacrifices, but the Supreme Being present in all of them is the real object of religious devotion. They indignantly repudiate the charge of Pantheism, and hold that in their acts of worship they look beyond the personal and visible god to the impersonal and invisible Spirit which underlies everything.

The hymns in which these elevated moral and ethical ideas are expressed, are not numerous in number. Only a few of them appear to contain the simple conception of one divine existent Being (which according to the Hindoos lies behind their personified deities), and even in these the idea of the one God present in all nature is somewhat nebulous and undefined. "On the one side,

1. Murray Mitchell's Hinduism Past and Present, P, 21.

2. Religious Life and Thought in India, P, 20. Monier Williams



indeed, their thought<sup>v</sup> seems to sink to the level of Fetichism and the grossest superstition; on the other it loses itself in the arid wastes of pantheistic speculation. But midway between these opposite extremes can be traced forms of theistic devotion such as have never been altogether absent, from that day to this, from the religious reflection of India(1)". One of the best known hymns of the Rig-Veda is in the tenth Mandala, the first nine verses of which always end with the question, "Who is the God to whom we should offer our sacrifice(2)". Great importance has been attached to this hymn by Max Muller, and has been called by him, the 'Hymn to the unknown God'. Running throughout there seems to be the expression of a yearning after one supreme Deity, one God above all the gods of the Vedic Pantheon, - a yearning which exerted its force more and more as time went on, and which ultimately led up to the transcendental philosophy of the Upanishads.

1. In the beginning there arose the germ of golden light, Hiranyagarbha;

He was the One born Lord of all that is.

Who

Who is the God to whom we should offer our sacrifices?

2. When the great waters went everywhere, holding the germ and generating fire, thence he arose who is the sole life of the bright Gods.

Who is the God to whom we should offer our sacrifice?

9. May he not destroy us, he, the creator of the earth, or he, the righteous who created the heaven, he who also created the bright and mighty waters.

Who is the God to whom we should offer our sacrifice?

The foregoing are three characteristic verses from the hymn, in which the sage seems to have a dim apprehension of God, - a transcendental God who had been worshiped by their ancestors, and toward whom for a time the march of development seemed to move, as toward a living personal God in whose fellowship his worshipers might find the cleansing of their hearts. But across this pathway of promise there falls a shadow; progress is stayed and finally this dimly perceived God is, in some way, lost sight of.

During this period sacrifice was deemed necessary in order to propitiate the deities as represented by the various aspects of nature. But in the Brahmanas which are attached to the Samhitas or collections of Mantras,

1. Rev. N. Macnicol, The Indian Interpreter, April 1909.  
2. Rig-Veda, 10, 121.

there is the development of a vast sacrificial system presided over by the priests. The offering of sacrifice had a fourfold meaning, 1. A mere thank offering. 2. To nourish the gods. 3. The wresting of boons from gratified deities. 4. The attaining of superhuman powers and even exaltation to heaven. Along with these aims in sacrifice in the Brahmanas, there also sprang up the idea of sacrifice as an atonement for sin. This idea, however, never took hold of the Hindu mind, although there are a few references to the sacrifices of representative men, as for instance in the Tandya-Brahmana, 'He who knowing this, sacrifices with the Purusha-Medha, or sacrifices the primeval male, becomes everything', and again in the Satapatha-Brahmana, 'The lord of creatures (Prajapati) offered himself a sacrifice for the gods'. Thus the idea of expiation was gradually introduced. The sacrificer was mysteriously identified with the victim, which was regarded as a ransom for sin and the instrument of its annulment. In the Tandya-Brahmana we read, 'Oh thou limb of the victim now consigned to the fire, thou art the expiation for the sins committed by the gods, by the fathers (our deceased ancestors), by men, by ourselves. Whatever sin we have committed sleeping or waking, knowing or unknowing, thou art the expiation for that'. May we not conclude that in these mystical allusions there are traces of sacrifice as a divinely appointed ordinance typical of the one great voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of the world. "It would not be easy to account for the genesis of the idea, except on the assumption of some primitive tradition of the 'Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world(1)".

In the Upanishads we have a reaction against the vast system of ritualism which sprang up during the period of the Brahmanas. No rest was to be found in the continual rites and sacerdotalism which had become such a prominent feature of Hindu worship, and so the people sought refuge in speculative inquiries concerning the possibility of release from the numberless births to which men are doomed. These inquiries were but guesses at truth in relation to some of the greatest questions with which men have to deal, and the value of the Upanishads lies in the fact that these guesses were a groping after something felt to be needed, the yearning of hearts dissatisfied and empty. The Upanishads express the desire of the personal soul or

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1. Prof Banerjia, Arian Witness, P 204.

or spirit (Jiva or Jivatman) for deliverance from a long series of separate existences and from liability to pass through an infinite variety of ~~of~~ bodies - gods, men, animals, plants and stones -, and its longing for final union with the supreme Soul or Spirit of the universe (1)". Thus the fundamental idea of the Upanishads as interpreted by the first great commentator, Sankaracharya, is that behind all forms of nature, behind all the Vedic deities there is the supreme Soul of the universe, even Brahma, the highest self or the absolute. They maintain that the highest knowledge possible to man is, when the self within finds and knows its true self in the highest self, and the aim of all thought and study is, that through this knowledge man may return to the world soul - the highest self, and retain identity with it. "There is one eternal thinker, thinking non-eternal thoughts; He the One fulfils the desires of many. The wise who perceive Him within their self, to them belongs eternal life, eternal peace (2)". How is this perception to become actualized in the lives of those who seek this peace, this eternal life? By renunciation, by a cutting away not only from covetousness and evil passions, but likewise from duty and right affection, believing that only thereby can union with the Ultimate be achieved! "When desires cease the mortal becomes immortal; he attains Brahma here (3)". Here the human consciousness has been endeavouring to pass behind the material world, and grasp the invisible essence which was felt to be the underlying reality in all things. It was an attempt to solve the problem of the one in the many by using the Absolute or Brahma as the only reality and looking upon all else as illusion. "This common unity the underlying essence is God, timeless, spaceless, causeless, and the world from this standpoint is nothing but God magnifying himself in different names and forms (4)". The central figure of the Upanishads, the One who has taken the place of the many, is conceived of as existing in two conditions, Nirguna, unbound and transcending all attributes; and Saguna, bound and possessed of qualities. These are sometimes called the higher and lower Brahma. The former is the pure unchangeable Brahma (Neuter), the latter is Brahma (Masculine) or Brahma associated with ignorance or Maya. "These two have been united from eternity and the first product of their union is Isvara (5)!"

1. Monier Williams, Religious Life and Thought in India, P, 26.

2. Katha Upanishad, 5, A 12, 13

3. Brahad Upanishad, 4. 4, 7.

4. Brahmavidya, vol, 3, P, 184.

5. Jacob, Hindu Pantheism, P, 58.

This Ishvara or Lord is so called because he presides over individual souls and rewards them according to their works. "It should be distinctly understood however, that God the highest of manifestations in the world of reality is the collective aggregate of all animated things from the highest deity down to a blade of grass, just as the forest is an aggregate of trees(1)". It is but fair to add that all this, while struggling to express a great truth is most misleading, as Isvara is after all only an illusory creator, and to say that he presides over an aggregate of souls is to say that he rules himself. The great underlying principle is Brahma, all else is illusion, and as long as man imagines himself to be something different from Brahma, he is in a state of Maya; but when he can say 'Brahmasmi' (I am Brahma), then he possesses Vidya and becomes the knowing man.

Thus the human soul, tired of ritual and outward form, is endeavouring to get into touch with the innermost 'substratum both of nature and of man'. In looking upon this inner principle as the "one only without a second(2)", the people of that time laid themselves open to the charge of Pantheism, but unlike European pantheism, which has commonly identified the world with God, Indian mystical pantheism affirms, not the deification of the finite world but the fact that it does not exist; it is merely an illusion. Even this charge, true though it is, does not prevent us seeing in these 'pathetic guesses at truth' an attempt to elevate the thoughts of man and lift them from earthly surroundings and sordid contemplation to that higher realm of spiritual communion, wherein the soul comes into contact with the Divine soul and enters into life giving fellowship with the source of all light and truth. The thought that the Supreme abides in the heart and that in the divine nature of the soul itself we have abiding witness of the indwelling of God within the human heart, is one of the most important contributions made by these old writings to the history of religious thought, and in spite of all their trivialities and errors, the burden of these old books is their search after the infinite, the eagerness of the soul to know, and that it is only the spiritual man who can know realities. "That God the maker of all things, the great self, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, soul and mind, and they who know it become immortal(3)".

1. Jacob, Hindu Pantheism, p. 58.  
 2. Chhandogya Upanishad, C. 1.  
 3. Svet Upanishad, 4.7.

The 'Six Instruments of True Teaching' or 'Six demonstrations of truth' as the Darsanas are sometimes called, grew out of the Upanishads. Some of them are dualistic, and affirm the co-existence of two eternal principles; while others are non-dualistic, insisting on the unity of all being. Of these systems there are only two that need be noticed in passing, namely, the Vedanta and the Yoga. The Vedanta has long been the chief philosophic system of India and is based directly on the Upanishads, embodying the doctrine of 'Ekam Eva-dvitiyam' (Only one without a second) more fully than any of the other systems, and like the Upanishads teaching that liberation or 'Mukti' can only be obtained by a proper understanding of the Vedanta philosophy. Hence the great necessity is knowledge - apprehension of the truth. 'He who knows what soul ~~is~~ is gets beyond grief', nay more, 'He who knows God becomes God'.

When we turn to the Yoga we find that its teaching is more nearly theistic than any of the other schools. Dr John Muir has said, that 'the only ~~of~~ one of the six schools to recognize Divine Providence is the Yoga'. It is a thoroughly mystical school maintaining that it is possible by profound meditation and extreme forms of asceticism to attain union with the Divine Principle. The author is Patanjali, and "his references to Isvara, Pranidhana or Divine contemplation, we must take as pleasing witness to that religious sentiment which God has implanted in human nature, and which is indeed the most satisfactory evidence of his existence(1)". The Yoga system is the answer, not only to the Sankhya, but to almost every other system of Indian philosophy. Nearly all of these systems make salvation dependent on right knowledge and in doing so they raise the question; How can right knowledge or knowledge of the essential distinction between soul and non-soul be obtained? Disease, langour, doubt, carelessness, idleness, ~~weariedness~~, mistaken notions, unattainment of stability/in the life of abstraction; these are the obstacles which prevent the union of the soul with God. How can they be removed? How can the mind be suppressed and brought into a state of repose and proper relation to right knowledge? The Yoga system answers these questions by teaching that this relation may be obtained and these obstacles removed by 'dispassion', and the carrying out of certain exercises as follows;

1. Yama (restraint).
2. Niyama (religious observance).
3. Asana. (postures).

4. Pranayama (regulation of the breath). 5. Pratyahara (restraint of the senses). 6. Dharana (fixed attention). 7. Dhyana (contemplation). 8. Samadhi (profound meditation). By the practice of these exercises the higher self can become connected with the lower self and eternal union with God himself made possible. "For by ascetic penance goodness is obtained; from goodness is reached understanding; and from understanding the self is obtained, and he who has obtained that does not return(1)". While it is true that objection may be taken to many of the methods used and much of the fantastic nonsense which accompanies these exercises must be condemned; yet there is underlying the whole history of Yogism and Asceticism, a yearning on the part of individuals to experience that mystical union with the Infinite through which the human soul can best realize the fulfillment of its holiest aspirations.

After the 'Six systems of philosophy' comes the Bhagavad-Gita which has been called the 'Divine Lay' or 'Lord's Song', and which has been styled by Schlegel 'the finest philosophic poem in the world'. In it we find produced practically the whole of the teaching of the Veda, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Six Systems. The spirit of the Vedic hymns and the Brahmanas reappear in certain passages which teach that material prosperity(2) and forgiveness of sins(3) can be obtained through sacrifice. The teaching of the Upanishads appears in its positive aspect, as well as in their negative conclusions to which their teaching inevitably leads. Thus we are taught that the knowledge of Brahma brings immortality(4), while on the other hand the emphasis laid on the personality of God exclude the Upanishad teaching, namely, that the individual soul is identical with the Divine soul. The Vedanta and Sankhya systems are also clearly represented. "It is pantheistic in that it represents Krishna as the one real existence; and theistic in representing him as a personal being, the creator and upholder of all that is(5)".

The Gita was written at a time when the people were face to face with a most momentous problem, and is an attempt to provide a way out of the difficulty. The philosophic systems that had gone before, however attractive they may have been to the intellect, and however lofty in their spiritual ideas, were found inadequate to satisfy the spiritual desires of humanity. Moreover they were in conflict with traditional religion and the ancient

1. Mait Upanishad, 4.3. 2. Gita, 3.14. 3. Ibid, 3.13. 4. Ibid, 13.12.  
5. Slater's Higher Hinduism, P. 126.

social system of the community. The more faithful a man was to the Upanishads the less faithful could he be to the ancient gods, to the caste system, and to his work in the world. Thus the problem was to provide a system which should unite these two; the caste system and traditional religion on the one hand, and the moral and spiritual ideas of the Upanishads on the other. This the Gita attempted to do by bringing forward two doctrines; 1. The worship of Krishna as the one personal God, and, 2. Karma Yoga, or the doing of action, without attachment, that is without any desire for the result which action brings. "The significance of Krishna lies in this, that he is conceived of as the absolute Brahma, the object of all meditation of the sages of the Upanishads, and at the same time as a personal God approachable with sacrifices and prayers, as Indra was in Vedic times, and other personal Gods at all times (1)". An examination of the Karma Yoga doctrine shows that its significance, also, lies in its combination of philosophy with the popular life, and as Krishna unites the loftiest meditations of philosophy with the simplest worship of the ignorant, so Karma Yoga unites philosophic renunciation of the world with practical every-day life. The commands of Karma Yoga are: Give up all desire for the fruits of action and thereby fulfill the philosophic ideal; but continue to do your ordinary work in the world at the same time, and thus fulfill your own duty as a member of a Hindu family and caste.

Perhaps in no aspect of the Gita does the mystical element find expression so vividly, as it does in the Bhakti doctrine or personal devotion to Krishna as the one God. Here we find ourselves in the region of distinctly Christian sentiment and truth. Dr J F Jones has said, "that this new doctrine brings the Hindu religion into warmer relationship to Christianity than at any other point (2)". "They, verily, who worship me with devotion, they are in me and I also in them (3)". "Know thou certainly that my devotee is never destroyed (4)". "Thinking on me, thou shalt conquer all obstacles by my grace (5)". In these words, which call to mind parallel expressions in the Gospels, we have indicated a high level of experience in religious thought-trustful and ardent attachment to an agent represented as Divine. So much so,

1. J N Farquhar, Gita and Gospel, P. 26. II. India; Its Life and Thought, P. 18  
3. Gita, vii, 23. 4. Ibid. 9. 28. 5. Ibid. 18. 58.

that certain writers have been forced to the conclusion, that here we have distinct traces of Christian teaching, and that the Krishna cult is indebted to Christian legends which found their way into India and were there modified to suit Indian modes of thought. One of these writers was Dr Lorimer, who in 1869 stated, ~~that~~ in the appendix to his German translation of the Gita, 'that Christian ideas had been borrowed by the Brahmans and that the poem was indebted to the Bible'. Prof Weber also, while regarding the foregoing ~~as~~ conclusion as 'overdone' has yet stated, that "the reciprocal action and mutual influence of Gnostics and Indian conceptions in the first centuries of the Christian era are evident, however difficult it may be at present to say what in each is peculiar to it or borrowed from the other(1)". Other writers such as Dr J Muir, Prof M Monier Williams and Mr Justice K T Telang of Bombay agree that there is not sufficient evidence to prove that any influence has been exerted.

This Bhakti doctrine did not remain long in its pure form and was soon carried to ~~a~~ a wild extreme. It was held to consist of five degrees; I, Quiet contemplation of the deity. II, Slavery or absolute consecration to his service. III, Friendship for him. IV, Love to him, resembling that of children to parents. V, Passionate devotion to him as the supreme object of devotion. This form of piety failed because it did not have a worthy object as the centre of attraction. Krishna, as portrayed in the corrupt literature of the Puranic Vaishnavism, could not, as an incarnation, maintain for any length of time the elevated conception of devotion that we have in the Gita, nor could he ever hope to attain to the position which the central figure of Christianity holds in the life and thought of Christian people. To have supreme devotion, a figure supreme in holiness is an absolute necessity, else that devotion will become degraded into a blind belief, impure as it is superstitious. While this is to a great extent true of the Gita; at the same time there are evidences of a heart-felt desire for communion with the Divine, which have led writers like Farquhar to say that "The thought that remains in the mind after a perusal of this great work is this, -- The Gita is the cry of the Hindu people for an incarnate Saviour(2)".

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1. Indian Antiquity. 4.79. 2. Farquhar. Gita and Gospel. P .28.



parties were at hand to get possession of his body. The question was settled by Kabir himself, who, as tradition asserts, appeared and told them to look underneath the cloth which covered the corpse. On doing so the only thing visible was a heape of flowers. These were divided between the rival faiths, half being buried by the Mohomedans and half being burned by the Hindoos. Whatever truth there may be in this story, there can be no doubt but that his life and teachings were greatly influenced by the Mohomedan idea of the Unity of God. He rejected caste, denounced Brahmanical arrogance and hypocrisy and ridiculed the Sastras. He was also a strong opponent of idol worship, holding that by a life of faith or devotion (Bhakti) a worshiper can come into personal communion with a personal God. "Kabir taught the life of (Bhakti) the object of which is a personal God and not a philosophic abstraction of an impersonal, quantity-less, all pervading spiritual substance(1)". For him "True religion meant really nothing but devotion to one God(2)".

The direct influence of the Kabir sect in northern India was wide spread, but it dwarfs into insignificance when compared with ~~the~~ the indirect influence that has been exerted through the founding of the Sikh sect by his disciple Nanak. "That it formed the basis of the Sikh movement in the Punjab is clear from the fact, that Kabir's sayings are constantly quoted by the Guru Nanak and his successors(3)". Nanak was born near Lahore in the year 1469, and finding himself in a part of the country where ~~the~~ the Mohammedans formed a majority of the population, he became partly Islamized, to the extent at least of renouncing idolatry. Being originally a Hindoo, he conceived the idea of bringing together the followers of these two great religions 'on the common ground of belief in one God'. "He taught that there was one God; but that God was neither Allah nor Ham, but God—simply simply God; neither the specific God of the Mohammedan nor of the Hindoo, but the God of the universe, of all mankind ~~and~~ and of all religions(4)".

That Sikhism was an advance on previous religious thought can be seen from an examination of the Sikh Granth or Bible. Recognizing the tyranny of priestly rule and the folly of ceremonial observance, Nanak revolted against them. He also rejected idols and the incarnations of the Hindoos, and on the ground of the equality of all men he denounced the system of caste. Thus

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1. Ency Brit. Vol 15, P. 624. 2. Monier Williams. Religious Thought and Life in India. P. 159. 3. Ibid P. 158. 4. Ency Brit. Vol 25. P. 84.

Guru Govind Singh, one of the contributors to the Granth, writes;

"Some worshipping stones put them on their heads;  
Some suspend lingams from their necks;  
Some see God in the South; some bow their head to the West.  
Some worship idols, others busy themselves with worshipping the dead.  
The whole world entangled in false ceremonies hath not found God's  
secret".

Moreover Guru Nanak says: "Caste hath no power in the next world; there is a new order of beings. Those whose accounts are honored are the good". Consecration of widows, the use of wine, tobacco smoking and infanticide are prohibited; while honesty, justice and many of the other moral and domestic virtues upheld by Christianity are inculcated.

Coming now to more modern times, we find considerable development of the Monotheistic mystical element in the various Somaajas which have sprung into existence, not so much as a protest against Hindu superstition and pantheism, but as a means to save Hinduism. It was to be expected that the large influx of Christian ideas and Western thought generally, which has taken place during the last century, and more particularly during recent years, would powerfully affect Hinduism. "The Theistic movement, as a growing search after a personal God, is to be traced definitely to the growth of Western thought, and especially to the direct influence of Christianity(1)". Western civilization, English education and Christian missions have produced marked changes in Hindu society. They have revealed to many of the people of India the fact, that if Hinduism is to escape decay and maintain its hold on the people, it must be reformed. Convinced that it cannot endure and convinced at the same time that the principles of Christianity are largely true, the educated people of India have been led to try and find these principles within their own faith, and in many cases to adopt distinctly Christian truths, reading them into their ancient scriptures and interpreting them in the light of modern thought. This they did and are doing in the hope that they may be able to counteract the steady growth of Christianity and prevent the people, in some measure at least, from breaking away from the faith of their fathers. "In fact the whole Somaaj movement is as distinct a product of the contest of Hinduism with Christianity in the 19th century, as the Panth movement was of its contest with Islam 300 years earlier(2)".

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1. Jones. India; Its Life and Thought. P.379.  
2. Ency Brit. Vol 4. P.388.

a part in the life of the people, but that it exists will not, I think, be disputed. "God has ever been willing seeking His Indian children; that he has never left himself without a witness among them; that with many limitations and errors the people of India have diligently sought after God in eager desire that hapily they might find Him; - - - that as to earlier generations of Israel God spoke through Hebrew prophets, - - - so to previous generations of Indians God spoke more or less distinctly by Indian thinkers and saints (1). As the years pass by this spiritual tendency is becoming more pronounced, and the longing of many enlightened sons of Hindustan for a vision of the Jehovah God of Israel is ever increasing. This aspect of religious development was clearly expressed in an address delivered before the Y M C A in Bombay by the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay university. Speaking on the theme 'The Kingdom of Christ and the Spirit of the age', he said:- "The greatest miracle of the age is that there should come from a little island, unknown by name even to our forefathers, - - - a message so full of spiritual life and strength as the Gospel of Christ, - - - The process of the conversion of India to Christ may not be going on as rapidly as you hope, or in exactly in the manner that you had hoped, but nevertheless, I say India is being converted; the ideas that lie at the heart of the Gospel of Christ are slowly, but surely, permeating every part of Hindu society, and modifying every phase of Hindu thought (2)".

The more the hollowness of Indian religious ceremonies becomes manifest, and the more the contradictions and absurdities of Hindu philosophy and science become recognized, the more quickly will the multitudes of Indian people become conscious of and welcome that supreme manifestation of God in whom true mysticism may be experienced, and through <sup>whom</sup> vital and living relation may be, with the one and only true God may be established. This change may not come about just as we expect, nay it will not come in the garb of the West, but clad in oriental form - a form peculiar to the people of the East, Keshub Chunder Sen has abundantly expressed himself concerning the Christ and His message, and in doing so has brought out this aspect of the question. To him it is an Asiatic Christ; and <sup>He</sup> ~~He~~ must be accepted in a truly oriental, yes, even in a Hindu way. He says:- "It is not the Christ of the Baptists, nor the Christ of the Methodists, but the Christ sent by God, the

1. Dr Hume's Interpretation of Indian Religious History. P. 13.

2. Bombay, June 14th, 1910. Mr. Justice Chandavarkar.

Christ of love and meekness, of truth and self-sacrifice, whom the world delights to honor. If you say we must renounce our nationality and all the purity and devotion of Eastern faith for <sup>in</sup>sectarian and Western Christianity, we say most emphatically, No. It is our Christ, ~~which~~ you have come to return to us. The East gratefully and lovingly welcomes back her Christ. But we shall not have your Christianity, which suits not the spirit of the East. Our ~~own~~ religion is a religion of harmony(1)". It is the overmastering power of the love of God in Christ that India needs,---a love that will touch the heart and lighten the understanding and produce in her the moral qualities which she so sorely needs. An ideal is needed, and Christianity not only supplies that ideal, but also gives men the power to realize it. It is potent ethically because it is profoundly mystical, and India needs above all else a practical mysticism - a mysticism that, linking man to God, compels him 'to spend and be spent' in loving service for all men, without reference to caste or creed. Then and only then will the people of India realize 'the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man'.