

**Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Theological Legacy  
of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy  
(1861-1907)**

**Timothy C. Tennent**

**A thesis presented to the  
University of Edinburgh  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
May, 1998**



**I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and constitutes the results of my research in the subject.**

**Timothy C. Tennent**  
**May, 1998**

## Abstract

Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy, a pioneer of Indian Christian theology, was born Bhavani Charan Banerjea into a Bengali Brahmin family in 1861. In 1887, he was formally initiated into the *Brāhmo Samāj* where, until 1890, he was actively involved in promoting reforms within Hinduism. However, he became increasingly attracted to the uniqueness of Christ and on 26 February 1891, he received Christian baptism and on 1 September formally united with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1894, he declared himself a *sannyāsin* and thereafter was known as Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy. Upādhyāy's conversion to Christianity marks the beginning of a series of journalistic efforts in which he sought to demonstrate how Christian theology, particularly neo-Thomistic thought, was compatible with indigenous thought forms present in India. This thesis is an analysis of the theology of Upādhyāy drawn from his writings from 1893 until his untimely death in 1907. These writings are primarily found in several journals he founded, including the *Sophia*, *The Twentieth Century* and, *Sandhyā*.

This research focuses on three main areas in which Upādhyāy's theology seeks to interact with indigenous Indian religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. First, there is an analysis of how Upādhyāy sought to build Christian theology on the foundation of human reason and his belief in universal, primitive theism. In his writings from 1894 until 1897, he sought to construct Christian theology on the foundation of the earliest Indian Scriptures, the Vedas. However, after January 1898, he recognized that the Vedas provided an insufficient philosophical foundation and he increasingly sought to demonstrate the compatibility between neo-Thomism and, what he regarded as the highest expression of Hindu philosophy, *advaita* Vedāntism, as expressed by the 8th century philosophical theologian, Śaṅkara. His development of Śaṅkara's thought occurs primarily over the next five years in several important and definable stages, each designed to demonstrate how the key concepts in Śaṅkara's thought could be used "as stepping stones to the Catholic faith." Upādhyāy recognized that Śaṅkara's theology need not be re-interpreted or re-directed, but only properly understood to be an adequate statement of many important themes in Christianity. Thus, Upādhyāy's use of Śaṅkara became the second major foundation upon which he sought to construct Christian theology in India. The third and final area in which Upādhyāy constructs an indigenous theology, was on the foundation of Indian culture which he viewed as an extension of his ongoing commitment to Śaṅkara's *advaitism*. By 1902, Upādhyāy had re-defined Hinduism as primarily a cultural, not theological, phenomenon, which enabled him to embrace various iconic figures in India, such as Krishna, as cultural symbols which are in no fundamental conflict with the Christian faith. Upādhyāy was convinced that once Hinduism was accepted as an expression of Indian culture, then an indigenous Christianity might then be able to be planted in Indian soil which was not unnecessarily united with European cultural forms. Upādhyāy insisted, both in his writings as a 'Hindu-Catholic,' as well as in his life as a *sannyāsi*, then he could live and behave as a Hindu, but believe as a Catholic.

After a thorough examination of his theological writings, the thesis concludes by arguing that Upādhyāy has left a lasting theological legacy which continues to provide fresh insights relevant to the ongoing process of the emergence of indigenous expressions of Christianity in India.

## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people, without whom the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible. Several years ago, I had the opportunity of helping to host Dr. Janie New who had come to India to celebrate the official opening of the Luther W. New, Jr. Theological College (NTC) in Dehra Dun, U.P, named after her late husband. While in India, Mrs. New attended several of my lectures at the college and, as a result, offered to financially assist me in pursuing doctoral studies. I remained indebted to her, as well as her sister, the late Dr. Lucille Holliman, both of whom enabled me to study in Edinburgh. This thesis is dedicated in their honor and memory, respectively. I am also deeply appreciative of the encouragement and support I have received from Rev. George Chavanikamannil, the founder of NTC. He introduced me to India, and has exhibited such remarkable patience over the years with my western conceptions of Christian theology. He provided me with an opportunity to teach courses at the college and, in the process, to learn much about theological formulation in India. His friendship, along with the entire faculty and staff at NTC, has been a constant source of inspiration and, without them, I would not have had the opportunity to realize the need for deeper theological reflection in the Indian context.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Toccoa Falls College, especially my director, Dr. Norman Allison, my colleague, Dr. David Harvey and our secretary, Carol Silvernail, all of whom worked extra hours so that I could be gone from Toccoa and live in Edinburgh much of the last three years. Their support and prayers, not only as I complete my dissertation, but also their encouragement as I am moving on to a new post at Gordon-Conwell, will not be quickly forgotten. I trust that I will be able to bring the vision and depth of commitment which Norm Allison exhibits daily in the School of World Missions at Toccoa Falls College to my new post.

My family will always be grateful for the assistance of Verlin and Jane King who so generously assisted us in our living expenses during our time in Scotland. Others, such as Fran Stewart, Brenda Myers, David and Vicky Scott, Leon and Janice Osborne, Glenn and Linda Wilson, Bob Williamson and Al and Jeanette Gurley were helpful in so many ways. While here in Scotland, we have enjoyed the rich fellowship and friendship of many Scottish friends who have made the experience particularly meaningful. We will cherish many warm memories of our time with John and Margaret Patterson, Peter and Heidi Gardner, Matthew and Anne Henderson and Mark and Diane Nicholas.

As anyone who has completed a dissertation knows, it cannot be accomplished without excellent and attentive supervision. I was blessed to have two talented supervisors, both of whom brought valuable skills to the task at hand. I am indebted to Dr. James Cox and his remarkable ability to step back and view the larger structural and methodological issues in the development of this research. Likewise, I was so enriched by the many hours spent with Dr. John Brockington, whose uncanny

attention to even the smallest detail has made this dissertation much stronger. I will miss our regular meetings together at Buccleuch Place.

It has been a privilege to study at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW). I am indebted to Professor Andrew Walls, the director emeritus, as well as the current director, Professor David Kerr who both were a constant source of encouragement and whose leadership of the centre during my years of study here has helped me to gain an insight into the wider missiological and theological ramifications of the many, seemingly disparate, manifestations of what today comprises non-Western Christianity. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the wonderful staff of the Centre; Elizabeth Leitch, Anne Fernon, Margaret Acton and Ruth Scott, who were always so friendly and helpful. Their helpfulness, coupled with such a warm dose of humor, has kept many a post-graduate student sane during the difficult days of such a project as this.

During my archival work in Calcutta, I was greatly aided by Mr. Roman Gomes as well as Mr. Warren Brown, the librarian and archivist of the Goethals library at St. Xavier's College. If I had been unable to access and scan the primary source materials then, quite obviously, this dissertation would never have materialized. Their willingness to allow me to examine the primary source materials, even outwith the normal library opening times, greatly aided me during the time I stayed in Calcutta. I am also appreciative of Dr. Gispert-Sauche who agreed to meet with me in Delhi to discuss my research in Upādhyāy. It will be also obvious to anyone who reads this dissertation that I owe a great debt to Dr. Julius Lipner, Senior Lecturer in comparative religion and Sanskrit at the University of Cambridge. He is one of the few scholars who has pursued studies in Upādhyāy in earnest, and it was through his writings that I became convinced that Upādhyāy deserved the kind of in-depth theological analysis which this study attempts. Dr. Lipner's willingness to meet with me in Cambridge on several occasions to discuss Upādhyāy will always be appreciated. Furthermore, his willingness to provide copies of his own personal translations of Upādhyāy's Bengali writings furthered my entire project.

My parents, Bob and Jackie Tennent, as well as my wife's parents, Howard and Jean Myers, have provided constant and loving support through this entire process, which has provided inestimable support to me and my entire family. Likewise, I want to express my love and appreciation to my wife Julie and our two children, Jonathan and Bethany who have all been so supportive through these years. Despite months of separation doing archival work in India and living in Edinburgh alone, as well as the year and a half we all lived in Edinburgh together, I am profoundly grateful. Julie's remarkable love for Christ and attitude towards life is an inspiration to all who know her.

Finally, I trust that everything I have learned through this research might be used to bring praise and honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Timothy C. Tennent  
Edinburgh, May 1998

## Key Events in the Life of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy (1861-1907)

Date	Year	Event
11 Feb.,	1861	Born in Khanya, Bengal
	1880	Met Vivekānanda
	1881	Met Keshab Chandra Sen
	1883	Eagle's Nest founded
06 Jan.,	1887	Joins Church of the New Dispensation
	1888	Reads <i>Catholic Belief</i> by Faa de Bruno
Aug. to Dec.,	1890	Publishes <i>The Harmony</i>
26 Feb.,	1891	Baptized by Anglican, Rev. Mr. Heaton, but did not unite with the Anglican, or any other, church.
01 Sept.,	1891	Unites with the Roman Catholic Church; chooses baptismal name, Theophilus
	1893	Publishes "A Tract on the Existence of God"
Jan.,	1894	First issue of <i>Sophia</i> monthly
Dec.,	1894	Becomes sannyāsi and publicly adopts the name Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy
	1896	Lecture tour and public debates with Annie Besant
March, April	1897	Lecture tour of Southern Presidency
Jan.,	1898	Returns to Calcutta, re-assessment of <i>advaita</i> Vedāntism
Feb.,	1898	Discusses idea of Catholic-Vedānta <i>maṭha</i> with Animānanda
Oct.,	1898	Significant shifts in his appreciation of Vedānta
Jan.,	1899	Beginning of Kastalik <i>Maṭha</i> on banks of Narmada
Mar.,	1899	End of <i>Sophia</i> monthly
16 June	1900	Weekly <i>Sophia</i> begins
June	1900	Equates Śaṅkara's <i>māyā</i> with Thomas' contingent being
	1900	Uses pen name 'Narahari Das'
20 Sept.	1900	Mgr. Zaleski bans <i>Sophia</i>
08 Dec.	1900	Last issue of <i>Sophia</i> weekly
31 Jan.	1901	First issue of <i>Twentieth Century</i>
01 Aug.	1901	<i>Twentieth Century</i> banned by Catholic authorities
Dec.	1901	Upādhyāy and Rabindranath Tagore founded <i>Santiniketan</i>
05 Oct.	1902	Departs Bombay for Rome, London, Oxford and Cambridge
July	1903	Returns from Europe
July	1904	<i>Sandhyā</i> journal begins, continues until October, 1907.
07 Aug.	1904	Unites with <i>Svadeshi</i> movement
July	1904	Address on Sri. Krishna delivered in Calcutta
Feb.	1905	Permits <i>pūjā</i> in honor of Sarasvatī, Animānanda leaves
Nov.	1905	Calls for complete independence from Britain
10 Mar.	1907	Upādhyāy issues first of twelve issues of periodical, <i>Svarāj</i> .
June	1906	Permits idol Shivaji to be placed at the feet of Durgā
	1907	Performs <i>prāyaścitta</i>
10 Sept.	1907	First sedition case launched
21 Oct.	1907	Taken to Campbell Hospital for hernia operation
26 Oct.	1907	Second sedition case against Upādhyāy announced
27 Oct.	1907	Dies in hospital and is cremated at dusk on banks of Ganges

## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration</b>	ii
<b>Abstract</b>	iii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iv
<b>Key Events in the Life of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy</b>	vi
<b>Table of Contents</b>	vii
<b>Chapter One: Prolegomena</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Definition of Indian Christian Theology	2
Insufficient Research on Indian Christian Theologians	3
<b>Research Proposal</b>	<b>6</b>
Statement of Research Question	6
Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy as the Focus of this Study	7
<b>Theological Methodology set within an Historical Context</b>	<b>12</b>
Historical Overview of the Life of Upādhyāy	12
Early life (1861-1881)	12
Hindu reform period (1891-1890)	15
Christian witness period (1891-Sept. 1902)	20
Nationalistic period (Oct. 1902-Oct. 1907)	26
Theological-Historical Methodology	29
<b>Review of the Literature</b>	<b>33</b>
Survey of the Primary Source materials	33
Accessibility of Primary Source Materials	35
The theological writings of Upādhyāy	35
Biographical material on Upādhyāy	37
Theological analysis of Upādhyāy's writings	38
Authorship	39
Unsigned articles	39
Use of <i>noms de plume</i>	42
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>43</b>

<b>Chapter Two: The Historical Context</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Bengali Renaissance</b>	<b>45</b>
Western Education and the Emergence of the Bengali <i>Bhadralok</i>	<b>45</b>
British Orientalism and the Re-Discovery of India's past	<b>52</b>
Press and Propaganda in 19 <sup>th</sup> C. Bengal	<b>55</b>
<b>Hindu Reform Movements</b>	<b>58</b>
Derozio and <i>Young Bengal</i>	<b>59</b>
Ram Mohan Roy and the <i>Brāhmo Sabha / Brāhmo Samāj</i>	<b>61</b>
Theism and natural theology	<b>61</b>
Assessment of the Hindu past	<b>62</b>
Attitude to Jesus Christ	<b>64</b>
<i>Brāhmo Samāj</i>	<b>66</b>
Keshub Chandra Sen, the <i>Brāhmo Samāj</i> and the Church of the New Dispensation	<b>68</b>
Hindu Theism	<b>68</b>
Trinitarian Theism	<b>69</b>
The Church of the New Dispensation	<b>73</b>
Swami Dayananda and the <i>Ārya Samāj</i>	<b>74</b>
Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society	<b>79</b>
<b>Christian Attitudes to Hinduism and Indian Culture in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal</b>	<b>82</b>
Missionary attitudes concerning Hinduism	<b>82</b>
Catholic versus Protestant attitudes concerning the relationship of Hinduism to Indian culture	<b>87</b>
Protestant attitudes concerning Indian culture	<b>88</b>
Catholic attitudes concerning Indian culture	<b>89</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Chapter Three: The Philosophical/Theological Context</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>The Vedic Tradition</b>	<b>96</b>
The Vedic Corpus	<b>96</b>
Theistic Themes in the Vedas	<b>101</b>
Theism	<b>101</b>
Polytheism and henotheism in the Vedas	<b>102</b>
Indian monotheisms <u>and</u> monism	<b>105</b>
Brahman in the Vedas	<b>109</b>
Brahman's relationship to the cosmos	<b>112</b>
Creation texts in the Vedas	<b>112</b>
Development of Vedic cosmology in the Upanishads	<b>113</b>
Creation and the doctrine of <i>māyā</i>	<b>114</b>
Conclusion	<b>116</b>

<b>The Philosophical Theology of Śaṅkara</b>	<b>117</b>
Introduction and Historical Context	117
Monism	120
Śaṅkara's monism defined	120
Monism and the nature of Absolute Brahman	122
Nirguṇa Brahman defined	125
Ātman is Brahman	129
<i>Māyā</i>	131
The problem stated	131
Śaṅkara's <i>māyā</i> analogies	132
Subjective delusion	133
Objective illusion	134
Non-difference from Brahman	135
Relationship of Brahman to the world	137
<i>Mokṣa</i>	142
Mokṣa defined	142
Mokṣa as the breaking of ignorance	142
Mokṣa as the liberation from the effects of <i>karma</i>	144
Conclusion	146

## **Chapter Four: Brahmabāndhav and Natural Theology: Building Christian Theology on the Foundation of Primitive Theism and Human Reason** **148**

<b>Introduction:</b>	<b>148</b>
Natural Theology	148
Influences on Natural and Revealed Theology in 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Thought	150
Thomas Aquinas and Natural Theology	153
<b>Natural Theology in Upādhyāy's Writings</b>	<b>154</b>
Primitive Theism	154
Sources of primitive theism	157
The decree of God	157
Human conscience / Innate moral law	159
Moral argument for primitive theism	162
Contribution of other religions in establishing primitive theism	162
God of primitive theism versus "Potter God"	165
Cosmological argument for universal theism: The Indian application	167
<i>Sophia</i> and Primitive Theism	173
Natural - Supernatural Distinction	175
Natural foundation and supernatural edifice	176
Natural religions and supernatural Christianity	177
<b>Reason and Revelation in Brahmabāndhav's Writings</b>	<b>180</b>
Revelation defined	180
<i>Revelatio generalis</i> and <i>revelatio specialis</i>	183
Ectypal theology of revelation	184

Revelation distinguished	185
Protestant view of revelation	185
Protestant “private interpretation” versus Catholic “fixed deposit”	186
Protestant view of human nature	187
Theosophic view of revelation	188
Exoteric and esoteric revelation	188
Impersonal nature of God	192
Neo-Hindu view of revelation	193
Improper views of human reason	194
Reliance on ‘inspired’ personalities	196
Role and Limits of Human Reason	199
The positive role of human reason	199
The limitations of human reason	201
Philosophy as the <i>ancilla theologiae</i>	207
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>210</b>

## **Chapter Five: Brahmabāndhav and Śaṅkara’s Advaitism: Building Christian Theology on the Foundation of Philosophical Hinduism**

	211
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>211</b>
Structure of the Chapter	211
Setting the Historical Context for Upādhyāy’s Theological Shift	212
<b>The Nature of God as Absolute and Unrelated (<i>Asaṅga/Nirguṇa</i>)</b>	<b>214</b>
<i>Asaṅga</i> in Upādhyāy’s Writings	215
<i>Nirguṇa/Saguna</i> in Upādhyāy’s Writings	222
God as ‘Personal’ reconciled with <i>advaitism</i>	224
God as <i>saccidānanda</i> : A Re-statement of Trinitarianism	227
Internal knowledge/relationship	229
Eternal distinctions within the Godhead	232
Theosophic challenge	233
Max Müller challenge	234
God as <i>Sat</i> , <i>Cit</i> and <i>Ānanda</i>	235
God the Father as <i>Sat</i>	237
God the Son as <i>Cit</i>	238
Logos theology as applied to <i>advaita</i>	240
Hymn to the Incarnate Logos	244
God the Holy Spirit as <i>Ānanda</i>	247
Trinitarian hymn to <i>saccidānanda</i>	251
Refrain	253
First stanza to the Triune Godhead	255
Second stanza to the Father	257
Third stanza to the Son	258
Fourth stanza to the Holy Spirit	260

<b>The Relationship of the Absolute to the Phenomenal world (<i>Māyā</i>)</b>	<b>261</b>
Introduction	261
Upādhyāy's Writings on the Relationship of the Absolute to the World prior to 1899	263
Limitation and mutability in the <i>advaita</i> position	264
Eternality of matter in Śaṃkhya	268
Upādhyāy's Writings on the Relationship of the Absolute to the World from 1899 to 1903.	269
Upādhyāy's understanding of <i>māyā</i>	269
Applying the <i>Arundhatī</i> hermeneutic to the metaphors	279
Upādhyāy's Reconciliation of Thomism with <i>Saguṇa</i> Brahman/ <i>Īśvara</i>	281
<b>Salvation (<i>Mokṣa</i>)</b>	<b>282</b>
Introduction	282
Identification of <i>Ātman</i> and Brahman	283
Transmigration of souls	291
The doctrine of transmigration is ultimately unjust	292
The doctrine of transmigration has an inadequate view of evil	293
The doctrine of transmigration is unscientific	296
Atonement and Vicarious Suffering Related to the Doctrine of <i>Karma</i>	299
Final State and the Doctrine of <i>Mokṣa</i>	303
Using the <i>advaitic</i> language of <i>mokṣa</i>	304
Identification of <i>mokṣa</i> with the beatific vision	305
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>307</b>

## **Chapter Six: Religion and Culture: Building Christianity on the Foundation of Indian Culture** **309**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Hindu, Hinduism and 'Hinduness' in Upādhyāy's Writings</b>	<b>309</b>
Defining 'Hindu'	309
Upādhyāy's Understanding of the Term 'Hindu'	310
Upādhyāy's Conception of 'Hinduness' ( <i>Hindutva</i> )	314
<b>Upādhyāy's Application of 'Hindutva' to Aspects of Indian Culture</b>	<b>318</b>
Role of Caste and Life-Stages in Hindu Culture	318
Introduction	318
'One-Centredness' and the origins of the caste system	320
'One-Centredness' and the goal of the caste system	322
Conclusion	325
Role of Iconic Figures and Symbols in India	325
Introduction to Upādhyāy's view of icons prior to July 1903	325
Upādhyāy's view of Krishna before July 1903	328
Brief overview of Krishna	328
Krishna in Upādhyāy's <i>Sophia</i> writings	330

Incarnation and <i>avatar</i> defined and distinguished	333
Upādhyāy's view of Krishna after July 1903	338
Introduction	338
Lecture on "The True Nature of Sri Krishna"	340
lecture introduction	340
the historical assessment	343
the true nature of an <i>avatār</i>	345
the Sri Krishna <i>avatār</i>	350
Other iconic figures and symbols	352
<i>Sarasvatī pūjā</i>	352
<i>Durgā</i> and the <i>Shivaji</i> festival	356
Upādhyāy's Performance of <i>Prāyaścitta</i>	359
Meaning of <i>prāyaścitta</i>	359
Upādhyāy's 1907 <i>prāyaścitta</i>	362
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Chapter Seven: The Theological Legacy of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Seven Key Theological Contributions of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy</b>	<b>368</b>
Role of Natural Theology in the non-Christian context	368
Adaptation and use of Vedāntic language	370
Nature of God's Existence	372
Ontological Status of the world: Creation ' <i>ex-māyā</i> ' not ' <i>ex nihilo</i> '	375
Use of Śaṅkara's <i>Advaitism</i> as a Philosophical base for Christianity	378
Balance between Universality and Particularity in the Indian Context	381
The Relationship between Religion and Culture	384
<b>Suggestions for Further Research</b>	<b>388</b>
Early Influences on Upādhyāy's Thought	388
How Upādhyāy's Work was Followed up by Others	390
Official Catholic Opposition to Upādhyāy	391
Upādhyāy's Role in the Indian Nationalistic Movement	392
<b>Concluding Evaluation of Upādhyāy's Place in the History of Indian Christian Theology</b>	<b>393</b>
<b>Appendix One</b>	<b>396</b>
Hymn to the Incarnate Logos	396
Canticle to the Trinity	397

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>398</b>
Unpublished Materials	<b>398</b>
Cited Primary Sources of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy	<b>399</b>
Published Sources	<b>402</b>

**Note:** This dissertation is written in American English and conforms in style to the regulations of the University of Edinburgh and the 14th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

## **Chapter One**

### **Prolegomena**

#### **A. Introduction**

Indian Christian theology is like modern India, a fascinating mixture of both ancient and modern traditions. It is as ancient as the tradition which states that St. Thomas landed on the coast of Malabar and preached the gospel in 52 CE. It is as modern as the efforts of contemporary Indian theologians to understand and apply the gospel message to the pressing concerns and issues of our time. However, it is only in comparatively recent times that one encounters the expression 'Indian Christian theology' as a normative expression of a distinct theological tradition. While the roots of Indian Christian theology are deep in Indian soil, the first flowerings of a distinct tradition emerge in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century experiences of upper caste converts to Christianity.

Nineteenth century India witnessed the emergence of a whole new generation of Christians such as Krishna Mohan Banerjea (b. 1813), Lal Behari Day (b. 1824), Nehemiah Goreh (b. 1825), Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (b. 1861), P. Chenchiah (b. 1886), V. Chakkari (b. 1880), Sadhu Sundar Singh (b. 1889), and A. J. Appasamy (b. 1891), all committed to finding a way to relate their Christian faith to the Indian context. While their perspectives and methodology varied greatly, they shared a common concern to respond, either positively or negatively, to the Indian tradition and to assess the validity and relevance of a Christianity which had heretofore been clothed almost solely in the thought forms of European and Western Christian experience. This research, as shall be stated more fully in due course, is about the theological contributions of one of these Indian Christian theologians.

### 1. Definition of Indian Christian Theology

What exactly is meant when the proper adjective 'Indian' is placed before 'Christian theology?' For many years observers of the Indian Christian experience have commented on the alien nature of Christianity in India. Professor V. E. Devadutt has even apologized that the Indian Church "has not yet produced even a decent heresy" because so much of the experience of the Indian church was non-indigenous (either Western or Syriac).<sup>1</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneers of Indian theology sought to change this by seeking to explore a Christian theology which would be purposefully Indian in its thought forms, theological terminology, and general sensitivity to the Indian experience. The Christian encounter with Hinduism became a dominant theme and driving force in the pioneer efforts of these Indian theologians. Many of their critics accused them of seeking to Christianize Hinduism or Hinduize Christianity, but their goal, as stated by P. V. Devanandan, was "to render the Christian gospel intelligible to India, making it relevant to our present needs, emphasizing its particular adequacy to meet our circumstances, speaking God's message to us in the language of India's every-day commerce."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, a truly *Indian* Christian theology must, of necessity, relate the gospel to the religious, cultural, social and philosophical realities of India. As an Indian *Christian* theology, it must always strive to understand the meaning and significance of the Christian gospel. Thus, for the purposes of this research, Indian Christian theology is defined as a Christian theology which seeks to articulate the Christian gospel in interaction with distinctively Indian cultural and religious components.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Asirvatham, *Christianity in the Indian Crucible* (Calcutta: YMCA, 1957), 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>3</sup> This definition, with certain modifications, is largely derived from J. Lipner's "A Modern Indian Christian Response" as found in H. Coward, ed., *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism*

It is a presupposition of this research that any imported theology ultimately proves insufficient since every culture asks the ultimate questions in its own way. Furthermore, it is the legitimate right of Christians in every culture to do their own theologizing within the context of their sometimes universal, sometimes unique, questions which emerge in their own part of the world. This is clearly seen even in the New Testament as the gospel moves from its Palestinian-Jewish cradle to the new frontiers of the Graeco-Roman world. New concepts, new language, new categories and new metaphors are employed to articulate the Christian gospel.

## **2. Insufficient Research on Indian Christian Theologians**

An examination of the current research on Indian Christian theologians will reveal that insufficient research exists in any in-depth analysis of the thought of many of these key theologians. Frequently, books on Indian Christian theology contain general surveys of the various figures with little time for any in-depth analysis or reflection. Examples of these include such important and valuable works as Robin Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Kaj Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* or M. M. Thomas' *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*.<sup>4</sup> These works, while immensely helpful, do not provide the kind of analysis which many of these theologians deserve. Some initial studies are finally beginning to emerge on a few of these thinkers such as A. J. Appasamy, Sadhu

---

(New York: SUNY, 1987), 292. Lipner defines Indian Christian theology as "Christian theology and commitment seeking articulation in interaction with a specifically Indian cultural component."

<sup>4</sup> The full references for these are as follows: R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1969, 1994); K. Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969); and M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1969). Other general surveys which should be noted are the Gurukul theological research publication of *A Christian Theological Approach to Hinduism* (Madras: CLS, 1956); R. Boyd's *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church* (Cambridge University Press, 1974); and R. S. Sugirtharajah and C. Hargreaves' *Readings in Indian Christian Theology* (London: SPCK, 1993).

Sundar Singh and V. Chakkari.<sup>5</sup> However, a comprehensive analysis of many of these figures remains undone. Later in this chapter it will be demonstrated that, due to the difficulties in accessing the primary source materials, insufficient research has been advanced on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengali theologian, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay.<sup>6</sup>

There are several important reasons why Indian Christian theology has been so slow to emerge and why India's indigenous theologians have not received the attention they deserve. O. V. Jathanna in "Indian Christian Theology: Methodological Reflections" points out several of these. First, there is an historical reason. All three of the major Christian traditions already had well-developed theological systems which the Indian church inherited as a "legacy from the 'mother' churches." Second, those who propagated Christianity, at least dating back to the Portuguese involvement in India beginning at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, zealously protected the "purity of the inherited doctrines ... and did not encourage the development of context-related Christian theologies in India." Third, generally speaking, the Christian missionaries viewed Indian religions and culture negatively. This confrontational approach to the Hindu religion and Indian religious categories made the missionaries reluctant to make use of indigenous thought out of fear that it would "distort the meaning of the Christian gospel." Fourth, even Syrian Orthodox

---

<sup>5</sup>See, T. Dayanandan Francis, ed., of *The Christian Bhakti of A. J. Appasamy and Sadhu Sundar Singh: The Lover of the Cross*, both published by CLS in Madras. P. T. Thomas has published *The Theology of Chakkari* (Madras: YMCA/CISRS, 1968). While not a Christian, Keshub Chunder Sen is an important figure in stimulating Indian Christian theological reflection. David C. Scott has published an important collection of his writings entitled, *Keshub Chunder Sen* (Bangalore: CLS, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Probably the most well known introduction to Indian Christian theology is the volume published by Robin Boyd which was first published in 1969, revised in 1975 and reprinted an additional four times in 1979, 1989, 1991 and 1994. Nevertheless, in a personal letter, Boyd stated to me that in the course of his research he had been unable to access any of the primary source materials concerning Upadhyay.

and Roman Catholic churches, who have a longer historical presence in India than the Protestants, maintained official foreign languages, Syriac and Latin respectively, “which had an alienating effect on the [Indian] church and hindered them from developing context-related theologies in India.” Finally, the primary concern of Indian seminaries has long been to focus on the training of evangelists, catechists and pastors/priests, rather than theologians.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, these reasons served to not only discourage independent Christian reflection in India, but, when it did emerge, to patronizingly dismiss it or declare it heretical since it often did not conform to Western creedal formulations of theology.

This research intends to address part of this imbalance by focusing on the Indian Christian theologian Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy (1861-1907). This 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengali theologian had important insights into many perennial philosophical and theological themes which still demand the attention of the church today. Themes such as the role of natural theology, the relationship of the Absolute to the world, epistemology, and the relationship of religion to culture, are all explored in thought provoking, sometimes provocative, ways. His work was extremely controversial in his own day, resulting in an official Catholic ban on his writings. However, many of his ideas were later carried forward and his thought seems to be attracting the attention of contemporary writers in such a way that his writings are rapidly gaining recognition in theological circles both in India and abroad. Julius Lipner of the University of Cambridge calls Upadhyay “one of the most interesting, influential and

---

<sup>7</sup> I have summarized five of his seven reasons. The full discussion can be found in O. V. Jathanna, “Indian Christian Theology: Methodological Reflections,” *Bangalore Theological Forum*, vol. 18, #2, 3 (April-Sept., 1986): 60-62.

revealing figures of that part of modern India's history." Lipner, writing in the same article, refers to Upadhyay as "well known, but little researched."<sup>8</sup> K. P. Aleaz says that the writings on Upadhyay often suffer from "either misinterpretation or superficial interpretation."<sup>9</sup> This research intends to advance new and substantial research on the theology of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. The specific parameters of this research will now be set forth.

## **B. Research Proposal**

### **1. Statement of Research Question**

There are many areas of fruitful research which could be pursued in connection with Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. The scope of this study will be limited to an analysis of his theological writings. His theological writings in English began with "A Tract on the Existence of God" published in 1893 and continued to the end of the last English medium periodical he founded entitled "*The Twentieth Century*" in 1901. His Bengali medium writings which primarily appeared in journals from 1904 to 1907 will be examined only as they relate to the development of his theology.<sup>10</sup> However, this analysis will necessitate taking into consideration how his writings may have been influenced by his pre-conversion involvement with Hindu reform groups (1883-1890) as well as how his theological development, in turn, may shed light on some of his controversial actions during the nationalistic period of his life (1902-1907). The focus of this research will seek to answer the following question: How did the Bengali Catholic theologian, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, interact with indigenous Indian religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions?

---

<sup>8</sup> J. Lipner, translator, "The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race," *Vidyajyoti*, (October, 1981): 411.

<sup>9</sup> K. P. Aleaz, "The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined," *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 28, #2, (April-June, 1979): 55, 56.

<sup>10</sup> A full survey of his writings, including their availability, will be provided later on in the chapter.

Specifically, this research will explore the theological and philosophical interaction of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay with the Vedic tradition as well as the philosophical theology of Śāṅkara's advaitic Vedāntism and his later application of this to the Indian cultural context.

## **2. Brahmabandhav Upadhyay as the focus of this research**

It is vital to establish at the outset why this Indian theologian who has been so often neglected in the Indian context and who is little known in the West deserves such a detailed analysis. Several reasons will now be advanced.

First, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay is the earliest Indian Christian theologian to enter into a positive dialogue with the indigenous theological and philosophical tradition of Hinduism. He is the first Indian Christian to understand the vital role of building Christianity on an indigenous philosophical base. Just as St. Thomas Aquinas used Aristotle as a starting point for articulating Christian theology in the West, so Upadhyay believed that the Vedas and Śāṅkara should be used as starting points for articulating Christian theology in India. No other Indian Christian theologian preceded Upadhyay in this quest. This is why the noted Indian theologian, K. P. Aleaz, calls Upadhyay "the Father of Indian [Christian] theology."<sup>11</sup>

Other early Indian Christian theologians such as Krishna Mohan Banerjea (1813-1885), Lal Behari Day (1824-1894) and Nehemiah Goreh (1825-1895) had a more confrontational attitude toward the Hindu philosophical tradition. Banerjea is recognized as one of the early Indian Christian apologists. He is driven by a desire to "expose the errors and weaknesses of Hindu philosophy and to set forth the Christian

---

<sup>11</sup> K. P. Aleaz, "The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined," 77.

claims.”<sup>12</sup> His classic exposition, entitled *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, argues that Hindu philosophy is essentially atheistic. To be fair, after Banerjea’s retirement from Bishops College in Calcutta, he did begin to move toward a comparatively more positive attitude towards Hinduism, ultimately becoming an early exponent of the ‘fulfillment theory.’<sup>13</sup> However, for Banerjea, Hinduism never rises to become anything more than a ‘witness’ to Christ.

Lal Behari Day represents an important step in the emergence of an indigenous church. Despite the vehement opposition of the Scottish missionary Alexander Duff, Day proposed the idea of a separate, Indian church known as the National Church of Bengal. While the idea for the church failed, Day remained very critical of inequalities between the missionaries and the Indian ordained clergy. His followers even criticized the missionaries for “denationalizing Indian Christians and making them compound Christians.”<sup>14</sup> This began a movement which eventually, with the aid of Upadhyay’s uncle, K. C. Banerjea, formed the *Christo Samāj*, patterned after the Hindu reform group known as *Brāhmo Samāj*. This movement, while important in the overall history of the Indian church, did not result in any significant interaction with the Hindu philosophical and religious literature. It was

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>13</sup> T. V. Philip, “Krishna Mohan Banerjea and Arian [*sic*] Witness to Christ: Jesus Christ the True *Prajāpati*,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 29, #2, (April-June, 1980): 74. The ‘fulfillment theory’ was made famous later by J. N. Farquhar at the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and expounded in full in his important book, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913). While ‘fulfillment’ theology certainly represents a more positive attitude towards Hinduism than the past, (compare Banerjea’s *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy* with *The Arian Witness*) its ultimate assessment of Hinduism must be considered negative and confrontational since the goal is to demonstrate how Hinduism represents only unmet desires and unfulfilled aspirations which, in turn, find their fulfillment in Christianity. Other important later writings of Banerjea include, *Two Essays as Supplements to the Arian Witness* (1880) and *The Relation Between Christianity and Hinduism* (1881). Banerjea explores the Vedic figure *Prajapati* as a principle of self-sacrifice which foreshadows and finds its fulfillment in the self-sacrifice of Christ in Christianity.

<sup>14</sup> K. Baago, 4.

more aimed towards the elimination of imported theological divisions perpetuated by the various Christian denominations working in India.

The third important Indian Christian theologian who preceded Upadhyay is Nehemiah Goreh. Goreh remained a life long apologist against Hinduism. He attempted a careful and systematic analysis and refutation of each of the Hindu philosophical systems. His 1860 work, known as the *Ṣaddarśana Darpana*, was republished in 1862 in English translation under the title, *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems*.<sup>15</sup> Throughout his writings, Goreh articulates the Christian gospel in Western terminology and is consistently negative in his attitude towards Hinduism and Hindu philosophy.

There were other writers who wrote theologically such as Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833) and Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884). Undoubtedly, they interacted with certain aspects of the Christian theological tradition and had a more positive attitude towards the Hindu philosophical tradition, but they were not writing as Christians, but as Hindu reformers. The influence of these men on Upadhyay will be explored in more detail in chapter three.

Second, Upadhyay is deserving of attention because he was a pioneer in his application of natural theology to the Indian context. From 1881 through 1890 Upadhyay was deeply influenced by the *Brāhmo Samāj* view of what he called, Primitive Theism. This, along with his later studies of neo-Thomistic theology and philosophy, gave Upadhyay a profound appreciation for certain universally

---

<sup>15</sup> N. Goreh, *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems* (Madras: CLS, 1911). It also appeared under the English title, *A Mirror of the Hindu Philosophical Traditions* which is a more accurate translation of the original title. Goreh was a life long disputant against the *Brāhmo Samāj*, seeking to convince them of the truth of historic Christianity. Goreh's most important convert was Pandita Ramabai, the well known female *Brahmin* pandit.

apprehensible truths. His very positive view of natural theology enabled him to approach the Hindu religious and philosophical context with a positive, rather than a confrontational, attitude. Even as a Christian, Upadhyay expected continuity with his own Hindu tradition at a time when others looked only for discontinuity. This perspective enabled him to press towards new vistas in the application of natural theology to the Indian context.

Third, Upadhyay was one of the earliest Indian Christians to redefine what is meant by the term 'Hinduism.' The Western missionary perspective viewed Hinduism as a massive conglomeration of conflicting belief systems. Upadhyay helped to construct an understanding of Hinduism which was no longer tied to some form of Hindu religious beliefs, but was rather the multifarious reflections of Indian culture. Rather than identify Hinduism as a formal religion or belief system, Upadhyay understood it as a "particular intellectual and religious approach."<sup>16</sup> To use his own words, Upadhyay said that "the Hindu's Hindu-ness is not founded on any particular basis. The Hindu's Hindu-ness does not depend on any particular religious belief."<sup>17</sup> Instead, Hinduism is a reflection of Indian culture and could be (indeed, should be) used to express what it means to be an Indian Christian.

In an unusual way, both the high, philosophical Hinduism of Śāṅkara as well as the popular Hinduism expressed daily in the many villages of India find a meeting point in Upadhyay. The former enables him to develop a theology of 'higher' and 'lower' truth which when applied to the latter allows him to participate in many of the practices of popular Hinduism, while viewing them as religiously insignificant in

---

<sup>16</sup> J. Lipner, translator, "One-Centredness of the Hindu Race," 413, fn. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

an ultimate sense. As a Christian, this attitude is reinforced by the clear distinction Upadhyay made between natural and revealed theology. As this research will seek to demonstrate, a proper understanding of his theological period will shed light on many of his later actions which were misunderstood even by his closest friends. Indeed, much of his writing and activities were fueled by his understanding of himself as a Hindu Christian, meaning he was a cultural Hindu, but a Christian by faith.

Upadhyay was not the first to use the expression 'Hindu-Christian' in this way.<sup>18</sup>

However, he is the first to develop the theological significance of such an expression.

His *samāj dharma* (social Hindu) and *sādhana dharma* (religious faith) distinction is deserving of deeper reflection and analysis. His writings, coupled with his controversial address on Sri Krishna, his performance of *pūja* (Hindu worship), and the rite of *prāyaścitta* (ritual repentance for mixing with foreigners) have served to shape the debate concerning Hinduism as a broader cultural, rather than an exclusively religious, expression.

Finally, Indian Christians themselves have repeatedly called for a deeper analysis of the thought of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. Many of the leading Indian scholars believe that his thought will shed new light on many of the issues currently

---

<sup>18</sup> The earliest reference I can find to the expression 'Hindu-Christian' or one closely related to it, is found in a statement made by Mr. Owen Leonard. Reflecting the earlier, more positive attitude which Carey, Marshman and Ward (known as the Serampore Trio) had towards Hinduism, he is reported to have said to William Ward that the goal of the missionaries was to make 'Christian Hindus.' Additionally, Leonard made the following statement to a group of Indians in Dacca on 10 July 1818: "We wish you to remain Hindoos, but to become Christian Hindoos, and to leave off the worship of idols, and all sin, and to become holy men." See, E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1967), 225. The first Indian to use a similar expression dates back to the 1870's in the writings of a periodical known as *The Bengal Christian Herald*. This statement originated from the Bengali Christian Conference which, interestingly, was led by Upadhyay's uncle, K. C. Banerjea. They stated the following: "In having become a Christian, we have not ceased to be Hindus. We are Hindu Christians, as thoroughly Hindu as Christian. We have embraced Christianity but we have not discarded our nationality." See, K. Baago, 3.

facing the increasingly diverse expressions of Indian Christian theology. C. Fonseca, in his article "A Prophet Disowned," declares that if the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian Church

had heeded at that propitious time the prophetic utterances of its greatest convert (Upadhyay) and most erudite and perceptive of its thinkers, it would not today be grappling so darkly with the problem of an Indian theology or the even more elusive search for inculturation.<sup>19</sup>

Instead, the church of Upadhyay's day was unwilling to shed its foreign image and become rooted in Indian soil. However, his 19<sup>th</sup> century voice is being heard in a fresh way today as we approach the new millennium. In the words of K. P. Aleaz, Upadhyay has "indicated to us the way forward."<sup>20</sup>

### **C. Theological Methodology set within an Historical Context**

The purpose of this section is to establish a general historical overview of Upadhyay's life and then to articulate the methodology through which the research question will be addressed.

#### **1. Historical Overview of the Life of Upadhyay**

##### **a) Early life (1861-1881)**

Brahmabandhav Upadhyay was born Bhavani Charan Banerjea on February 11, 1861 in Khanyan, a small village about thirty-six miles North of Calcutta.<sup>21</sup> He was born to an orthodox Bengali *Brahmin* family, though his family had early ties with both Christianity and with the British. His father was a police inspector employed by the British and his uncle, K. C. (Kalicharan) Banerjea was a Protestant Christian, converted under the ministry of Alexander Duff at the Free Church

---

<sup>19</sup> C. Fonseca, S.J., "A Prophet Disowned," *Vidyajyoti*, (April, 1980): 194.

<sup>20</sup> K. P. Aleaz, "The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined," 77. Statements from those who have called for a renewed analysis will be developed later in the chapter in the survey of the literature.

<sup>21</sup> For general biographical information on Upadhyay's life, see, C. Fonseca, "A Prophet Disowned," 177f. or the introduction to *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay* by J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J., vol. 1 (Bangalore, UTC, 1991). The most detailed biographical account is still the work by B. Animananda entitled, *The Blade* (Calcutta: Roy and Son, n.d., probably, 1947).

Institution.<sup>22</sup> His father enrolled him in several different English schools where Bhavani received an English education. His Christian uncle, K. C. Banerjea, visited Bhavani regularly and was an early example for the young Bhavani that accepting Christ did not necessarily mean separation from Indian family and society. His uncle was not only the co-founder of the *Christo Samāj*, but later became quite active in the nationalistic movement - a path from Hinduism to Christianity to Nationalist which Bhavani would himself follow in his own life.

His mother died when he was only twelve months old, so he was raised by his paternal grandmother, Chandramoni, a devout Hindu. She raised Bhavani in the traditional Hindu manner, giving special honor to the goddess *Kālī*, the family deity. Yet, through his father's influence, he was given an English education in various Protestant schools in Calcutta. At age nine he was in "the Scottish mission school, from where he went on to Hoogly Mohsin College and finally to the Metropolitan College."<sup>23</sup>

In 1874 at the age of thirteen, he was invested with the sacred thread, an event he underwent with grave seriousness and one which marked the beginning of a lifetime of study and interest in Sanskrit. After school he would cross the Hoogly on a boat and study Sanskrit grammar and literature at Bhatpara.<sup>24</sup> He also had *Vaiṣṇava* influence. By the time he was thirteen "he had read the Bengali versions of the Hindu epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* thirteen and seven times

---

<sup>22</sup> See, J. Lipner's "A Modern Indian Christian Response," in H. Coward, ed., *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 306.

<sup>23</sup> K. Baago, 27.

<sup>24</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 12.

respectively.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, throughout his early life he became acquainted with popular Hinduism as well as the Sanskritic tradition.

In 1877 while at Hoogly College, and again in 1879 while at the Metropolitan College at Calcutta, Bhavani decided to leave school, join the army and, to use his own words, “learn the art of fighting and drive out the English.”<sup>26</sup> He thus resolved not to marry or pass his University examinations, but to “liberate India at the risk of my own life.”<sup>27</sup> Both times he set out 700 miles north-west to the capital city of the Maharaja Sindia known as Gwalior. Both trips ended in failure and disappointment. The first time he was apprehended by a relative and sent back. The second time he was utterly shaken when he was made aware that the general was one in name only and had no actual power. Bhavani returned to Calcutta broken-hearted.

Julius Lipner points out that this marks a significant turning point in Bhavani’s life. It marks the shift from “that of a dedicated, patriotic warrior or *kṣatriya*...to that of the celibate, duty minded (*dharmic*) teacher.”<sup>28</sup> Both of these ideals, however, continue to resonate within Bhavani and after 1903 the warrior once again emerges as the dominant *persona*. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the person who will be known as Brahmabandhav Upadhyay apart from these two ideals, the *Kṣatriya* warrior and the *Brahmin* teacher. These are not exclusive ideals, for it

---

<sup>25</sup> J. Lipner, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xxiii. Though the book is edited by both Lipner and Gispert-Sauch, S.J., I will henceforth use only Lipner in the notation, with the exception of footnote #75 where the full reference is repeated.

<sup>26</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>28</sup> J. Lipner, ed. xxvii.

was “typical for Bengalis exposed to western ideas to articulate their patriotism by the blending of social and religious concerns.”<sup>29</sup>

#### **b) Hindu reform period (1882-1890)**

After Bhavani’s second return from Gwalior, he entered into a new phase of his life, sparked through his meeting several of the leading figures in the Bengali Renaissance. He came into contact with leaders such as Vivekananda (known at the time as Narendranath Dutta), Keshab Chandra Sen, Priya Nath Mullick, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Pratapchandra (P.C.) Mozumdar.<sup>30</sup> Bhavani was particularly drawn to Keshab Chandra Sen. Sen (1838-1884) was the leader of the *Brāhmo Samāj*, one of the most prominent social reform movements in India. By 1882, Bhavani had become a disciple of Sen and considered him to be “the greatest Indian of his time.”<sup>31</sup> Even after Sen’s death in 1884, Bhavani continued his involvement in the *Brāhmo Samāj* as a disciple of Sen’s successor, P. C. Mozumdar. Both Sen and Mozumdar were profoundly inspired by the person of Jesus Christ. They were committed to Hindu reform, but also devoted to Christ, a combination which undoubtedly had an impact on their young disciple, Bhavani. In fact, *The Blade*, an early biography of Bhavani, recalls anecdotally how Bhavani hung up a picture of ‘Ecce Homo,’ while his colleague Nandalal Sen hung a picture of Sri Krishna.<sup>32</sup>

In August 1883, five students at Calcutta University, who were admirers of Sen’s ideals, rented a house and started a discussion group known as the Eagle’s Nest. They issued hand-written articles collected together under the title, *The*

---

<sup>29</sup> J. Lipner, “A Case Study in ‘Hindu Catholicism:’ Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907),” *Zeitschrift Fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, Heft 1 (Jan. 1988): 34.

<sup>30</sup> C. Fonseca, “A Prophet Disowned,” 177.

<sup>31</sup> A. Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1996), 58.

<sup>32</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 31.

*Journal*. Bhavani joined the Eagle's Nest as a teacher of Sanskrit. In 1886, the group began to print a fortnightly journal known as the *Young Man*. Later in the same year it became a weekly and the journal's name as well as the Eagle's Nest became known as *The Concord* and The Concord Club respectively.<sup>33</sup> Though Bhavani never wrote an article in these journals, he gained valuable lessons in journalism which would serve him well in the future. Another important influence on Bhavani during his years with The Eagle's Nest and The Concord Club was the manner of their dialogue with other religions. The Club was divided into various societies which studied not only traditional Hindu topics such as the Vedas, but also the Bible and Shakespeare. Whatever was being studied, it was learned not from critics, but by the help of its representatives; "the Vedas with the *Brāhmans*, the Koran with the Moulavis, and the Bible with the Christian Missionaries."<sup>34</sup> Father Townsend of the Oxford Mission conducted the Bible classes.<sup>35</sup> This idea of a public review to serve, in the words of the Club's prospectus, "as a fair, free and full discussion of questions of public utility"<sup>36</sup> would be reflected in each of the journals Bhavani himself would later establish.

On Sunday, 6 January 1887, Bhavani was formally initiated as a member of the *Brāhmo Samāj's* Church of the New Dispensation. One of the five founders of the Eagle's Nest was a Sindhi known as Sadhu Hirananda. After graduating from Calcutta University, Hirananda returned to Hyderabad. In July 1888, he wrote to

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>34</sup> B. Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Story of His Life*, Part I (Calcutta, 1908), 11. The date 1908 is handwritten on the front by the librarians of Goethal's Indian library in Calcutta. There is some uncertainty as to the exact date of publication, but it was soon after the death of Upadhyay in 1907.

<sup>35</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 29.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

Bhavani requesting his help in founding a Brāhmo school at Hyderabad. Bhavani and his colleague, Nandalal Sen both came to Sindh and, together with Hirananda, founded The Union Academy.<sup>37</sup> Nandalal Sen was the Superintendent, Hirananda, the Headmaster, and Bhavani the Sanskrit teacher. The school officially opened on 28 October 1888 with only six students, but eventually grew to around 2000 and was regarded by many as the best school in Sindh. Bhavani devoted himself fully to his duties as well as delivering lectures in the *Brāhmo Samāj* and even officiating at a Brāhmo marriage. He might have continued his work as a Brāhmo missionary for many years if not for an unexpected event in his life associated with the sudden illness of his father. By this time his father had been transferred to Multan in West Punjab about 400 miles northeast of Hyderabad. Bhavani rushed to Multan to nurse his father in his illness. As his father lay dying, Bhavani kept vigil by his bedside. One night, he saw on his father's bookshelf Joseph Faa di Bruno's standard work on Catholicism entitled *Catholic Belief*. Bhavani read the book into the night and, after his father's death, took the book with him back to Hyderabad. This marks the beginning of Bhavani giving more serious attention to the unique claims of Christ. C. Fonseca in his lecture "A Prophet Disowned" compares Bhavani's experience of discovering Bruno's *Catholic Belief* with the famous scrap of paper containing a *purāṇic* verse blown by the wind which lodged against Tagore's foot, or when Augustine heard those life changing words "tolle, lege, tolle, lege."<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>38</sup> C. Fonseca, "A Prophet Disowned," 178.

Upon returning to Sindh, Bhavani became completely preoccupied with what J. Lipner calls “the theological status of Christ.”<sup>39</sup> During the period from 1888 until 1890, Bhavani’s life is marked by significant intellectual shifts regarding the Person of Christ. During this time, a C. M. S. missionary named Joseph Redman “sent letters to thirty young men of Hyderabad, inviting them to accept Jesus as their Savior.”<sup>40</sup> The offer was rejected, but it did open the way for Bible classes to be offered every Sunday evening at the Union Academy. Bhavani attended these classes. In addition to these classes, Bhavani regularly visited a Rev. Heaton who convinced him of the resurrection of Christ. Eventually, Bhavani came to accept that Christ was the co-eternal Son of the Father. By 1889, he affirms in his lectures at the Union Academy that Christ is free from sin. This represents a paradigmatic theological shift for Bhavani. All other gurus and saints all over the world had been keenly aware of their own sinfulness, but not Christ. In 1889, Bhavani gave a lecture which sought to demonstrate that “Christ fulfilled the universal desire of the Hindus who had ever been looking forward to the advent of a sinless Guru (a Sat Guru, a Nishkalanka Avatār).”<sup>41</sup> Jesus was “not just an/the ideal man, but the incarnate Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, who had redeemed mankind by his life, death and resurrection.”<sup>42</sup> At this point, Bhavani embraced this position as a logical extension of the teachings of Keshab Chandra Sen and P. C. Mozumdar, rather than a movement towards Christianity *per se*. This is clearly stated later on in his very first editorial in a journal he founded in August 1890 known as *The Harmony* where he

---

<sup>39</sup> J. Lipner, ed. *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xxxi.

<sup>40</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 36.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>42</sup> J. Lipner, ed. *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xxxi.

calls for a harmonization of Christianity and Hinduism based on “the inspiration of that great man, the man of God, Keshava Chandra Sen.”<sup>43</sup>

However, in the view of many of his colleagues, his views were becoming too Christian and in May 1890 he, on his own accord, tendered his resignation to the Union Academy. This caused a great stir at the Academy. Hirananda wired immediately to Bhavani’s brother. Goethal’s Indian library archives in Calcutta still retain a copy of the moving letter sent from Bhavani’s brother Haricharan back to Hirananda:

My dear Sir,

Your telegram reached me like a thunderbolt. I could not decide for two days what I should do; hence the delay in replying. Where is Bhavani now? Kindly tell him not [to] make an unhappy brother more unhappy. Sir, kindly ask him to remember his poor old grandmother who has been shedding tears unremittingly since the death of his father.

I cannot leave Calcutta at present. My daughter’s marriage takes place very soon. I entreat you to do whatever is necessary on my behalf. Ask him not to become a convert to the Christian faith as least for some time. He should give an opportunity to me for an interview. What more can I write to you? Though I do not know you personally, I cannot conclude my letter without expressing my sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to you for the interest you have taken on my behalf.

Yours faithfully,

Haricharan Banerji<sup>44</sup>

Bhavani did agree to postpone his baptism for six months, but he had already reached the turning point. His days as a Hindu Reformer within the *Brāhmo Samāj* were over and new vistas awaited him.

---

<sup>43</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 38. See also, J. Lipner, ed. *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xxxi and 2.

<sup>44</sup> Archives, Goethal Indian Library, *varia*, volume one, 81. See also, *The Blade*, 37.

### c) Christian witness period (1891-September 1902)

Within a few months after leaving the Academy, Bhavani Banerjea began the monthly journal *The Harmony*, referred to above. Although it only lasted from August until December 1890, it represents Bhavani's transition from Brāhmoism to Christianity. As noted earlier, Bhavani understood his mission to reconcile Christianity and Hinduism as an outgrowth of the work of Keshab Chandra Sen. In the very first issue he claims not to have forsaken his Brāhmoist roots. He writes, "have we then abjured Brāhmoism? Never. We believe that God raised up Keshava Chandra Sen to preach...harmony of all religions in spirit and truth."<sup>45</sup> He insists that Sen's Church of the New Dispensation is not incompatible with "the belief in Christ as the Redeemer of fallen humanity and the Source of all righteousness."<sup>46</sup> He also is careful to avoid using the word 'Christian' since, as he writes, many people understand the term 'Christian' to refer to "a man who drinks liquor and eats beef, who hates the scriptures of India as lies . . . If we are called Christians in this sense of the term, we are not Christian."<sup>47</sup>

Towards the end of 1890, Bhavani made a brief trip to Calcutta where he attended a meeting of Protestant Christians. *The Blade* records that he addressed them saying, "I am longing to be engrafted on the vine of which you are already branches and the body of which you are members."<sup>48</sup> Thus, on 26 February 1891, Bhavani Charan Banerjea was baptized by his long time Christian friend Rev.

---

<sup>45</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 39.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* It should be noted that *The Blade* cites this article as appearing in *The Harmony* in August 1889. This is an error. It actually appeared in August 1890. Even *The Blade* states this earlier on page 38. Lipner's footnote on page one is also misleading when he says that Upadhyay edited the journal "not long after his arrival in Sindh (end of 1888)..." He arrived in Sindh in the Fall of 1888, but did not publish *The Harmony* until August 1890.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Heaton, but he did not unite with the Anglican church. Instead, during the Spring of 1891 he met with Father Salinger of the Society of Jesus and, on 1 September 1891, united with the Roman Catholic Church. The significance of this decision will be explored in more detail in chapter three, but suffice it to say that there were both theological and cultural reasons for his decision. Culturally, the Catholics represented a church which spanned East and West and was not identified with the British colonial powers, as was the Protestant church. Theologically, Catholics had a much more positive attitude toward India and the Hindu religion than was evident in the more confrontational, discontinuous approach which typified Protestants in 19th century India. On the same night as his baptism, *The Blade* records an insightful comment made by Bhavani. Asked by a census official whether he was a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, he replied, "Neither. Put me down as an Indian Catholic."<sup>49</sup> This marks an early distinction between belief and behavior (i.e., *believe* as a Catholic, *behave* as a Hindu) which would be a hallmark of his theology.

Bhavani also adopted a new baptismal name. He chose the name Theophilus. It is uncertain whether this name was chosen because it was the name of his baptismal mentor, Father Theophilus Perrig, S.J., or because of the Catholic teaching that St. Theophilus was the first writer to use the word 'Trinity.' If the latter, it shows an early love for the Trinity, an area in which he would later do some of his most important theological work.

Throughout most of 1891, Bhavani experienced sustained persecution from his Hindu friends. However, he was comforted by the conversion and baptism of two

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

of his close friends from his days at the Union Academy, Parmanand and Khemchand.<sup>50</sup> The next few years following his conversion were marked by Catholic activism. Bhavani lectured and defended his faith as well as continued his study of Catholic doctrine. During these years there was what Kaj Baago calls a “regular tug-of-war between the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans over the possession of this newly converted *Brahmin*.”<sup>51</sup> Because of this, Bhavani was overly preoccupied with Protestant - Catholic issues, while the real field which lay before him was the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism.

Another conversion occurred in 1893 which would be significant for Bhavani. Rewachand (later known as Animananda, Upadhyay’s biographer) was converted. In that same year, as a response to the wave of atheistic rationalism which was sweeping through Bengal, Bhavani published *A Tract on the Existence of God*. The publication of this tract marks the beginning of a new period of journalistic activity whereby Bhavani sees journalistic writing as the most effective way to disseminate his ideas.

In January 1894, with the full support of the Catholic authorities, he launched a monthly journal known as *Sophia*. The purpose of this Catholic journal was to engage in a comparative study of religions. He assured his readers that he would “represent faithfully the distinctive features of different religions.”<sup>52</sup> The journal lasted for five years and then after a fifteen month gap re-emerged as a weekly. The weekly *Sophia* only lasted seven months, but was succeeded by a new monthly

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>51</sup> K. Baago, 28.

<sup>52</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 56.

journal known as *The Twentieth Century*, the first issue of which appeared in January of 1901. *The Twentieth Century* continued until December of 1901.

It was in the December 1894 issue of *Sophia* that Bhavani publicly decided to go by the Sanskrit version of his baptismal name, Theophilus (friend of God). In Sanskrit it is Brahmabandhu, which he later amended slightly to the more formal Brahmabandhav. He united his baptismal name with the second portion of his family surname, Upadhyay, meaning 'teacher' or 'sub-teacher.'<sup>53</sup> Henceforth he was known by all as Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. In this same issue of *Sophia*, Upadhyay announced that he was adopting the life of a *Bhikṣu* (mendicant) *sannyāsi*. His adopting the life of a *sannyāsi* is the primary reason he gives in explanation of his assuming a new name.

Upadhyay explored many great theological themes in his writings which will be analyzed in detail, especially in chapters four and five. Nevertheless, in a general way, he interacted (both negatively and positively) with the Vedic tradition through 1896. During 1897, his focus began to shift from the Vedic tradition to the Vedāntic tradition. It is then that he began to emphasize the theological potential of Śaṅkara's *advaitic* Vedāntism as a starting point for Christian theology. Throughout all of his writings he remains committed to his original vision of reconciling Hinduism with Christianity. Specifically, he sought to reconcile neo-Thomism with Śaṅkara's *advaitism*. In an important article written in the July 1897 issue of *Sophia*, Upadhyay asks,

Can philosophy help in any way a revealed religion which is fixed and

---

<sup>53</sup> *Sophia*, December 1894, vol. 1, #12, 1. See also, J. Lipner, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xxxv. It is worth noting that in his public declaration he makes a point of saying that he no longer wishes to be known as Banerjea because it is merely an English corruption of his family surname, Vandya-ji.

all-inclusive? Philosophy can serve it not by adding to or subtracting from it any doctrine, but by making explicit what is contained in it implicitly to satisfy the demands of the developed intellect of man; by showing its unity in diversity and the necessary connection between its different parts...<sup>54</sup>

Clearly, Upadhyay sees philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae*. The next question he asks in the same article is, “Has any system of philosophy served the Christian Revelation in the above way?” His answer is an emphatic yes. He then recalls a period when human reason and the philosophy of Aristotle were considered to be in conflict with one another. Even the church sought to exclude Aristotle from Catholic institutions of higher learning. At last, Upadhyay writes,

the sovereign intellect of St. Thomas Aquinas, who fully knew the art of making the yoke of faith light and easy to human reason, adopted the Aristotelian system boldly, of course minus its errors, and made it a rational basis for the mysterious edifice of the Christian religion to stand upon, with its beauty and harmony of structure dauntlessly exposed to the gaze of friends and foes alike.<sup>55</sup>

He then draws the parallel to the Indian context. Why, he reasons, “should we Catholics of India now wage a destructive warfare with Hindu philosophy because the neo-Hindus have made it their weapon against Christianity?” Alternatively, he argues that we should “look upon it [Hindu philosophy] in the same way as St. Thomas looked upon the Aristotelian system.” He then declares,

We are of the opinion that attempts should be made to win over Hindu philosophy to the service of Christianity as Greek philosophy was won over in the middle ages...The task is beset with many dangers. But we have a conviction and it is growing day by day, that the Catholic Church will find it hard to conquer India unless she makes Hindu philosophy hew wood and draw water for her.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7, (July 1897), 7. See also, J. Lipner, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, 17.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 8; Lipner, ed., 17.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 9; Lipner, ed, 18.

This, in brief, is the theological-philosophical burden which flows from Upadhyay's pen during the years he publishes the three journals, *Sophia Monthly*, *Sophia Weekly* and *The Twentieth Century*.<sup>57</sup>

In January 1898, Upadhyay returned to Calcutta, followed shortly by his colleague, Animananda. This marks the beginning of another creative initiative by Upadhyay. He conceived of the idea of establishing Catholic-Vedānta style *maṭhas* dedicated to the training of 'Hindu-Catholic' *sannyāsi* to propagate Christianity throughout India. In the June issue of *Sophia Monthly*, he publicly called for the establishment of such a *maṭha* with an eye to many being established throughout India. This occurs at the very peak of his theological engagement with the Vedāntic tradition. Yet, at the same time, there is a growing anxiety among the Catholic authorities about his writings and proposals such as this. One year later, in January 1899, Upadhyay proudly announced the beginning of the *Kastalik maṭha* in Jubbulpore. It began quite humbly with only Upadhyay, Animananda and a novice named Shankerji. In true *sannyāsi* form, they refused to accept any payment for their teaching and were seen regularly begging in the streets of Jubbulpore.

This humble beginning was soon squashed, as the Catholic authorities, in the first few months of 1899, opposed the *maṭha* and expressed concerns about his *Sophia* writings. Upadhyay was so upset that he withdrew from all his engagements and began a forty day Lenten fast of solitude and prayer. This took place in March

---

<sup>57</sup> The monthly and the weekly *Sophia* are known as simply *Sophia*. However, each has a subtitle which, in the former, includes the word 'Monthly' and the latter 'Weekly.' Thus, for the purposes of clarity in this research I will consistently refer to the two journals as *Sophia Monthly* and *Sophia Weekly* respectively. The full title of the monthly *Sophia* is *Sophia: A Monthly Catholic Journal*. The weekly is entitled *Sophia: A Weekly Review of Politics, Sociology, Literature and Comparative Theology*. Later, from 20 October until the conclusion of the journal on 8 December, the latter is titled *Sophia: A Weekly Journal*.

and April 1899. He returned from the East determined to present his case directly to Rome, but an illness caused him to cancel his plans to go to Rome. He then decided to launch the *Sophia Weekly* and subsequently *The Twentieth Century*. Both of these journals included not only theological, but political discussions. Nevertheless, both journals were banned. The *Sophia Weekly* was officially banned on 20 September 1900, *The Twentieth Century* was likewise banned on 1 August 1901. This marks the imposed end of Upadhyay's theological writing period. The added shock of learning of the death of Swami Vivekananda in September 1902 helped Upadhyay look to the West for new direction. His trip to Rome and to England marks the beginning of a new, tragically short, phase of his life.

#### **d) Nationalistic period (October 1902-October 1907)**

On 5 October 1902, Upadhyay left Bombay on a ship bound for Rome. One would expect that the purpose of the Rome trip would be to seek to have the ban on his journalistic writings overturned. However, upon arriving in Rome there is no evidence that he contacted any of the officials involved.<sup>58</sup> The motive for the trip to England seems clearer. He wrote that upon "hearing of the death of Vivekananda in Howrah Station I determined there and then to go to England and to continue his mission."<sup>59</sup> Upadhyay reached London on 4 November, 1902. From London he traveled to Oxford where he delivered four lectures entitled: *Hindu Thought, Hindu Theism, Hindu Ethics* and *Hindu Sociology*. In March 1903, he lectured three times

---

<sup>58</sup> Upadhyay gives a detailed description of his time in Rome in his letter to the Bengali weekly, *Bangabasi* which appeared on 20 Nov., 1902. Special thanks to Dr. Julius Lipner for providing his English translations of these Bengali letters. These letters are primarily an account of his time in England. See the Bibliography for a complete list of all of Upadhyay's letters which were published in the *Bangabasi*.

<sup>59</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 108. See also, A. Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1996), 64.

at Cambridge on the topics *Nirguṇa Brahma*, *Hindu Dharma* and *Hindu Devotion*. He also entered into discussions with Cambridge authorities about the possible appointment of a lecturer in Hindu philosophy. The plan was approved provided the person was fully qualified and paid for by India. In July 1903, Upadhyay returned to India disenchanted with Western culture and a confirmed nationalist. He had written while in England that the Catholic Faith in the West seemed to be “mixed up with beef and pork, spoon and fork, too tightly pantalooned and petticoated to manifest its universality.”<sup>60</sup>

Upon his return, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the nationalistic movement. He started a new daily Bengali newspaper known as the *Sandhyā* in July of 1904 which continued until his death. Later, he published two supplements to the *Sandhyā* known as the *Karālī* and the *Svarāj*. On 7 August 1904, he officially united with the *Svadeshi* movement. The *Svadeshi* movement was a confrontational nationalistic movement which gathered great momentum as a result of Lord Curzon’s Partition of Bengal in 1905. It began as a boycott movement, but eventually roused powerful popular anger against the British presence in India. Upadhyay’s *Sandhyā* became one of the leading journalistic voices of the movement.<sup>61</sup> It was during this period that Upadhyay brought the full weight of popular Hinduism into the service of Indian nationalism. Three actions of Upadhyay are deserving of special note.

First, in July 1904, one month before Upadhyay united with the *Svadeshi* movement, he delivered a lecture in Bengali on the “*The True Nature of Sri*

---

<sup>60</sup> J. Lipner, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xlii. See also, Bengali letters to *Bangabasi*, J. Lipner, tr.

<sup>61</sup> The *Sandhyā* had an official circulation of 7,000, but readership would have been considerably higher. See, C. Fonseca, “Upadhyaya Brahmabandav: The Political Years.” *India Church History Review* (April 1981): 18-29.

*Krishna*.” This was an extremely controversial lecture which established a precedent for how Upadhyay understood the relationship between a Hindu *avatāra* and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, especially Sri Krishna.

Second, in February 1905 during the feast of *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of learning, Upadhyay permitted Hindu boys in the school that he and Animananda were running to perform *pūjā* to *Sarasvatī*. Clearly, Upadhyay regarded *Sarasvatī* as merely a cultural symbol of divine wisdom. Nevertheless, this act, coupled with a later occurrence when he allowed the idol *Shivaji* to be placed at the feet of *Durgā* during the annual *Shivaji* festival caused a complete breakdown and parting of the ways between Upadhyay and his colleague Animananda.

Third, in August 1907 just two months before his death, Upadhyay performed the Hindu penitential rite of *prāyaścitta*, whereby the recipient is socially chastised for violating *dharma*. It can be performed as merely a return to Hindu *society* after mixing with foreigners, such as Upadhyay had done in England. It can also be understood to mean a return to the Hindu *religion*. Whether Upadhyay actually apostatized from his faith or whether he was merely demonstrating the clear distinction between Catholic belief and Hindu practice is a matter which will be explored in more detail in chapter six.

During the same month as the performance of *prāyaścitta*, Upadhyay wrote some of his most scathing articles against the British. One article, for example, was entitled, “*Booming the Sedition: the Firinghi is in a Fix!*” The term ‘*firinghi*’ was a racially offensive term which Upadhyay applied regularly to the British. The police

searched the *Brāhmo Samāj* offices and arrested Upadhyay, charging him with sedition against the British government. Upadhyay refused to appear in court saying,

I do not want to take part in the trial because I do not believe that in carrying out my humble share of the God-appointed mission of *Swarāj*, I am in any way accountable to the alien people who happen to rule over us and whose interest is and must necessarily be in the way of our true national development.<sup>62</sup>

While the trial was still on, Upadhyay fell ill and was rushed to the Campbell Medical College in Calcutta where he received a hernia operation. The operation was initially successful, but he developed a tetanus infection and had a painful death on 27 October, 1907. He died at age 46 with the word '*Thakur*' on his lips, the title by which he usually referred to Christ. His body was immediately put out on the street, and about 10,000 admirers formed a procession, taking his body to the cremation grounds where he was cremated according to Hindu custom. The 'Hindu-Catholic' who had lived out in a unique way both the *kṣatriya* and *brahminic* ideals was dead. What he left behind was a remarkable collection of journalistic writings which continue to influence the debate today concerning the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity.

## 2. Theological-Historical Methodology

To thoroughly address the research question noted above, it is vital to keep in mind the theological as well as the historical dimensions of this study. On the one hand, this research is primarily a theological study. An examination of Upadhyay's theological writings and how they interact with the indigenous Hindu religious and philosophical traditions will necessitate a theological/philosophical analysis of both the neo-Thomism of Upadhyay as well as the Vedic and Vedāntic traditions with

---

<sup>62</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 168. *Svaraj* means 'home rule.'

which he is interacting. Even a cursory reading of Upadhyay's writings would sufficiently prove that he is highly motivated by theological concerns. It is, therefore, appropriate to his own self understanding that he be studied from this point of view. This study will not impose *a priori* Western theological categories on Upadhyay. Rather, the selected theological themes are those which arise out of his own writings.

On the other hand, this research intends to be sensitive to the larger historical context in which Upadhyay lived. Upadhyay is preeminently a man of his time. Upadhyay was born in the midst of the Bengali renaissance when India was under British occupation. Early in his adult life he became involved in the *Brāhmo Samāj* and, later, the nationalistic movement. To ignore the role these important historical forces played in his life would be to risk a serious misinterpretation of his writings. Thus, a pure theological/philosophical methodology will not be pursued in this research.

The theological and the historical concerns must always be kept in the proper balance. A pure historical methodology would involve a careful analysis of his later, largely non theological, Bengali writings (1904-1907) and his involvement in the drive to Indian independence. Instead, this research will focus on his theological writings (1893-1901), while being sensitive to the larger historical context in which he lived and, where appropriate, examining Upadhyay's later Bengali writings which are of particular theological significance.<sup>63</sup>

Chapter two will establish the larger historical context. The Bengali renaissance, Hindu reform movements and the relationship between Christianity and

---

<sup>63</sup> In particular, his address on Sri Krishna and his views on 'One-Centredness,' both originally published in Bengali, will be examined, among others.

Hinduism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century will be examined. Chapter three will provide the theological context to which Upadhyay speaks. This will involve an understanding of both the Vedic tradition as well as Śaṅkara's *advaitic* Vedāntism. There are several crucial theological distinctions which will be made in chapter three which are often the cause of widespread confusion, particularly in the West, regarding the *Advaita* position. It is important, therefore, to examine those aspects of Śaṅkara's teaching which are most relevant to the later theological activity of Upadhyay. Several of these crucial theological distinctions become the doorway through which Upadhyay develops a Christian perspective on *advaitism*.

Chapter four will focus on Upadhyay's earlier theological work which appears before January 1898. During this period, Upadhyay writes extensively concerning revelation, natural theology and the role of human reason in apprehending truth. It is only gradually that he comes to recognize that Śaṅkara is the Indian counterpart to the Aristotle of the West. Prior to that, he relied heavily upon human reason to establish primitive, universal theism in order to counter pantheistic tendencies in India. The influence of his pre-conversion involvement with the *Brāhmo Samāj* is evident in his optimism concerning human reason as well as his attitude towards the earliest Indian Scriptures, the Vedas.

Chapter five will explore Upadhyay's attempt to build neo-Thomism on the foundation of Śaṅkara's *advaitic* Vedāntism. This reflects a decided shift in his thinking which began as early as 1896, but is pursued with earnest from January 1898. Beginning in 1898, he attempts a systematic re-statement of the key themes in Śaṅkara's *advaitism*, each of which will be explored in chapter five. It is during this

period that he calls publicly for the establishment of the Catholic-Vedānta *maṭha*. However, at the height of his theological reflection on Śaṅkara he meets with increasing opposition from the Catholic authorities. This opposition marks the beginning of a rapid decline in the theological content of his writings.

Chapter six will analyze Upadhyay's understanding of the relationship of Christianity and Hinduism within the context of the Indian culture. It is here that Upadhyay's self understanding as a 'Hindu-Christian' or a 'Hindu-Catholic' will be fully explored. This chapter will necessarily involve both an analysis of his writings about the relationship of Christianity to culture as well as the radical way in which he applied it during the last four years of his life.

Chapters four, five and six constitute the heart of the thesis. It is in these chapters that the three most important contributions of Upadhyay's life and writings will be explored:

1. His application of natural theology to the Indian context, including his belief in primitive Theism and the role and limits of human reason.
2. Building neo-Thomistic theology upon the philosophical base of Śaṅkara's *advaitic* Vedāntism in a way similar to St. Thomas Aquinas' work which sought to build upon the philosophical base of Aristotle.
3. The meaning of the term 'Hinduism' and relationship of the Christian gospel to Indian culture.

Chapter seven will examine the key theological contributions in the writings of Upadhyay and evaluate his significance and contribution to the emergence of indigenous theological formulations in the Indian context. Suggestions for further research will also be explored.

Thus, in summary, the methodology used in this research will be an historical/theological approach which focuses on the theological writings of

Upadhyay, while remaining sensitive to the larger historical forces in which he lives. This methodology will entail a careful analysis of Upadhyay's theological writings demonstrating how he interacted with his own religious and philosophical traditions.

#### **D. Review of the Literature**

##### **1. Survey of the Primary Source Materials**

Brahmabandhav Upadhyay was engaged in various forms of journalistic writing his entire adult life. Though he was involved in the *Brāhmo Samāj* publication of *The Journal*, *Young Man* and *The Concord* periodicals, he never personally contributed an article.<sup>64</sup> However, *The Blade* says that he did contribute articles as a young *Brāhmo Samāj* worker to a periodical P. C. Mozumdar founded entitled, *The Interpreter*.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, none of these periodicals are extant.

After Bhavani's resignation from the Union Academy, but before his Christian baptism, he founded his first journal entitled *The Harmony*. The journal was published in Karachi from August to December, 1890. These are important articles since they represent his early thinking and his bridge from Brāhmoism to Christianity. Though none of these journals are extant, many of his most important writings in *The Harmony* are either preserved in typewritten form in the archives of St. Xavier's College in Calcutta or they are quoted in *The Blade*.<sup>66</sup> The extant articles cover valuable areas such as his Christology, his view of sin and his attitude towards Hindu Reformers.

---

<sup>64</sup> *The Blade* says that though Bhavani (Brahmabandhav) eventually was the manager of the periodical, "it does not contain a single line from the pen of Bhavani its manager." See, *The Blade*, 30.

<sup>65</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 31.

<sup>66</sup> Most of the quotations from *The Harmony* which appear in *The Blade* also re-appear in the volume edited by J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, S. J.

In 1893 Upadhyay published a 29 page booklet entitled, *A Short Treatise on the Existence of God*. The substance of this treatise is found in *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*.<sup>67</sup>

Beginning in January 1894 and continuing until March 1899, Upadhyay published the *Sophia Monthly*. All copies of this journal are located in the Goethal's Indian library archival collections at St. Xavier's college in Calcutta. To my knowledge, they have the only complete collection of the *Sophia Monthly*.<sup>68</sup> After a nearly three month hiatus, Upadhyay began the *Sophia Weekly* which continued from 16 June 1900 until 8 December 1900. St. Xavier's college in Calcutta contains all but three issues of the *Sophia Weekly*.<sup>69</sup>

From January, 1901 through December, 1901 Upadhyay issued the monthly periodical entitled *The Twentieth Century*. As far as I am aware, no complete collection of this journal is extant. However, various copies can be found in the British Library in London as well as extensive quotations from other issues in *The Blade* as well as the Lipner and Gispert-Sauch, S.J. collection.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to these regular periodical publications, there are several single publications by Upadhyay worth noting. Two of the most important are, *The Infinite and the Finite*, and Upadhyay's personal translation of a portion of the *Pañcadaśī*, an

---

<sup>67</sup> J. Lipner, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, 94-103.

<sup>68</sup> On two occasions in 1898 and one in 1899, the last year of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay published one edition, yet counts it for several months. For example, in *Sophia* vol. 5, the April-June and the November-December issues are combined. In *Sophia* vol. 6, the very last issue is a combined February-March issue.

<sup>69</sup> Missing issues are 30 June, 08 Sept and 13 Oct. There are two occasions where a weekly issue is skipped entirely, 22 Sept. and 06 Oct. On 1 October 1896, Upadhyay, along with several other friends, founded a fortnightly known as the *Jote*, although it is unlikely if Upadhyay contributed articles to the journal since he was primarily responsible for *Sophia*. The Lipner-Sauche collection contains the article which appeared on the first page of the first issue. See, Lipner, ed., 13.

<sup>70</sup> There are five copies of *The Twentieth Century* which I have been unable to locate. They are the March, Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. issues.

important Vedāntic teaching manual. Both of these are found in the Goethal's collection referred to earlier. Upadhyay also made regular contributions to other contemporary publications such as the *Bangabasi*, the *Sāhitya Samhitā* and the *Bombay Catholic Examiner*. Goethal's library also contains four bound volumes of archival notes, Upadhyay letters, and personal reminiscences, the most important of which have been published in *The Blade*.

In July 1904, Upadhyay founded his final journal known as the *Sandhyā*, which continued until his death. This periodical also published two addendums known as the *Karālī* and the *Svarājī*. These were all Bengali medium periodicals. These writings are not theological, but popular and nationalistic.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps the most significant of his Bengali writings are his *Hindujātir Ekniṣṭhatā* and *Śrīkṛṣṇatattva*. These are important and confirmations of views expressed earlier in life regarding Hinduism, not as a belief system, but as an approach or intellectual methodology endemic to Indian culture. Both articles have been translated into English, though only the former is available through its publication in *Vidyajyoti*.<sup>72</sup> As with all of Upadhyay's writings, most of them are scarcely available.

## 2. Accessibility of Primary Source Materials through Recent Publications

### a) The theological writings of Upadhyay

In 1979 K. P. Aleaz wrote, "Brahmabandhav Upadhyay's theological writings

---

<sup>71</sup> J. Lipner who has translated much of the Bengali material has stated that these writings "give no indication, in content or style, that a Christian is writing." See, J. Lipner, ed., *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xlii. Nevertheless, though many of these writings do not contain explicit theological writings, they reveal his theological understanding of Indian culture and the Christian gospel. Indeed, the content of these articles and the actions during the last four years of Upadhyay's life have caused several scholars to assume that he renounced his faith. For an example of this interpretation see, A. Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, 65.

<sup>72</sup> J. Lipner, tr., "The One Centredness of the Hindu Race," 410-422.

are not yet easily accessible to us.”<sup>73</sup> Twenty-one years later a similar published statement was made by Julius Lipner in which he described them as “scarcely accessible.”<sup>74</sup> Even today, despite a growing interest in Upadhyay, this assessment could still be made. The most significant change since 1991 is the publication by Julius Lipner and Gispert-Sauch, S.J. entitled, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, vol. 1*.<sup>75</sup> This volume represents the first of a projected two volume publication which should contain most of Upadhyay’s English writings. The first volume is arranged topically, so it may be difficult for some readers to fully appreciate the development of and changes in Upadhyay’s thought.<sup>76</sup>

The translation of many of the most important Bengali writings of Upadhyay is still being completed prior to the publication of volume two. Dr. Julius Lipner kindly agreed to provide this researcher with pre-publication access to his English translations of Upadhyay’s most important Bengali writings. The publication of this volume by the United Theological College in Bangalore still awaits several years before it will be available to the public. Thus, even with the publication of this first volume the majority of his writings are still only available through archival work. The present writer travelled to Calcutta and received special permission to access the archives of the Goethal’s library at St. Xavier’s College. Since photocopying of

---

<sup>73</sup> K. P. Aleaz, “*The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined*,” 55.

<sup>74</sup> J. Lipner uses the expression “scarcely available” in his October 1981 article in *Vidyajyoti*, 411. This has been helped in part by the first volume of *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, but this accounts for only about one-third of his entire literary output.

<sup>75</sup> J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J., eds., *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, vol. 1 (Bangalore, UTC, 1991).

<sup>76</sup> This is the critique of Dr. T. Jacob Thomas who, in reviewing the book, made the following observation: “The arrangement, however, fails to appreciate the significant paradigmatic shift in Upadhyay’s thinking which Kaj Baago described as the ‘decisive turning point,’ [which] happened around 1898 soon after the return of Swami Vivekananda, his friend, from the West.” See, *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 35, #2 (1993): 87.

archival material is not permitted in Goethal's library, hundreds of pages of material had to be electronically scanned in order to successfully bring this material out of India for theological analysis.

### **b) Biographical material on Upadhyay**

Soon after the untimely death of Upadhyay, his friend and colleague B.

Animananda, decided to write a biography of his life. The result was two small volumes: the first, a 76 page biography entitled, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Story of his Life*; the second, a 63 page book entitled, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Study of his Religious Position*. Both were published in 1908. In 1928, a German scholar produced what is by all accounts a polemical biography which sought to justify the Jesuit hostility toward Upadhyay and their successive bans on each of his periodicals.<sup>77</sup> This work, by A. Vāth, is entitled *Im Kampfe mit der Zauberwelt des Hinduismus*.<sup>78</sup> Animananda was so outraged at Vāth's treatment of Upadhyay that he decided to publish a fuller, more comprehensive biography. The new work, and certainly the most detailed biography currently available is entitled, *The Blade: The Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*. This 220 page work, published in 1947, is essentially biographical with some theological reflections woven into the overall treatment.<sup>79</sup> A newer, more critical, study of his life and

---

<sup>77</sup> Animananda says in his preface to his larger, more critical edition, *The Blade*, that he could not accept Vāth's treatment of Upadhyay because of the "strange interpretation he gives to the facts."

<sup>78</sup> A. Vāth, S. J., *Im Kampfe mit der Zauberwelt des Hinduismus* (Berlin and Bonn: Ferd. Dummlers Verlag, 1928).

<sup>79</sup> The book does not contain a date of publication. However, Robin Boyd in *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, asserts that the book probably came out in 1947. Due to the untimely death of Animananda, the book was actually brought to completion by P. Turmes, S. J. It is worth noting that in 1963 P. Turmes, S. J. published a 79 page biography of B. Animananda entitled, *A Teacher of Genius: B Animananda*. By virtue of the close relationship Animananda and Upadhyay had for so many years, the biography contains additional material about the life of Upadhyay.

thought has been written by Julius Lipner of the University of Cambridge, though the precise date of publication is, as yet, unknown.<sup>80</sup>

### c) Theological analysis of Upadhyay's writings

To date there have been no publications which have sought to analyze Upadhyay's theological writings in any comprehensive way. The Lipner/Gispert-Sauch collection is not a theological analysis, but rather a collection of his primary source writings organized according to certain theological themes. The book is prefaced by a brief biographical survey, but the book does not contain any analysis other than the occasional footnote to clarify certain points. Furthermore, there are no known doctoral dissertations written in English on Upadhyay.<sup>81</sup>

Several general surveys of Indian Christian theologians have been published which contain a chapter on Upadhyay. The three most important were all published in 1969. They are as follows: Robin Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (chapter five, 23 pages), M. M. Thomas' *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (chapter five, 11 pages) and Kaj Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (chapter three, 24 pages).

A number of important articles have been published in scholarly journals about Upadhyay. The two most important articles are, "The Theological Writings of

---

<sup>80</sup> In a personal conversation with the author in June of 1997, Dr. Lipner indicated that Oxford University Press has provisionally agreed to publish the volume, but the projected publication date is probably the Fall of 1998. In a preview of the table of contents, it is clear that the book approaches Upadhyay's life historically, visiting each of the four periods of his life: Path to manhood (1861-1882), Brāhmo years (1883-1891), Hindu Catholic years (1892-1901) and nationalistic years (1902-1907).

<sup>81</sup> This statement is based on a personal conversation with Julius Lipner of Cambridge. To my knowledge, the only recent dissertations written about Upadhyay's life or theological work are as follows: First, Christian LaVarene has written *Swami Brahmbandhav Upadhyay (1861-1907) Theologie Chretienne et pensee du Vedanta* in 1993 at the University de Provence. This thesis did not have access to a large portion of the primary source materials. Secondly, Father Gispert-Sauch from Vidyajyoti in Delhi told me that there is another dissertation written in Flemish which is present in the Jesuit research library at Vidyajyoti.

Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined” by K. P. Aleaz, and “The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay” by G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J. Some articles have focused on his theological contributions, others have been more interested in his contribution to the nationalistic movement. The best in the former category is the article by K. P. Aleaz noted above, whereas the latter is probably best exemplified by Ashis Nandy in *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* and the recently published article, “Brahmabandhab Upadhyay und die Befreiung von den Feringhees durch den varnasramadharma: Gedanken eines fruhen Svadesi-Revolutionars” by Von [sic] Hans Harder.<sup>82</sup>

### 3. Authorship

#### a) Unsigned articles

Establishing the authorship of Upadhyay’s writings is not as self-evident as it may appear on the surface. In approaching the question of authorship, it is important to understand the nature of periodicals in 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. The spread of English

---

<sup>82</sup> The following is an alphabetical bibliography of the most important articles written about Upadhyay.

Aleaz, K. P. “The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined.” *IJT* 28 (April-June, 1979): 55-77.

Fonseca, C. “A Prophet Disowned.” *Vidyajyoti* (April 1980): 177-194.

———. “Upadhyaya Brahmabandav: The Political Years.” *India Church History Review* (April 1981): 18-29.

Gispert-Sauch, G. “The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay.” *Religion and Society* 19:4 (Dec., 1972): 60-79.

Harder, Von Hans. “Brahmabandhab Upadhyay und die Befreiung von den Feringhees durch den varnasramadharma: Gedanken eines fruhen Svadesi-Revolutionars.” *ZDMG* 146:2 (1996): 492-506.

Kukhopadhyay, U. “Upadhyay Brahmabandhav (1861-1907).” *The Hindustan Standard* (25 October, 1959).

Lipner, J. “A Case Study in ‘Hindu-Catholicism:’ Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907).” *Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* (Jan., 1988:1): 33-54.

———. “On ‘Hindutva’ and a ‘Hindu-Catholic’ with a Moral for our Times.” *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 5 (1992): 1-8.

———, tr. “The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race.” *Vidyajyoti* (October, 1981): 410-422.

Martindale, C. C. “Do We Think About India?” *The Clergy Review* (London) 10:2 (1935): 265-271.

Thomas, P. T. “Adaptation of Catholic Monasticism in India,” *The Catholic Herald of India* (9 and 16 Feb., 1921) Calcutta: 112-113, 132-133.

Passing references to Upadhyay in other articles would be too numerous to mention.

and vernacular periodical material, especially in Bengal, will be explored in chapter two. Suffice it to say, Upadhyay's journal typified many of the small periodicals of the time. While no paid circulation figures for any of Upadhyay's journals are available<sup>83</sup> one can assume that, even if the numbers were small, the readership was quite large as a single copy of a journal might be read by an entire village.<sup>84</sup> These journals were typically small and did not have a group of staff writers.<sup>85</sup> Throughout his life, Upadhyay put out various journals with very little editorial assistance. It was the custom of Upadhyay, as editor, not to sign his name to any article he personally wrote. This was Upadhyay's practice in both the *Sophia Monthly* and the *Sophia Weekly*. Since he was the editor and did most of the writing it is assumed that the article is his unless otherwise noted.<sup>86</sup> When Upadhyay inaugurated *The Twentieth Century*, he specifically stated in the first issue that he was changing his policy and that "every article on any religious question will go forth with the *imprimatur* of the writer's name."<sup>87</sup> However, this commitment seemed to raise difficulties because there were times when Upadhyay was responsible for several articles in a single issue. Rather than sign them all 'B. Upadhyay' as was his new custom, he adopted

---

<sup>83</sup> J. Lipner, ed., *Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay*, xxxiv, fn. 29.

<sup>84</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1967), 453.

<sup>85</sup> A. Sen, commenting on the *Bangabasi* office states that "the staff was marginal and the work staggering; one prospective subscriber who dropped in at the office, found the Editor to be the same man who had been earlier distributing handbills at College Square." The *Bangabasi* was a Bengali journal contemporary with Upadhyay and is cited by A. Sen as typical of the small scale Bengali journalism of the period.

<sup>86</sup> One obvious exception to this was when he wrote his "Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant" challenging her to a debate. This was signed and dated. See *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 9. Another exception is found in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #12 (Dec., 1896): 13. The article, entitled, "Western Science Justifying Occultism: Mrs. Besant's Lecture Dissected" is signed, "U. B.," presumably representing Upadhyay Brahmabandhav. Articles which are not by Upadhyay may be appended with the initials of the contributor, the full name or, sometimes simply designated "contributed" as in *Sophia Monthly*, Vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 9.

<sup>87</sup> J. Lipner, G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J., *Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay*, 38. In the February issue he again makes reference to admitting "signed articles." See, Lipner, 39.

the *nom de plume*, *Narahari Dās*.<sup>88</sup> This occurs, for example, in the very first issue where two articles are already penned by Upadhyay, so a third article receives the name *Narahari Dās*. There are other times even in *The Twentieth Century* where articles remain unsigned, some of which Julius Lipner argues are clearly by Upadhyay.<sup>89</sup> Finally, there are a few examples where the signature is more cryptic and it is difficult to know for certain if it is, in fact, Upadhyay. Some examples are the signatures “A Roman Catholic,” “Quondam Brāhmo” (a former Brāhmo), “An Indo-Catholic” and “a ‘Hindu-Catholic’ Nationalist.”<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> The evidence that Upadhyay uses *Narahari Dās* as a *nom de plume* is derived from *The Blade* where Animananda records a handwritten remembrance by Miss Agnes Khemchand who lived in Calcutta under the same roof as Upadhyay from April 1900 until April 1901. During this time she asked Upadhyay what was meant by the *nom de plume*, *Narahari Dās*. She remembers him saying that “it meant servant of God-made-Man,” 86. Upadhyay also refers to Christ as ‘*Narahari*’ in his writings, lending further support to the idea that he would perceive himself to be the servant of ‘*Narahari*,’ i.e. *Narahari Dās*. See, in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July 1897) the article “Are we Hindus?” where Upadhyay states that “all that is noblest and best in the Hindu character is developed in us by the genial inspiration of the perfect *Narahari* (God-man) our pattern and guide.” See also, vol. 5, #7 (July 1898): 102. The most famous reference of Upadhyay to Christ as “*Narahari*” is his well known Sanskrit Hymn to the Word Incarnate published in *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan. 1901): 6-8. Father Gispert-Sauch, S.J. also states that “he often assumed the pen-name of *Narahari Dās*.” See, G. Gispert-Sauch, “The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay,” *Religion and Society* 19:4 (Dec., 1972): 78, fn. 1. J. Lipner has also acknowledged that *Narahari Dās* is “Upadhyay’s *nom de plume*.” See, J. Lipner, tr., “The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race,” *Vidyajyoti* (Oct., 1981): 410, fn., 1.

<sup>89</sup> J. Lipner, tr., “The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race,” 411, fn., 1.

<sup>90</sup> Examples of these signatures can be found in the following articles: For the signature, “A Roman Catholic” see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #5 (May, 1895): 15; vol. 2, #6 (June, 1895): 13; vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 16; vol. 3, #9 (Sept., 1896): 14. The September 1896 article is particularly significant because in that issue Upadhyay implies that he is, in fact, the author of these articles. He states, “Our readers will remember that some letters appeared last year in the columns of this journal over the signature of “A Roman Catholic,” in which the writer conclusively proved from certain texts which were mostly of Brāhmo and Unitarian choice, not of his own, that Christ claimed to be an eternal, omnipotent, omniscient Person of equal majesty with the Father. The arguments adduced in those letters remain unchallenged to this day, though the Editor of the *Unity and Minister*, a Brāhmo organ, with whom the controversy first arose, after making one or two nominal efforts at discussion, ended by roundly abusing the Editor of *Sophia* (15). Clearly, the implication is that the editor of the *Sophia* and the author of the series signed “A Roman Catholic” are one and the same. For “Quondam Brāhmo” see, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 2, #12 (December 1895): 15. The article is entitled, “Brāhmo Rationalism and the Divinity of Jesus Christ.” For “An Indo-Catholic” see, *Sophia Weekly*, New Series, 1:21 (17 November, 1900): 6. For “A ‘Hindu-Catholic’ Nationalist” see, *Sophia Weekly*, New Series, 6:18 (27 October, 1900): 7. He is also referred to editorially as “A Christian Sannyāsi.” See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #6 (June, 1896): 15.

**b) Use of *noms de plume***

D. Killingley has analyzed the use of pseudonymity in the writings of Ram Mohan Roy and determined that it served a two-fold purpose. First, it enabled the writer to “multiply himself into a stage army of supporters,” creating the illusion that many people were endorsing a particular viewpoint. Secondly, Roy adopted a pseudonym as a new *persona* in order to enter into dialogue with his opponents from several points of view. Through the use of different personae, Roy could speak to an issue as a Christian or a Hindu or a Sikh.<sup>91</sup> Roy’s use of his favorite *persona*, Rām Doss, (‘servant of Rāma’) is strikingly similar to Upadhyay’s favorite pseudonym *Narahari Dās* (‘servant of God-made man’), though in Upadhyay’s case there is no evidence that he used this name to express a viewpoint other than his own.<sup>92</sup>

In both the *Sophia Monthly* and *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay occasionally created fictionalized characters who raised questions which were, in turn, answered by another fictionalized character who is obviously the voice of Upadhyay. The most important example is a series of articles which appeared in *Sophia Monthly* between March and May 1898. Upadhyay creates an ongoing dialogue between two characters ingeniously named *Philalethes* (lover of truth) and *Catholicus* (well instructed Catholic layman). *Catholicus* is clearly the voice of Upadhyay.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> D. Killingley, *Rammohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition* (Newcastle: Grevatt and Grevatt, 1993), 119.

<sup>92</sup> Roy used ‘Rām Doss’ as a voice for traditional Hinduism, with an eye to place “the Christian doctrines of the incarnation and the Trinity under the same condemnation as Hinduism.” See, D. Killingley, *Rammohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition*, 124.

<sup>93</sup> The Greek term *Philalethes*, lover of truth, is equivalent to the Sanskrit *Satyakāma*, a fictionalized inquirer in the Upanishads (*Chandogya* IV.4.1f, *BĀU* VI. 3.11-12). Lipner also notes that “*Satyakāma* is the name of the interlocutor who expounds the truth among the “*Dramatis Personae*” of Krishna Mohan Banerjea’s *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy*.” See, J. Lipner, ed., *Writings of Brahmanbandhav Upadhyay*, 68, fn. 14. Significantly, Lipner also points out on page 69, fn. 15 that Upadhyay’s use of *Catholicus* is ironic because it is only a few weeks after the publication of this article that questions begin to be raised by the Apostolic Delegate to India, Mgr. L. Zaleski questioning whether or not Upadhyay was qualified to set himself up as a spokesman for the Catholic

However, none of this is out of the ordinary since the use of a pseudonym, a *nom de plume*, and even cryptic references to the true author are not uncommon features in 19th century Bengali journalism.

### **E. Conclusion**

The specific research question and the parameters of this research have now been set forth. The historical, theological and philosophical background necessary to appreciate Upadhyay's larger context will now be examined in chapters two and three.

---

church. Perhaps this is why Upadhyay purposefully defines *Catholicus* as a "well-instructed Catholic layman." Another example of Upadhyay setting up a fictionalized character is in *Sophia Weekly* (29 Sept. 1900) where Upadhyay responds to "A Worshipper of Reason."

## Chapter Two

### The Historical Context

#### A. Introduction

19th century Bengal into which Upadhyay was born was one of the most creative, dynamic periods of Indian history. Indeed, several forces converged in Bengal, creating a unique interaction between eastern and western history, thought and culture. On the one hand, new ideas from the West were challenging the most basic assumptions of life on the sub-continent. On the other hand, the western stimulus also created several new response movements which demanded a more positive assessment of the indigenous cultural, theological and philosophical heritage of India. Upadhyay's birth into a *Bhadralok* family, his western education, his early involvement with the *Brāhmo Samāj*, his wrestling with Śāṅkara's *advaitism* in a Christian context, and later, his untiring efforts on behalf of the nationalistic movement, all testify that he was a product of his time and cannot be properly understood apart from it.

By the mid 19th century, Calcutta was setting the pace for change throughout India. In the earlier part of the century, especially after the 1830's, activity in Bengal was primarily focused on internal socio-religious reform. It was not until after 1880 that Bengal began to focus on political reform and nationalistic self-assertion. This period from the 1830's onward is often referred to as the Bengali Renaissance. Therefore, this chapter seeks to explore these historical forces which so uniquely converged in 19th century Bengal. Rather than provide a general survey of what is in itself a major field of study, this research will focus on four aspects of the Bengali Renaissance which are of particular relevance to the study of Upadhyay. First, there

will be an analysis of how the western and Hindu forces converged to create new dynamics in Bengal such as the *Bhadralok* middle class and the Anglicist-Orientalist debate, both of which profoundly influenced not only Upadhyay's upbringing, but his journalism, including the late shift in his writing from an English to Bengali medium. This analysis will include a survey of the vital role of the printing press and the use of propaganda in expressing ideas and shaping opinion in 19th century Bengal. Second, this chapter will examine the governing beliefs and aims of the key Hindu Reform movements with which Upadhyay was involved either as a member before his conversion or in written disputations through his journalism. Finally, an analysis of Catholic and Protestant attitudes towards Hinduism and Indian culture, which are important features of Upadhyay's own self-understanding as a 'Hindu Catholic,' will be explored.

## **B. Bengali Renaissance**

### **1. Western Education and the Emergence of the Bengali *Bhadralok***

Western education represented a powerful new stimulus for the diffusion of western ideas into India. There were two main sources of western education in mid 19th century Bengal, the Christian missionaries and the British administrators. The first source of western education came from Christian missionaries who were eager to preach Christianity in India. Particularly after the Charter Act of 1813 lifted the ban on missionary activities, schools began to spring up throughout the British territorial possessions in India. William Carey (1761-1834) and the Serampore Trio (Carey, Marshman and Ward) are widely regarded as the most important missionary presence in early 19th century Bengal. Carey diligently applied himself to the mastery of Indian languages such as Sanskrit, Bengali, Marathi and Hindi. By the

time of Carey's death in 1834, the entire Bible had been translated into six languages, the New Testament into 23 more and various portions were available in about ten other languages. Perhaps the most important translation was his Bengali New Testament in 1801. Carey has been widely recognized not only as a competent linguist, but as the father of Bengali prose.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of Bengali prose became a vital link in the debut of vernacular newspapers and periodicals in Bengal which gave voice to growing Hindu and nationalistic identities. Joshua Marshman was a teacher and was instrumental in starting a chain of schools throughout Calcutta and other surrounding cities. The missionary trio opened Serampore College in 1819 with the stated purpose of instructing "Asiatic, Christian, and other youth, in Eastern Literature and European Science."<sup>2</sup> William Ward was responsible for the printing press in Serampore, making not only the publication of biblical materials possible, but also works of western scholarship, providing a further stimulus to Bengali thinking. Thus, the Serampore Trio reflected many of the forces which were at work on a larger scale in the Bengali Renaissance.

Two important principles which guided the missionary philosophy of the Serampore Trio are relevant to this research. First, their decided conviction in the ultimate harmony between scientific and Christian truth. M. A. Laird in "William Carey and the Education of India" writes that for Carey,

the study of Nature gave an insight into the ways of its Creator, while the Book of Genesis was an accurate textbook of the early history of the world. As God manifested himself openly in all branches of

---

<sup>1</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1967), 178. Carey is responsible for the first comprehensive grammar of Bengali and the preparation of an 80,000 word dictionary which set the standard for the emergence of Bengali prose. See, S. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), 264. I am also indebted to J. Brockington's unpublished manuscript, entitled, "William Carey's Significance as an Indologist."

<sup>2</sup> S. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 265.

learning, the study of them would be an effective preparation for the Gospel; and just as theology was vindicated by science, so were ethics by experience.<sup>3</sup>

For the Serampore missionaries, there was no barrier separating the sacred from the secular or the religious from the scientific truth.

Secondly, the Serampore Trio were Orientalists, not Anglicists, i.e. Carey and his colleagues were committed to using the vernacular to bring about cultural revitalization and to communicate the Christian gospel. Carey published the first Sanskrit Grammar (1806) and labored tirelessly to convince the government to give Sanskrit and Bengali equal status with Persian and Urdu, the official languages at that time. Marshman started the *Dig Darshan* which was the first Bengali journal dedicated to the dissemination of scientific and historical knowledge among college students in the vernacular.<sup>4</sup>

The most noted missionary to arrive in India after the Charter of 1813 was the Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff (1806-1878). Duff embraced a 'superior West-inferior East' attitude. Thus, he tended to emphasize the vast differences between East and West, not indigenous points of contact, as did the Serampore missionaries. As an Anglicist, Duff did not utilize the Oriental languages. Duff's vision was to focus on giving the influential, upper-castes of India an English education. He was convinced that English medium education was the key to the disintegration of Hinduism. Defending his ministry to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1835 Duff declared, "The English language, I repeat it, is the lever

---

<sup>3</sup> M. A. Laird, "William Carey and the Education of India" *Indian Journal of Theology* 10 (1961): 98.

<sup>4</sup> T. Jacob Thomas, "Interaction of the Gospel and Culture in Bengal" *Indian Journal of Theology* vol. 36, #2 (1994): 46.

which, as the instrument of conveying the entire range of knowledge, is destined to move all of Hindustan.”<sup>5</sup> Duff was convinced, therefore, that the establishment of English schools and colleges was essential to the propagation of Christianity in India, and ultimately, the undermining of Hinduism. In the same address to the General Assembly, Duff insisted that through the medium of English “the communication of useful knowledge will demolish the ancient learning and religion of Hindustan.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, in 1830 Duff founded the General Assembly’s Institution with five boys enrolled initially, but which quickly grew to nearly 200.<sup>7</sup> Duff’s English medium educational efforts were soon copied by a whole new generation of missionaries such as John Wilson, Robert Noble and Stephen Hislop who, among others, all founded Christian Colleges.<sup>8</sup>

The second source of western education was through the influence of European merchants and administrators. Administratively, it was prudent to teach English to enough natives to facilitate the effective administration of the growing territorial acquisitions. Warren Hastings, who became governor of Bengal in 1772, had encouraged not only the cultivation of the Indian tongue (he was himself fluent in Bengali), but also the learning of English by the Indians. However, the floodgates

---

<sup>5</sup> A. Duff, *The Church of Scotand’s India Mission or A Brief Exposition of the Principles on which that Mission has been conducted in Calcutta* (Edinburgh: John Waugh, printer to the Church of Scotland, 1835), 20. This is an archival pamphlet recording an address given by Duff at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on May 25, 1835.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 20. In another writing, Duff compared English education in India to the “preparing of a mine” which would someday “explode and tear up” Hinduism from the “lowest depths.” G. Thomas, *Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1950* See, Verlag: Peter D. Lang, 1979, 43.

<sup>7</sup> S. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 275. In eighteen years of work, Duff only recorded thirty-three converts, but they were all from high-caste backgrounds and were very influential. Several became ordained ministers such as Krishna Mohan Banerjea, Gopinath Nandi and Lal Behari Day.

<sup>8</sup> A few notable examples are as follows: Wilson College in Bombay (1832), Christian College in Madras (1837), Hislop College in Nagpur (1844), St. John’s College in Agra (1853), Noble College in Masulipatam (1841).

were opened under the pragmatic administration of Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) who ardently defended the dissemination of English education. When Macaulay joined Bentinck in Calcutta he was entrusted by the British Parliament with assessing the direction of English education in India. Macaulay admitted that he had “no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic,” yet he wrote, “that all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, it was decided that the annual £10,000 which the Act of 1813 had set aside for the purpose of “education” should be utilized to teach western education to Indians in the English language rather than Oriental learning in the indigenous tongues. Ironically, it was British education which ultimately provided the stimuli for Indian nationalism by “arming India’s elite with the words in which to call for it.”<sup>10</sup> Lord Elphinstone, governor of Bombay, had correctly predicted that English education would be “our high-road back to England.”<sup>11</sup> This began a process whereby a new class of young Bengalis began to learn English. Later, Lord Dalhousie was responsible for founding the three great (largely English medium) universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, all in 1857.

After the Charter Act of 1813, not only did the Crown set aside £10,000 per annum for education, but India was opened up to a wide range of private educational endeavors by missionaries and utilitarians alike. By 1885, the British government

---

<sup>9</sup> S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 215. Alexander Duff was influential in helping to shape the Government’s attitude about the merits of English instruction and their more negative view of the indigenous languages.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

had either established or given financial assistance to 1,474 schools, and Christian missionaries had established or maintained 1,628 schools.<sup>12</sup>

Sir Charles Wood, the British Secretary of State, issued a Despatch in 1854 which dramatically increased the funding and involvement of Britain in English education in India. The aim was to train reliable civil servants, promote efficiency and to diffuse European ideals throughout the sub-continent. Wood stated the following in the Despatch of 1854:

We must emphatically declare that the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe; in short, of European knowledge... We look, therefore, to the English language and to the vernacular languages of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Both the British colonialists and the missionaries, despite their different goals, shared common assumptions about the usefulness of education. However, there was an important division between the Orientalists and the Anglicists regarding the best medium for education and the diffusion of western and/or Christian knowledge. The Orientalists and missionaries like Carey “differentiated between English education and Indian cultural change, while the Anglicists viewed English education as the only

---

<sup>12</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2, 431.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 205. Macaulay’s 1835 Minute on Education is most revealing. He stated concerning the 1813 Act, that “we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic...I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.” See, B. N. Pandey, *A Book of India* (Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1991): 62, 63.

way to affect cultural change in India.”<sup>14</sup> Both Anglicists and Orientalists, despite their differences, continued to play a vital role in the Bengali Renaissance.<sup>15</sup>

The 1813 grant of £10,000 was raised to over £2,000,000 by 1856-57. It was distributed to five Indian provinces, but nearly half of the entire amount was spent in Bengal.<sup>16</sup> The result was a significant investment in English education and westernization. This investment continued unabated, indeed, even increasing, despite the 1857 Mutiny, because the British were convinced that the key to ruling India was to win over the upper-caste Indians.

During this period, great numbers of upper-caste Bengalis began to move to Calcutta to advance themselves through British patronage. It was then that the “language of Clive, Hastings, and Cornwallis was taught to the Roys, Basus, and Tagores of Bengal.”<sup>17</sup> In short, there emerged a whole new class of English speaking Bengalis who came to be known as the “*bhadralok*,” i.e. the “cultured people.”<sup>18</sup> “The *bhadralok* were ‘cultural brokers’ - mediators of Britain to India just as the British were mediators of the West to them... [resulting in] a genuine synthesis which was socially, religiously and later politically transformative.”<sup>19</sup> They learned English and then opened English medium schools all over Calcutta. They became the ‘cultural brokers’ who “explained India’s regeneration by referring to western

---

<sup>14</sup> T. Jacob Thomas, “Interaction of the Gospel and Culture in Bengal,” pt. 2, *Indian Journal of Theology* vol. 37, #2 (1995): 58.

<sup>15</sup> The closing of Fort William College in 1831 and the transfer of its library to the Asiatic Society seemed to symbolize the victory of the Anglicists over the Orientalists, but the Orientalists, many of whom never even visited India (e.g. Max Müller) continued to play a vital role in India.

<sup>16</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2, 205.

<sup>17</sup> S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 209.

<sup>18</sup> J. Lipner, “A Modern Indian Christian Response,” 293 as found in Howard G. Coward, ed., *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*



notions of patriotism, freedom, equality and the use of western instruments of progress (the press, the debating society, the committee, etc.)”<sup>20</sup>

Upadhyay came from a *bhadralok* family, attended English medium schools and for most of his life was involved with debating societies, teaching in schools and using his journalistic skills and the printing press to advance his ideas. In every way, Upadhyay epitomizes the creative *bhadralok* agency of 19th century Bengal.

## **2. British Orientalism and the Re-discovery of India's Past**

The second major force which converged in 19th century Bengal was a more positive assessment of the indigenous cultural, theological and philosophical heritage of India. The spread of English education opened the doors of the Indian mind to western science, literature and history. A whole new world of ideas flooded into Bengal. These new ideas challenged many traditional Hindu customs such as *suttee*, infanticide, child marriages, untouchability, *purdah* (female seclusion), *devadāsī* (temple prostitution), the caste system and the prohibition against foreign travel.

At the same time, well known Orientalists such as W. Jones, H. T. Colebrooke and E. Burnouf were discovering a noble, golden Hindu past of which every Indian could be proud. W. Jones, for example, argued that in antiquity the Indians were “splendid in arts and arms, happy in government; wise in legislation and eminent in various knowledge.”<sup>21</sup> The Sanskritic tradition of literature and philosophy became the subject of careful western scrutiny. For the first time, knowledge of the Veda, the Upanishads, and the great Vedāntic philosophers such as Śaṅkara (788-820 C.E.) and Rāmānuja (1055-1137 C.E.) were being read by western

---

<sup>20</sup> J. Lipner, “A Case Study,” 36.

<sup>21</sup> D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance, the Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773 - 1835* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), 39.

scholars on a wider scale. It was discovered, on the one hand, to be of profound learning and insight; and, on the other hand, completely devoid of any of the degrading practices and images which were current within Hindu practice. Thus, the scholars called for a return to the golden past and challenged, what they assessed to be, the current state of decline and decadence.

Throughout the writings of the Orientalists, the present ignorant, superstitious, degraded religious practices were contrasted with the classical past of the great Sanskritic tradition. J. Lipner points out that westernized Bengalis widely accepted this contrast, which was further substantiated by the Christian missionaries.<sup>22</sup> The Hindu religion was on the defensive, but before the 19th century was out, it would rise from its slumber, revive itself and go on the offensive, asserting the spiritual bankruptcy of the West and the invigorating vitality of the *Sanātana Dharma* (eternal instruction).<sup>23</sup> Upadhyay is a part of this earlier literary, socio-religious reappraisal, as well as the later nationalistic emergence which sprang from the same root.

In response to these forces of change from the West ranging from Utilitarians to Humanist Radicals to Evangelical missionaries, there arose a number of Hindu

---

<sup>22</sup> J. Lipner, *A Case Study*, 34. It should be remembered that this assessment of a classical Indian past was made before the discovery of the Indus Civilization in the early twentieth century. The Orientalist, Alexander Dow, specifically criticized the British for "not investigating the learning and religious opinions which prevail in the countries of Asia." Significant for this study is his particular illustration whereby he distinguishes the religion of the Vedānta with the "religion of the vulgar." See, Marshall, 126.

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the most important symbolic expression of this dramatic shift was Swami Vivekananda's famous address to the Chicago Parliament of World Religions. Vivekananda is responsible for articulating the myth which even today is widely accepted in the East and the West, namely, the dichotomy between the *spiritual* East and the *material* West. Swami Vivekananda wrote in 1899, "on one side, is the independence of western societies based on self-interest; on the other, is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Āryan society... Of the West, the goal is individual independence, the language - money making education, the means - politics; of India, the goal is Mukti, the language the Veda, the means, self-renunciation." See, deBary, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 654-656.

reformers in Bengal who sought to purify the existing abuses and degrading aspects of Hinduism by declaring that they were later, spurious additions. In its place they advocated a re-discovery of India's glorious past.

The idea of re-discovering or recapturing a glorious past is the primary reason why this period is known as the Bengali Renaissance. However, this Renaissance did not occur in a vacuum or without the influx of fresh ideas from the West. This is why it is more accurate to speak not only of a *renaissance*, but also of an *enlightenment* in 19th century Bengal. Utilitarian and Evangelical thought united to shape the cultural policy of British India. The British shouldered the "white man's burden" to civilize the Indians and enlighten them on the superiority of western ideals and civilization. In the words of Indian historian P. Spear, the movement to westernize India was "based on the double belief that it was good for India and that she would accept it as soon as she awoke to the light of the modern world."<sup>24</sup> In the process, new ideas such as egalitarianism, the emancipation of women, rationalism towards religious beliefs, the superiority of human reason, and a general spirit of critical inquiry energized the young Bengali intelligentsia.

These Bengali youth avidly studied "the rationalism of Descartes and Spinoza, the skepticism of Hume, the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mills, the transcendentalism of Kant, the positivism of Comte,"<sup>25</sup> and then used what they learned to challenge the existing dogmas of their own society, religion and culture. A whole new literary output began as Indians began to produce works of poetry, drama

---

<sup>24</sup> P. Spear, *Oxford History of India*, 717.

<sup>25</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1967), 589.

and fiction which emphasized human dignity and egalitarianism. Individual rights were asserted over traditional family and caste conventions. Central to this whole process was the special role which the printing press played in encouraging the exchange of ideas in 19th century Bengal.

### 3. Press and Propaganda in 19th Century Bengal

Although printing in India dates back to the Portuguese presence in the 16th century, it was the 19th century which witnessed the widespread use of the press to produce books, pamphlets and journals in the major cities of India as an instrument to shape public opinion and influence governmental policy. The Serampore missionaries were largely responsible for the emergence of Bengali prose, but it received substantial development and growth through several decades of Bengali writers. A wide range of Bengali newspapers and periodicals were published to discuss important topics. Many of the earliest Bengali prose newspapers were religious in nature and were either published directly by Serampore or were being produced under their watchful eye. The earliest Bengali weekly was most likely the *Samācar Darpan* (mirror of news) edited by Joshua Marshman's son, John Clark Marshman.<sup>26</sup> Soon, however, Orthodox Hindus and a whole range of Hindu reformers discovered the power of Bengali prose and the press to propagate their ideas and shape opinion.

Ram Mohan Roy, the Hindu reformer, wrote regularly for the Bengali weekly paper *Sambād Kaumudī* and later started a journal himself known as the *Brahman Sevadhi*. Its purpose was to defend Hinduism against the attacks of the Christian

---

<sup>26</sup> There is an alternative claim that the *Bangal Gazeti* edited by Gangakishore Bhattacharya may have preceded the Serampore weekly by a week or two, but no copies of this weekly are extant. What is known is that Gangakishore learned his trade from the Serampore missionaries.

missionaries.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, several periodicals such as the *Bangadarshan*, under the editorship of the artist and novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, emerged which sought to inquire into the ancient Hindu past and relate it to new ideas in a sensitive way. Bankim represents one of the ablest attempts “to reconcile a reasoned critique of Hinduism enjoined on them by their modern education and a natural pride in one’s own tradition and culture.”<sup>28</sup> These journals brought a remarkable expansion in the knowledge of Hindu religious thought and culture to the masses. The mass appeal of these journals challenged the Orthodox idea that lower caste Hindus should not have access to Vedic knowledge. The *Ārya Samāj* publications and the *Bangabasi Press* were particularly criticized for this. The *Ārya Samāj* will be examined later in the chapter, but the *Bangabasi* was “instrumental in popularizing low-priced, popular editions of Hindu religious texts.”<sup>29</sup>

A. Sen in *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal* calls the periodical *Bangabasi* “the summit [in] the tide of social reaction in 19th century Bengal.”<sup>30</sup> The *Bangabasi* gradually became the most widely circulated vernacular periodical in Bengal with a distribution of over 20,000 copies per week by 1889. The paper managed to combine popular sensationalism and Hindu conservatism, which helps to explain why the paper reveled in Upadhyay’s supposed return to the Hindu fold after his performance

---

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>28</sup> A. Sen, *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 85. By the 1870’s there were at least six Bengali periodicals devoted completely to science and promoting scientific literature. This volume by A. Sen is an excellent study of several of the key figures who effectively used the press to spark Hindu revival in 19th century Bengal. The anti-Brāhmo sentiment of the *Bangabasi* is evident, for example, in the satirical comparison of Keshab Chandra Sen to “a vendor of assorted sweets,” reflecting his universalistic appeal beyond Hindu Vedism, 260.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 224. As mentioned in chapter one, *The Blade* mentions that while Upadhyay was in England “he wrote regularly for the orthodox Hindu newspaper, *Bangabasi*, *The Blade*, 191. These letters have only recently been translated into English by J. Lipner in preparation for the publication of volume two of *The Writings of Brahmanbandhav Upadhyay*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 236. The *Bangabasi* was incredibly cheap at only two paise per copy, or Rs. 2 annually.

of *prāyaścitta*.<sup>31</sup> After 1890, the *Bangabasi* became increasingly political in its orientation and became one of the voices in helping to shape public sentiment concerning the growing nationalistic movement. Unfortunately, due to charges of sedition against the paper, the *Bangabasi* office destroyed all of its own copies of past issues. Today there are no known extant copies. One feature which was common in these Bengali periodicals is that they often interacted with one another with claims and counter claims. Clearly, Hindu revivalism was a multifaceted movement with many voices, yet all finding common cause in the usefulness of the printing press.

Beginning in 1861, India witnessed the emergence of a wide range of English newspapers. Several of the papers were of British origin and were used to communicate with the Anglo-Indian community. The *Times of India*, started in 1861, the *Pioneer* in 1865, and the *Statesman* in 1875, are just three examples of many which could be cited.<sup>32</sup>

Another important expression of the Indian press were English language newspapers and periodicals owned and edited by Indians. The *Hindu Patriot* (1853), the *Bengalee* (1868) and the *Indian Mirror* (1861) were all important voices in promoting Indian sentiment and exposing injustices in the British rule. During and subsequent to the Revolt in 1857 the Indian press, both English and vernacular, played an increasingly important role. Normally, circulation was not large but most papers were read by many people and the influence was significant enough to cause

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>32</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2, 451. Printing was first introduced into India by the Portuguese in 1550.

ongoing concern by the British. It has been noted that from the mid 19th century until about 1875 the focus of most of the Indian newspapers was on social and religious reform, with a generally positive attitude towards the British presence. After 1875, the newspapers become more nationalistic and increasingly negative towards the British presence.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately this led to the passage of the controversial Vernacular Press Act of 1878 which restricted freedom of the press and armed the British government with the power to punish anyone who was deemed guilty of libel against the British rule. It is this act which eventually led to the arrest of Upadhyay and two charges of sedition at the close of his life.

### **C. Hindu Reform Movements**

The forces of the Bengali Renaissance and enlightenment converged to produce a group of Indians who were proud of their inherited tradition, but accepted the Orientalists' assessment of the current degraded state of Indian life, religion and culture. Through self-criticism they sought to create a new synthesis between the golden past and the new western traditions which were sweeping across Bengal. Several important Hindu Reform movements emerged, each with its own distinctive view of what constituted the 'golden past,' each with its own distinctive view of how the new synthesis should appear. Nevertheless, all in their own way shared certain common assumptions about the need to reform Hinduism through some kind of creative synthesis of the past with the present. Upadhyay was a member and teacher in the *Brāhmo Samāj* and later interacted extensively with the writings of Hindu reformers and Theosophy. Thus, a brief introduction to the main Hindu Reform

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 453, 454.

movements is essential to a proper understanding of the historical context in which Upadhyay lived and wrote. Four of these movements will now be examined.

### 1. Derozio and *Young Bengal*

One of the earliest reform movements to arise in Bengal centered around the young Anglo-Indian, Henry Louis Derozio (1809-1831). At the age of 20 he was already a lecturer in Literature and History at Calcutta's Hindu College. A brilliant teacher, he passionately inspired the young intelligentsia of Bengal. He founded a group known as *Young Bengal*. This group, mainly drawn from students at Hindu College, represented a radical abandonment of cherished religious taboos and caste, scandalizing Hindu orthodoxy at every point. One report commented that they challenged Hindu orthodoxy by "cutting their way through ham and beef and wading to liberalism through tumblers of beer."<sup>34</sup> Their willingness to embrace a wide range of liberal ideas demonstrates how far some groups were prepared to go to revitalize Indian society and culture. *Young Bengal's* followers, known as Derozians, attracted many Hindu youth who would later be the pioneers of Indian Christian theology. For example, Krishna Mohan Banerji and Lal Behari Day were both members of *Young Bengal*. They were attracted to Alexander Duff's strong Anglicist, pro-western message and became Christians through his influence. This sheds light on their later critical attitude towards Hinduism.

The reasons why *Young Bengal* is important for this research are three-fold. First, they represent an almost naïve fascination with western ideas, thought and culture which is easily forgotten in light of the emergence of nationalism in the same

---

<sup>34</sup> E. W. Madge, *Henry Derozio: The Eurasian Poet and Reformer*, new edition (Calcutta: Metropolitan Book Agency, 1967), 41.

century. Second, albeit unintentional, the radical ideas of *Young Bengal* caused a conservative Hindu response as reflected in the emergence of several anti-Derozian newspapers like *Sambād Prabhākar* and *Samāchar Chandrikā*.<sup>35</sup> This helps to highlight the relationship between the western enlightenment and the Hindu renaissance. These two forces often stimulated one another. The new, challenging ideas and thoughts from the West caused many Hindus to go back and scrutinize their own history and heritage more closely. Third, Derozio and his followers, despite their fascination with western ideas, were intensely patriotic. They sowed the seeds of a nationalism which would transcend Hindu sectarianism and unite the nation, or at least Bengal, around new ideas forged from the blending of East and West. Reformers such as Iswar Chandra Vidyasager (1820-1891) emerged. He was not only one of the foremost Sanskrit scholars in Calcutta, but was equally committed to western rationalism and humanistic ethics. Influenced greatly by the Derozians, Vidyasagar re-interpreted the Upanishads from a humanistic point of view in order, in his view, to rescue Hinduism from its degraded state. Thus, the Derozians foreshadowed other Bengalis such as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda who later would articulate a form of neo-Vedānta which would “reinterpret Hindu theology in terms of social ethics.”<sup>36</sup>

Derozio’s untimely death from cholera at age 22 soon muted the force of this movement. By the 1840’s many of *Young Bengal’s* followers had joined another contemporary, and far more influential, reform movement known as *Brāhmo Samāj*.

---

<sup>35</sup> T. Jacob Thomas, “Interaction of the Gospel and Culture in Bengal,” part 1, 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 2, 54.

R. C. Majumdar has commented that Derozio “has a just claim to share” the honor of the “creator of Modern Bengal” along with Ram Mohan Roy.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. Ram Mohan Roy and the *Brahmā Sabha/Brāhmo Samāj*

The Bengali Brahmin Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)<sup>38</sup> was one of the earliest Indians to attempt this synthesis of the Hindu past with modern western thought. The bulk of his work, both in Bengali and in English, sought to harmonize the *Advaita* Vedānta of Śaṅkara with the new western ideas concerning reason, natural theology and the moral teachings within Christianity. To appreciate the significance of Roy’s writings, three themes will be developed briefly. First, his understanding of theism and natural theology; second, his assessment of the Hindu past; and third, his view of Christ.

### a) Theism and natural theology

Roy’s first theological work was a Persian treatise named *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin* (*Gift to Monotheists*) which was addressed to the Muslim community. The writing is important because it introduces a pair of contrasting theological themes which persist throughout Roy’s writings. He distinguished between certain ideas which are common to all religions (i.e. a natural theology), and the irreconcilable differences which divide religions based on habits and customs learned from the historical religious traditions. While Roy did not refer to the latter as ‘revealed’ theology, he did accept that scriptural revelations can aid in the pursuit of truth. Thus, Roy came quite close to adopting the familiar 19th century distinction

---

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 1, 48.

<sup>38</sup> The exact date of Ram Mohan Roy’s birth is unknown. The literature is divided between those who cite 1772, 1774 and 1780. Roy’s tombstone in Bristol, erected 100 years after his death, states 1774. However, the 1772 date is the official date accepted by the *Brāhmo Samāj* and is accepted here.

between natural and revealed theology. The preface to the *Tuhfat* announces the two themes:

Turning generally towards One Eternal Being, is like a *natural* tendency in human beings and is common to all individuals of mankind equally. And the inclination of each sect of mankind to a particular God or Gods, holding certain especial attributes, and to some peculiar forms of worship or devotion, is an excrescent quality grown (in mankind) by *habit and training*. What a vast difference is there between nature and habit!<sup>39</sup>

For Roy, there is a universal natural tendency to worship God, whom he defined as a "Being who governs the whole universe." He cited both the external witness of nature (stars, planets etc.) as well as the internal witness or "innate faculty" which provides a universal testimony to God's existence and nature.<sup>40</sup> Roy wrote that "the rational worship of the God of nature arises from the benevolent design of the universe and the human capacity to observe nature and to infer the existence of its author and governor."<sup>41</sup> Thus, a universal, monotheistic belief in the absolute unity of God who is omniscient, omnipotent and formless became a central teaching of Roy.

#### **b) Assessment of the Hindu past**

Roy is the first Indian to use the word 'Hinduism' to refer to a distinct Indian religious heritage, rather than the more commonly used term 'Hindu' which was originally an ethnic term but had gradually served as a religious term as well.<sup>42</sup> For someone to call themselves a 'Hindu-Christian' in the 19th century carried a different

---

<sup>39</sup> D. Killingley, *Rommohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition* (Newcastle: Grevatt and Grevatt, 1993), 46, emphasis mine.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 65. Roy is impressed with the Theistic Argument from Design. Killingley comments that Roy's description of the universe is "less reminiscent of Śāṅkara than of Paley's analogy of the watch which seeks to show the universe as a mechanism from whose design we can infer the existence of its designer, God," 71.

<sup>42</sup> Roy first uses the expression 'Hinduism' in 1816. He also uses the phrase *hindur dharma*.

connotation than it does today. A 'Hindu-Christian' would not have been equated with a "Christian-who-practices-Hinduism," since the term 'Hindu' carried a more thoroughgoing ethnic connotation throughout the 19th century. Clearly, Roy's use of the term 'Hinduism' reflects the rise of missionary activity and the growing interest in the particular beliefs of the Hindu peoples in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Roy distinguished between an historic and true Hinduism which he embraced, and the current, false Hinduism which he rejected. By accepting this distinction of the Orientalists, Roy foreshadowed many important leaders such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1834-1894), Vivekananda (1863-1902) and even Gandhi (1869-1948).

Roy's studies of the Sanskrit tradition convinced him, in consonance with the Orientalists, that the Upanishads taught the unity and omnipresence of God:

I have urged in every work that I have hitherto published, that the doctrines of the unity of God are real Hinduism, as that religion was practiced by our ancestors, and as it is well known at the present day to many learned Brahmins.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Roy regularly denounced Hindu polytheism, image worship and Brahminical religion as antithetical to the true spirit of Hinduism. In contrast, Roy claimed that the "real spirit of the Hindoo Scriptures...is but the declaration of the unity of God."<sup>44</sup> Since God is eternal, omnipotent and omnipresent, he cannot be identified with any human-made image which is bound in time and space. Thus, Roy describes image worship as

the source of prejudice and superstition, and of the total destruction of moral principle, as countenancing criminal intercourse, suicide, female murder, and human sacrifice.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> D. Killingley, *Rommohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition*, 63.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

Indeed, he believed that image worship was in direct conflict with the original teaching of the Upanishads. In his introduction to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Roy writes:

The public will, I hope, be assured that nothing but the natural inclination of the ignorant...joined to the self-interested motives of their pretended guides, has rendered the generality of the Hindoo community (in defiance of their sacred books) devoted to idol worship.<sup>46</sup>

Polytheism and image worship violate human reason, and the Brahminical monopoly on religion robbed true Hinduism of its universal character.

### c) Attitude to Jesus Christ

Roy was not only impressed by the teachings of the Upanishads, he was equally impressed with the moral teachings of Christ. Roy wrote,

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 others which have come to my knowledge.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to Roy's belief in a minimal *theology* which all religions share, he also believed in a universally apprehensible minimal *morality* which is found in all religious traditions. Thus, Roy freely quoted from the primary sources of Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism to demonstrate how each religion, through reason, arrived at a consensus regarding a common code of moral behavior.<sup>48</sup>

However, Roy's belief that salvation comes through worshipping a God attainable

---

<sup>46</sup> D. Killingley, *Rammohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> M. C. Parekh, *Rajarshi Ram Mohan Roy* (Rajkot, 1927), 34. See also, R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi, ISPCK, 1994), 19. See also, Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 32. For a more detailed analysis of Roy's treatment of the Upanishads, see D. H. Killingley, Rammohun Roy on the Vedānta Sūtras, *Religion* 11 (1981): 151-169. One of the best general overviews of Roy is still, M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (London: SCM Press, 1969).

<sup>48</sup> There is some uncertainty concerning whether this universally perceived theology and morality is articulated to aid in the renewal of Hinduism or if it is a foreshadowing of the work of his eventual successor, Keshab Chandra Sen who sought to transcend Hinduism all together.

through human reason and that morality is likewise universally apprehensible stood in direct contradiction to the teaching of Hindu *adhikāra* as well as the Baptist missionaries in 19th century Bengal.

In 1820 Roy published *The Precepts of Jesus*.<sup>49</sup> The purpose of this book was to cull out of the gospels the ethical core of Jesus' teachings and demonstrate its universal appeal, especially when reconciled with the monism of the Upanishads. The Asiatic Christ whom Roy spoke of was not the second person of the Trinity, but a teacher of morality and one who knew the true unity of God's nature. He sought to emphasize a higher, and purer form of Christianity which was originally consistent with the Vedas, but, like Hinduism, had become corrupt over time. As might be expected, the Serampore Trio strongly opposed the publication of *The Precepts of Jesus*. Their view, which was made clear through extensive published disputes with Roy, was that his extraction of the moral teachings of Jesus out of their gospel framework was unwarranted and dangerous.<sup>50</sup> They were extremely concerned that Roy would provide a Deistic half-way house between rejecting Hinduism and accepting Christianity. This concern seemed justified as Roy found increasing acceptance from the Unitarians and the rationalists and even succeeded in converting William Adam, a Protestant missionary in Calcutta, to his unitarian teachings.

---

<sup>49</sup> The full title was *The Precepts of Jesus, The Guide to Peace and Happiness, extracted from the Books of the New Testament, ascribed to the four evangelists*.

<sup>50</sup> These disputes primarily took place in the pages of the Serampore journal *The Friend of India*. In *Friend of India* #20 (Feb. 1820) J. Marshman said that the *Precepts of Jesus* "may greatly injure the cause of truth." This began a series of public disputes. Roy published a response entitled, *An Appeal to the Christian Public in Defence of the Precepts of Jesus by a Friend of Truth*. Marshman followed with two publications which, in turn, received further responses from Roy. For a full account see, M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, chapter one.

In summary, there are three fundamental ideas which govern Roy's theology. First, a monotheistic belief in the unity of God which is universally attainable through natural revelation. Second, the confidence in reason as the means to purify religion of superstition and unnecessary miracles and mysteries. Third, the affirmation that morality is the essence of true religion.<sup>51</sup>

#### d) *Brāhmo Samāj*

In 1828, Roy established an Indian Society known as *Brahmā Sabha*, later renamed *Brāhmo Samāj*, which would become one of the most important Hindu reform movements of the century. The trust-deed of the first *Brāhmo Samāj* house stated that the purpose of the society was

for the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable, immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe, but not under and by any other name, designation or title, peculiarly used for, and applied to any particular being or beings by any men or set of men whatsoever.<sup>52</sup>

The early meetings of *Brāhmo Samāj* included "the reading of passages from the Upanishads and the singing of specially composed theistic hymns in Sanskrit and Bengali."<sup>53</sup> Roy, unlike his successors, never sought to explicitly break away from Hinduism, but rather to restore it to its original purity. However, many of his views certainly lent themselves to a wide variety of interpretations, which partly explains why, in time, the *Brāhmo Samāj* became fragmented into several different factions, each claiming to carry on Roy's original vision.

---

<sup>51</sup> M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, 2. It is important for the development of Upadhyay's later theology to recognize the influence of Roy, especially in Roy's attempt to construct a natural theology on the authority of reason. A full treatment of Roy would also reveal that his monotheistic leanings were influenced by Islam as much as by Christianity. Indeed, it seems that Roy shares many ideals in common with Sikhism.

<sup>52</sup> F. Lillingston, *The Brāhmo Samāj and Ārya Samāj* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1901), 51. The charter goes on to explicitly bar any worship of images.

<sup>53</sup> R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 21.

Roy's interest in giving Europeans his view of the Hindu tradition led him to travel to England in 1830. He received wide recognition while in England, but died in Bristol in 1833 before his return to India. The death of Ram Mohan Roy, like that of Derozio two years earlier, represented a blow for the society. However, unlike *Young Bengal*, the *Brāhmo Samāj* entered into an even more creative period, first under the leadership of Debendranath Tagore and, more significantly, under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884).<sup>54</sup>

Under the leadership of Tagore, the society moved away from its emphasis on western rationalism and unitarianism, and more toward an emphasis on the contributions of the Vedic past. This is indicative of the tension experienced by all the Hindu Reform groups as they sought to "bring out of their storehouses things old and new." Keshab Chandra Sen joined the society in 1857 and soon became its leader. Under his leadership, the *Brāhmo Samāj* became more sensitive to the devotional tradition of the past, and the society became far more Christian in its orientation. The direction of the movement put great stress between those who wanted a more Hindu orientation and the more radical group who wanted to transcend any particular religion in order to encompass them all.

Matters came to a head in 1864 when the *Brāhmo Samāj* split into two factions over the issue of wearing the sacred thread. Debendranath favored a stronger connection with Hinduism and a respect for caste divisions. Debendranath's faction became known as *Ādi Brāhmo Samāj*. Keshab's party broke away and was renamed *Brāhmo Samāj of India*. After the division, Sen made even more radical

---

<sup>54</sup> The *Brāhmo Samāj* sought to make a broader appeal than *Young Bengal*. In fact, one of Keshub Chandra Sen's earliest tracts was against the "irreverence" of *Young Bengal*.

changes towards Christianity, and included the study of the Bible and Christian literature. By the time Upadhyay became involved in *Brāhmo Samāj of India* he was exposed to a brand of reform which was distinctly Christian in its orientation. It is to the theology and unique contributions of Keshab Chandra Sen that we now turn.

### **3. Keshab Chandra Sen, the *Brāhmo Samāj*, and The Church of the New Dispensation**

The key theological contributions of Sen for the purpose of this research may be summarized under three headings: Hindu theism, Trinitarian theism, and the Church of the New Dispensation.

#### **a) Hindu Theism**

In examining Sen's theology, it is important to recognize the significant shifts which take place over his lifetime. This is particularly true of his understanding and articulation of theism. In Sen's earlier writings he openly accepted the Orientalists' distinction between the glorious Hindu past and the degraded Hindu present. When Sen visited Edinburgh in August 1870 he was invited to speak at Queen Street Hall.

In his lecture he made the following observation:

Today India sits in a state of abject humiliation at the feet of modern nations...But yesterday, what was she? Though in her infancy in relation to modern civilization, she was in ancient times the parent of a more grand and sublime civilization. The ancient Hindus had a better literature, better scientific ideas, and better and purer social and domestic customs and manners...they had no idolatry, no idol worship, no caste distinctions to fetter them, no priest-craft to keep them down in a state of spiritual destitution and slavery. My countrymen in ancient times were famous for their philosophy and even theology. But today, India's face is changed.<sup>55</sup>

Accepting this distinction, Sen extolled the glorious monotheism of the Vedic past.

He argued that the Vedas did not teach nature worship or polytheism, but that

---

<sup>55</sup>S. D. Collet, ed., *Keshub Chunder Sen's English Visit* (London: Strahan and Co., 1871), 490.

throughout many passages in the Vedas the “One True God was worshipped under different names.”<sup>56</sup> At this point, his theology was similar to that of Ram Mohan Roy. Sen, as Roy did earlier, understood true Christianity to be a “Unitarian Christianity,” and Sen states emphatically that the “word Trinitarian I, of course, do not like.” Instead, he refers to himself as simply an “Indian Theist.”<sup>57</sup> In the following decade, however, Sen would accept a qualified understanding of Trinitarianism and he would seek to transcend the Hindu Vedic past as the basis for his theism and instead secure his theistic concept through human reason which, in his view, lay at the base of all religious traditions.

Sen’s eventual abandonment of the Vedas as the strongest foundation for theism opened the door for the emergence of the Vedic oriented *Ārya Samāj* which will be discussed later in the chapter. His clear theological shift is also observed in the wide range of new periodicals which emerged to counter Brāhmo influence. These periodicals claimed that Sen and his Society were guilty of “spiritual defection and denationalization.”<sup>58</sup> The *Bangabasi*, discussed above, satirically compared Sen’s eclecticism to “a vendor of assorted sweets.”<sup>59</sup>

#### **b) Trinitarian Theism**

Sen joined the *Brāhmo Samāj* in 1857 when he was only 19 years old. As a member, he was taught that the highest expression of God was that of the

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 492. In another speech to a Congregational meeting at Brixton on 3 June 1870, Sen argues for two different kinds of pantheist: The early Vedic pantheist who saw the One True God behind everything in creation and the modern Indian pantheist who mistakenly sought to personalize God and, failing, slipped into idolatry.

<sup>57</sup> For Roy’s statement that true Christianity is a “unitarian” Christianity, see M. Carpenter, ed., *Last Days in England of Rammohun Roy* (London: Trübner and Co., 1866), 83. For Sen’s views, see S. D. Collet, ed., *Keshub Chunder Sen’s English Visit*, 310f. Sen’s comment on Trinitarianism and his self-designation as an “Indian Theist” is found on pages 311 and 309 respectively.

<sup>58</sup> A. Sen, *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal*, 85.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

undifferentiated Absolute Brahman. Ram Mohan Roy had been a diligent student of Śaṅkara and found in him a valuable ally against polytheism and image worship. However, Roy did not accept Śaṅkara's distinction between two levels of Brahman, but used the terms Brahman and Īśvara interchangeably. For Roy the Absolute Brahman was the Lord and Creator who is the object of worship.<sup>60</sup> This left the door open for Sen to re-evaluate his understanding of Jesus Christ and the whole relationship between *nirguṇa Brahman* (God without qualities) and *saguṇa Brahman* (God manifested with qualities). The result was that Sen moved away from his earlier unitarianism which he had inherited from Roy and closer to a Triune conception of the Supreme Reality.

In later Vedāntism, the Absolute Brahman (*nirguṇa*) is described as *sat* (reality), *cit* (intelligence) and *ānanda* (bliss). The doctrine of *saccidānanda* derived from these three words is often considered the most complete expression of Brahman that can be given. Keshab Chandra Sen identified the Christian doctrine of Trinity with the Hindu doctrine of *saccidānanda*. Perhaps his most well known lecture on this is the one given in 1882 entitled, "That Marvelous Mystery - the Trinity."

In this lecture Sen called the Trinity a doctrine which is "more asiatic than European." He declares that "though it comes to us a hard and solid principle of western thought, massive and colossal, we readily recognize in it the gorgeous colors of the East and the sweet poetry of Oriental devotion."<sup>61</sup> Sen did not embrace an eternal Trinity, but one which had evolved through several stages. The Supreme Brahmā of the Vedas and the Vedānta dwelled hidden and unmanifested. Then, "the

<sup>60</sup> D. H. Killingley, "Rammohun Roy on the Vedānta Sūtras" *Religion* 11 (1981): 155, 156.

<sup>61</sup> D. Scott, ed., *Keshub Chunder Sen*, (Madras: CLS, 1979), 220.

silent Divinity” or “Eternal Mind” began to speak, resulting in His word, the *Logos*. Sen affirmed the ongoing evolution of the *Logos*. The Son, or *Logos*, appeared as the apex of humanity and the crown of all the lesser manifestations which have occurred over history. Sen declared that “having exhibited itself in endless varieties of progressive existence, the primary creative Force at last took the form of the Son in Christ Jesus.”<sup>62</sup> Christ represents the apex of humanity as well as the means through which all of creation can share in divinity and “be carried heavenward.” Sen continued,

The problem of creation was not how to produce one Christ, but how to make every man Christ. Christ was only a means, not the end. He was ‘the way.’ The Lord of heaven and earth came into this world, and manifested Himself in the son, that He might go through the whole length and breadth of humanity, illuminating and sanctifying all generations of mankind with the radiance of Divinity.<sup>63</sup>

Christ is not God in the ontological sense, eternally one with the Father. Rather, Christ was a *created* Son, i.e. a man with “God super-added to his nature.” Coming very close to Arianism, Sen affirmed that the humanity of Jesus continued to be humanity, but that “divinity is engrafted upon humanity.”<sup>64</sup> Christ has a perfected human nature because of his affiliation with the Divine nature.

It is the Holy Spirit who is the culminating evolution of God and who “drags Christ-life into the hearts and souls of all men, breaking and annihilating the sins and iniquities of ages, and [making] all mankind partakers of Divine life.”<sup>65</sup> Sen pictured this evolution of God not as a line, but as a triangle. At the apex of the triangle is

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 229. This, for Sen, is the importance of the Resurrection. It assures us that Christ’s humanity was kept in tact and that Christ returned to the Father with all of his humanity, and remains with God as his human son.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

“God Jehovah” who is the “Supreme Brahmā of the Vedas.” From God comes the Son “in a direct line, an emanation from Divinity.” The analogy continues, declaring that,

God descends and touches one end of the base of humanity, then running all along the base permeates the world, and then by the power of the Holy Ghost drags up regenerated humanity to Himself. Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son; Divinity carrying up humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost. This is the whole philosophy of salvation.<sup>66</sup>

Such an exposition of the Trinity explains why the literature reflects such a wide range of opinions regarding Sen’s acceptance of the Trinity. David Gosling remarks that Sen “believed in the Trinity.” This is echoed by Robin Boyd who insists that Sen’s thought “moves steadily in the direction of full acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity.”<sup>67</sup> Others have as emphatically insisted that Sen did not believe in the Trinity. Upadhyay, for example, declared that Sen “was dead opposed to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.”<sup>68</sup> However, the variety of responses to Sen underscores the need to appreciate Sen’s contributions and insights apart from the confines of the historic ecumenical council formulations. Sen had insights into the humanity of Christ, the mystery of God, and the cosmic scope of redemption which are often not fully appreciated in the western more rational and systematic theological analysis. However, much of his theology was only tentative and was not carefully laid out. For example, despite pointing out the correlation between *sat cit* and *ānanda* and the Christian Trinity, Peter May in “The Trinity and *Saccidānanda*” has noted that Sen never “in any real sense related together the Trinity and *Saccidānanda*,

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 228. Sen uses the Sanskrit term ‘Brahmā,’ not ‘Brahman’ for God. This choice bypasses significant theological and philosophical problems which Upadhyay refuses to ignore. Sen risks the *Advaita* Vedāntists assertion that he is reducing the entire discussion to the level of illusory *Īśvara*.

<sup>67</sup> R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 34.

<sup>68</sup> *Sophia*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895), 14.

for there seems to be no real correspondence between all the different triads which he brings together.”<sup>69</sup> However, many strands of his theology were taken up by other Indian theologians and carried further.

### c) The Church of the New Dispensation

Eventually Sen declared that the world was entering into a Third Dispensation whereby all the major religions of the world would be harmonized. Sen founded his own church known as *The Church of the New Dispensation*. Sen’s church was mystical, embracing an eclectic devotion to Christ along the lines of the *bhakti* and *yoga* movements within Hinduism. Sen once wrote:

Behold, Christ cometh to us as an Asiatic...and he demands your heart’s affection... He comes to fulfil and perfect that religion of communion for which India has been panting... For Christ is a true Yogi, and he will surely help us to realize our national ideal of a Yogi.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the positive assessment of Christ, *The Church of the New Dispensation* distanced itself from any of the traditional, historic expressions of Christianity. Instead, the society interpreted their movement as “a source of creative renewal of Hinduism and the concrete centre of a new universal religion of the Spirit.”<sup>71</sup>

However, *The Church of the New Dispensation* also continued to distance itself from traditional Hinduism. First, Sen abandoned the infallibility of the Vedas

---

<sup>69</sup> P. May, “The Trinity and Saccidānanda” *Indian Journal of Theology* vol. 7, #3 (July-Sept, 1958): 94.

<sup>70</sup> R. Boyd, *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 20. Boyd is quoting the primary source, K. C. Sen, *Lectures in India* (1904), I, 388-389. An accurate assessment of Sen’s views of Christ is problematic because his writings are filled with many contradictory statements about Christ, as his views regarding Christ clearly evolve over the years. What is clear is that he seems to gradually come closer to adopting Christian terminology concerning Christ, but, under the influence of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, interprets it more mystically. Sen is an early example of one who, in effect, separates the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith.

<sup>71</sup> M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, 56.

and began to look increasingly toward his own subjective spiritual inspiration. Sen said in his address entitled “Hindu Theism” that,

there is still an inherent moral force in India which will enable it to work out its own redemption, not under the instruction of this man or that man, this book or that book, but under the direct inspiration of the holy and merciful God...after some years it was found that there was a defect in the foundation, for the Vedas upon which their faith was based taught, along with some truth, many errors: nature worship, transmigration, and absurd rites and ceremonies. Abandoning the infallibility of the Vedas, the Brāhmos appealed to nature, to their own hearts, to their own religious intuitions, in order to establish themselves upon a purely Theistic basis.<sup>72</sup>

Second, Sen moved away from his earlier position on caste. Originally, he embraced the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, including the notion that caste may need reform, but is inherently good. However, Sen eventually came to believe that caste was originally nothing more than a social distinction and that the divine sanction of caste was spurious. Thus, Sen instructed all of his followers to cast off their sacred cords. The denial of the infallibility of the Vedas and caste not only caused a split within the *Brāhmo Samāj*, but created a vacuum for the emergence of other groups who were more explicitly Hindu in their orientation and focused purely on the reform of Hinduism. One of the most important Hindu Reform movements to return to the infallibility of the Vedas and traditional Hindu values was the *Ārya Samāj*.

#### **4. Swami Dayananda and the *Ārya Samāj***

Many Hindus felt that the various *Brāhmo* movements were too enamored with Christianity and European ideas and insufficiently appreciative of their Hindu heritage, yet agreed that Hinduism needed reform. Indeed, they applauded the *Brāhmo* social reforms but felt that the reforms could be achieved without sacrificing essential Hindu traditions. Unlike Roy and the original vision of the *Samāj*, Sen’s desire to establish a religious movement which transcended Hinduism alarmed many

---

<sup>72</sup> S. D. Collet, ed., *Keshub Chunder Sen’s English Visit*, 301-302.

Hindus. Indeed, in the view of many conservative Hindus, *Brāhmoism* under Sen had gone entirely too far. In addition, there was concern over the increasingly Christian orientation of the *Brāhmo Samāj* and the dramatic weakening of the society's position regarding the infallibility of the Vedas. The result was the founding of a new movement in 1875 by Dayananda Sarasvati called the *Ārya Samāj*.

Dayananda was a diligent student of the Vedas, a *sannyāsi* and fluent in Sanskrit. He became convinced that much of the then current Hindu practices were inconsistent with the teaching of the four Vedas. Dayananda argued that post-Vedic scholarship had unnecessarily bifurcated the true teaching of the Veda into either a book of ritual, which the Brāhmaṇas emphasized and the Brahmins had exploited, or a book of divine knowledge developed in the Upanishads and later expounded by the philosophers.<sup>73</sup> Dayananda wanted to take Indian society back several millennia before any of the philosophical systems arose and before any of the eighteen *Purāṇas* had given Hinduism its castes and image worship.<sup>74</sup> With this assumption as his starting point, he openly rejected everything in Hindu practice which was contradicted by the Vedas or not specifically sanctioned in them. Furthermore, he restricted his definition of the Veda to include only the *Samhitā* portions. The various appendages on the *Samhitā* were considered authoritative only in a secondary sense and only in so far as they conformed to the actual teachings of the former.<sup>75</sup> By restricting his definition of the Veda, Dayananda was going against the trend in India

<sup>73</sup> L. Rai, *A History of the Ārya Samāj* (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1967), 72.

<sup>74</sup> Dayananda affirmed the "unity of God as revealed in the four Vedas, *R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*, and their inspired commentaries." See, S. Bose, *Studies in the Social Sciences* (Iowa City University, n.d.), 103. P. Spear, in the *Oxford History of India*, has commented that Dayananda was a 'Luther' compared to Ram Mohan Roy's 'Erasmus' model, 731.

<sup>75</sup> Despite this claim, and significant for this research, is the fact that Dayananda does accept the Upanishadic definition of Brahman as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

which was increasingly using the term Veda to include the *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* as well as the Upanishads. This is significant because Dayananda's restriction of the Vedas to only the *Samhitā* portion demonstrates how even he was being influenced by the western scholarship of the time which often limited the Vedas to the *Samhitā*.

The most important reforms the *Ārya Samāj* sought to promote were three-fold:

- 1) The *Ārya* belief that the Vedic hymns were chanted to One Deity known by many names caused them to call for the rejection of polytheism, including all forms of image worship.
- 2) Because caste was a mere political and social institution, the *Ārya* called for the abolition of a divinely sanctioned system of caste.
- 3) While denying the favored position of the Brahmin as its sole interpreter, the *Ārya* called for an unequivocal commitment to the infallibility of the Vedas.

A close examination of these three positions reveals various points of agreement as well as disagreement with other Hindu Reform movements. For example, the *Ārya's* strict view concerning Hindu images stands in marked contrast with the *Brāhmo Samāj of India* who, in Sen's later years, became more eclectic and began to reconcile image worship as true, but fragmentary worship. The *Ārya* view concerning caste, on the other hand was more consonant with the *Brāhmo Samāj of India*, but was clearly in conflict with the *Ādi Brāhmo Samāj*. The open challenge to Brahminical superiority was not new, but most of the leaders of Hindu Reform movements were themselves high caste Hindus, so it was difficult to challenge the Brahminical status quo. Dayananda was himself a Brahmin and had been invested with the sacred thread at age eight, yet he challenged whether one is automatically

invested by birth with the authority to interpret the Hindu Scriptures. Finally, at the root of the *Ārya* movement was a proud reassertion of the ancient wisdom of India. Dayananda claimed that “the latest German thought is as if still groping in the dark and trying to scale the heights reached by Indians centuries ago.”<sup>76</sup> Indeed, he affirmed that all the truths of modern physical science were already present in the Vedic hymns.<sup>77</sup>

Although Dayananda openly criticized the Brāhmo for embracing western ideas so freely, his very attack on Brahminism is influenced by his tacit acceptance of certain western ideas. Throughout much of the long and chequered history of India, the Brahmins completely dominated the study of and interpretation of the Vedas. Dayananda had the audacity to challenge this time honored custom. L. Rai in his *History of the Ārya Samāj* sums up Dayananda’s attitude well when he says that

he denied the right of any human being to control the free judgement of his fellow men or women in matters relating to the soul. He held that the Brahmin by birth was just an ordinary man who, on account of his hereditary characteristics had, perhaps, a better opportunity of becoming a veritable Brahmin than others not so born but with an equal right to become Brahmins if they would manage to acquire the necessary qualifications.<sup>78</sup>

This is an attitude which is clearly influenced by western ideals of egalitarianism, free speech and the right to private interpretation. It has been said that Dayananda was responsible for opening up the Vedas to all classes and castes of

---

<sup>76</sup> S. K. Bhatia, ed., *The Ārya Samāj* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1991), 157.

<sup>77</sup> L. Rai, *A History of the Ārya Samāj*, 76.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. Dayananda rejected the divine inspiration of all the existing commentaries on the Vedas. Thus, these commentaries were non-binding on the Hindu.

Hindus, and in the process “opened the sealed gate of Hinduism to the rest of mankind.”<sup>79</sup>

The *Ārya Samāj*'s popular appeal made it an increasingly important vehicle for the expression of nationalistic sentiment. The *Ārya Samāj*, unlike *Young Bengal* and the *Brāhmo Samāj* was far less enthusiastic about embracing new, western ideas. Instead, the *Ārya Samāj* was more focused on the Vedic past and the emerging Indian self-respect. The *Ārya* embraced the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth as well as the *sannyāsin* ideal, but used these to rally patriotic support against the forces from the West which, in their view, were seeking to destroy the purity of the ancient *Āryan* faith. One outsider observed insightfully that “the whole drift of Dayananda’s teaching is far less to reform Hinduism than to range it into active resistance to the alien influences which threatened to denationalize it.”<sup>80</sup> While this is certainly an overstatement, it does demonstrate the more radically nationalistic associations of the movement. The movement also represented a reassertion of the Orientalists’ position not only in its respect for ancient Hinduism, but its use of the vernacular.<sup>81</sup> In fact, Dayananda is the only leader of a major Hindu Reform movement who spoke no English, or any other European language.

---

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 58. Interestingly, and perhaps for the first time, this provided a world-view for Hinduism which was far more global. One of the Ten Principles of the *Ārya Samāj* was to “benefit the whole world, viz., by improving the physical, spiritual, and social condition of mankind.” See, L. Rai, 79.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 161. See also, S. Bhatia, ed., *The Ārya Samāj* (Delhi: Reliance Pub. House, 1991), 57. L. Lajpat Rai, a leader in the *Ārya Samāj*, claims that the movement was not intentionally nationalistic, nor anti-British. The point, however, is that the British perceived the movement to be nationalistic and anti-British and many members of the society were involved in various nationalistic expressions. Thus, the movement, as I have argued, provided a vehicle for the expression of nationalistic sentiment without necessarily being anti-British in its credo.

<sup>81</sup> Paradoxically, it was Keshub Chandra Sen who advised Dayananda to stop delivering his lectures in Sanskrit and use Hindi, the language of the people. Dayananda began to use the vernacular and even translated the Vedas into Hindi. See, Sarma, 165.

In 1910, after the fires of nationalism were burning bright, L. Ram and R. Deva wrote the following summary of the relationship between the society's commitment to the *Vedas* and their equal commitment to the growing nationalistic movement:

The Vedic church is undoubtedly a Universal Church. It preaches that the Veda was revealed in the beginning of creation for all races... When the *Ārya Samāj* sings the glory of ancient India, forces of nationalism receive an impetus, and the aspirations of the young nationalist who had persistently dinned into his ear the mournful formula that Indian history recorded the lamentable tale of continuous and uninterrupted humiliation, feels that his dormant national pride is aroused and his aspirations stimulated.<sup>82</sup>

Through his many efforts on behalf of the *Ārya Samāj*, Dayananda longed for an all-India movement which would unite the various reform groups into one voice. In fact, in 1878 there were open discussions with the Theosophical Society about a possible merger, but to no avail. Nevertheless, the two movements shared much in common, as shall now be demonstrated.

### **5. Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society**

The fourth and final movement to be examined is the Theosophical Society.

This is a movement which had international connections and certainly transcended Hindu reform. Nevertheless, theosophic ideas, particularly through Annie Besant, represented a major influence in the whole debate, especially since Theosophy gained a strong following throughout Bengal. Indeed, Upadhyay discussed and debated the ideas current in Theosophy with regularity.

The Theosophical Movement finds its origin in the Russian, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who claimed to have occultic powers. Blavatsky migrated to the United

---

<sup>82</sup> L. Rai, *A History of the Ārya Samāj*, 170. Rai is quoting from their work entitled, *The Ārya Samāj and Its Detractors*.

States and met Colonel Olcott who shared her interest in occultism. The result was the founding in 1875 of a new society known as the Theosophical Society. The stated aim of the society may be summed up in the following points drawn from its organizational statement:

1. To acquire an intimate knowledge of natural law, especially its occult manifestations.
2. To oppose materialism and dogmatic theology.
3. To make known among western nations the long suppressed facts about Oriental religious philosophies, ethics, esoterism, etc.
4. To counteract the efforts of missionaries to delude the so-called "heathen" and "pagans."
5. To disseminate a knowledge of the sublime teaching of that pure esoteric system...mirrored in the oldest Vedas, and the philosophy of Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius.
6. To promote the Brotherhood of humanity...as equal effects of one Uncreated, Universal, Infinite and Everlasting Cause.<sup>83</sup>

As noted above, in the early years of the Society, correspondence occurred between Blavatsky and Swami Dayananda of the *Ārya Samāj*. While a merger was not agreed upon, an agreement was reached that they would "work together for the revival of the ancient wisdom of the Vedas."<sup>84</sup> Soon, Colonel Olcott traveled to India and to Ceylon where he became interested in the revival of Buddhism. By 1882, the Theosophical Society made Adyar, a suburb of Madras, the headquarters of the movement. By 1885, 121 "lodges" had been chartered around the world, but 106 of them were in India, Burma or Ceylon.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, an Irish-English intellectual,

---

<sup>83</sup> Points derived from lengthy statement found in D. S. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism* (Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1944), 195. The primary source is *The Golden Book of the Philosophical Society*, by C. Jinarajadasa, 1925, 23. For a full statement of many of the beliefs of Theosophy see, *The Inner Life* by C. W. Leadbeater (Vasanta Press, 1910).

<sup>84</sup> D. S. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism*, 195.

<sup>85</sup> P. Washington, *Madam Blavatsky's Baboon* (London: Secker and Walburg, 1993), 68.

Theosophists often equated Vedāntism and Buddhism, the modern differences being the result of the degeneration of both. See letter entitled, "Vedāntism and Buddhism" in S. Eek, *Damodar and the*

Annie Besant, was converted to Theosophy after reading Blavatsky's two volume work, *The Secret Doctrine*.<sup>86</sup> Soon, Annie Besant became a close friend of Blavatsky and labored tirelessly for the Theosophical Society.

In 1893, after her attendance at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Besant made her first visit to India where her lectures were met with great enthusiasm. Besant moved permanently to Adyar where she worked on behalf of the revival of Hinduism until her death in 1933 at the age of 86. The British authorities frequently placed restrictions on her travels because her lectures were perceived as a threat to the imperial rule.<sup>87</sup> In 1907, Besant became the leader of the Society. However, her influence extended even further as she became the co-founder of Benares Hindu University, the founder of the Home Rule League (1915) and the first woman ever elected to the Presidency of the Indian National Congress (1917).<sup>88</sup>

The importance of Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society for this study is largely her uncritical attitude towards Hinduism and her ability to unite popular Hinduism with nationalistic fervor. Her focus, especially in her earlier years, was not the reform of Hinduism, but rather helping others to see the spiritual greatness of Hinduism as it is. She defended the whole range of Hindu rituals and customs at a time when, as we have seen, many Hindu Reform societies were distancing themselves from these practices. Besant did not accept the Orientalists' distinction

---

*Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement* (Madras: Theosophical Society Publishing House, 1978), 317.

<sup>86</sup> T. Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 3 (Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India Press, 1972), 448.

<sup>87</sup> P. Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India*, 974.

<sup>88</sup> T. Chand *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 3., 451. Besant is also credited for bringing about an important agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League on the emotional issue of communal representation. See also, D. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism*, 221. That she was the first woman to be elected President, see, S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 263.

between the golden heritage of India's past and the present state of corruption and degeneration. In a lecture delivered in Madras in 1914 Mrs. Besant stated,

I come back to the point with which I started: that, after a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect, none so scientific, none so philosophical, and none so spiritual as the great religion known by the name of Hinduism.<sup>89</sup>

Her desire to stem the tide of criticism against Hindu abuses and to stop the wave of European influences which were sweeping across India often led her to eloquent, but uncritical, statements in praise of anything Hindu. Nevertheless, her advocacy on India's behalf, especially coming from the lips and pen of a European, made her a powerful force to be reckoned with.

#### **D. Christian Attitudes to Hinduism and Indian Culture in 19th Century Bengal**

Several observations have already been made concerning the central role Christian missions played in British India. Indeed, understanding the relationship between Christianity and the colonial powers in India is an important and complex issue, yet is largely beyond the scope of this work. However, the more important concern is to explore how Christianity regarded Hinduism and Indian culture and what was the nature of Christian allegiance available to a convert in 19th century Bengal. Two areas will be explored. First, an analysis of missionary attitudes concerning Hinduism. Second, a broad comparison between Catholic versus Protestant attitudes concerning the relationship between Hinduism and Indian culture.

##### **1. Missionary Attitudes Concerning Hinduism**

It is often cited that the general attitude towards Hinduism by 19th century Christians is negative and confrontational. This assessment is not as easy to arrive at

---

<sup>89</sup> D. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism*, 213

as might appear on the surface. Certainly, when Europeans arrived in India their first reaction to Hindu practice was to regard it as repugnant and degrading. Practices such as *suttee* and *devādasī* and the degradation of the low and non-caste peoples were particularly startling. So, on the one hand, there is a constant stream of negativism which pours forth from the missionary literature of the period concerning Hinduism and Indian social customs. On the other hand, there are also examples of missionaries who were involved in various levels of Hindu scholarship, learning the indigenous languages and translating many Hindu religious works from Sanskrit into English and the indigenous languages of India. Yet, much of the scholarship is ultimately directed to outmaneuver and defeat Hinduism. A few key examples from Catholic and Protestant missions will suffice to underscore the general attitude towards Hinduism.

Considering the long history of Christianity in India, indigenous expressions of Christianity are a relatively new phenomena. There is no evidence of early Christians seeking to positively relate Christianity to the surrounding Hindu context. In fact, the ancient church of India, the Syrian Christians of Kerala, “retained Syriac as its liturgical language, and never translated their Christian faith into Malayalam,” their native language.<sup>90</sup> In the post-*Padroado* period when the Portuguese began work in India, especially in Goa, Christianity was communicated in terms foreign to the Indian context and there is no evidence of any positive assessments of Hinduism.<sup>91</sup> In fact, prior to the 17th century, not a single European had ever

---

<sup>90</sup> S. Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 33.

<sup>91</sup> The *Padroado* refers to the act of the Pope whereby he invested the Portuguese Crown with the authority to oversee all Catholic missions in Africa, Asia and Brazil. It was partially replaced in 1622 with the *Propaganda Fide*.

acquired the language of Sanskrit and therefore had not been able to study the basic texts of Hinduism first hand.

The first serious attempt by the Catholics to restate the Christian faith in Indian thought forms was by Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), a young Italian, Jesuit missionary who arrived in India in 1605. De Nobili distanced himself from European forms of Christianity. He learned Tamil and Sanskrit and adopted a Tamil name (*Tattuva Bodhakar*, meaning Teacher of Reality). Furthermore, he adopted the role of a Christian *sannyāsi*, and became the first European to learn Sanskrit, the language of the Hindu Scriptures. Using the Veda as a vehicle to convert people to Christianity was an idea both new and surprising. Despite de Nobili being hailed as the father of Indian contextualization, his overall attitude toward Hinduism *per se* is decidedly negative and confrontational. His use of Hindu philosophical and theological vocabulary was wholly to refute, even ridicule, Hinduism.

19th century Protestant missions flowed from the Evangelical Awakening of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This evangelical movement was rooted in European Pietism which emphasized the fallen nature of humanity, the need for individual repentance and faith and a clear division between the 'saved' and the 'heathen.' Eric Sharpe points out that "non-Christian religions (in this case Hinduism) were of a piece with the corrupt world, and were summed up as 'heathenism' or 'idolatry.'"<sup>92</sup>

Protestant missionary work in India began with the two Lutheran missionaries, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau on 9 July, 1706.

---

<sup>92</sup> E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy, but to Fulfil* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1965), 25.

Probably the most notable semi-exception to the Protestant attitude is found in Ziegenbalg. To the consternation of most of his colleagues, he extensively researched Hinduism, developing a more positive attitude than that demonstrated by his contemporaries. In 1710 he wrote:

I do not reject everything they teach, rather rejoice that for the heathen long ago a small light of the Gospel began to shine...one will find here and there such teachings and passages in their writings which are not only according to human reason, but also according to God's Word.<sup>93</sup>

Ziegenbalg's attitude towards Hinduism represented a significant shift from that of de Nobili. Ziegenbalg saw natural theology or general revelation positively operating within Hinduism, not just sufficient to condemn the Hindu, but as an internal witness which can lead them forward to the light of the gospel. However, Ziegenbalg was almost universally condemned for his views, including by his colleagues in the Tranquebar Mission. When he proposed the positive value of translating Hindu texts for dissemination and study in the West, the mission board angrily responded that they had sent him to India to "root out Hinduism in India, and not to propagate heathen superstition in Europe."<sup>94</sup> Thus, despite Ziegenbalg's views, the belief that Hinduism stood in radical discontinuity with Christianity prevailed in Protestant circles.

William Carey arrived in Calcutta in November of 1793. In some ways, the Serampore Trio shared the general negative assessment of Hinduism. Carey affirmed the exclusiveness of the Christian faith and affirmed that "the religions of the heathen were delusions of the devil."<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the Serampore missionaries, who are

---

<sup>93</sup> A. Lehman, *It Began at Tranquebar* (Madras: CLS, 1956), 31.

<sup>94</sup> S. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 230.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

often cited as a model of a typically Protestant confrontational attitude, were involved in extensive translation work of important Hindu religious literature. It was Carey, for example, who prepared a 1,000 page Sanskrit grammar and translated portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* into Bengali and English.<sup>96</sup>

The work and Anglicist orientation of Alexander Duff and John Wilson in Calcutta and Bombay respectively has already been noted. Indeed, one might expect that Duff's 'higher education' approach might have provided the prime opportunity for Ziegenbalg's ideas to be pressed forward and applied in the field of higher education in a way which was less practical in the evangelistic and preaching model of the Serampore Trio. However, as discussed earlier, Duff and Wilson clearly shared the general Protestant view towards Hinduism. It was Duff who called Hinduism "an old, pestilent religion," an assessment echoed by his colleague John Wilson who described it as "the grandest embodiment of Gentile error."<sup>97</sup>

The most positive assessment of Hinduism arises not from the missionary presence in India, whether Catholic or Protestant, but by western Orientalists and civil servants of the East India Company. Sir William Jones (1746-1794) and H. T. Colebrooke (1765-1837) were both sympathetic to Hindu thought, especially Hindu philosophy. There were also Orientalists who were writing about Hinduism who had no direct contact with India. The most obvious example is the German scholar Max Müller who widely popularized Indian studies, publishing his edition of the *R̥gVeda* in 1848 and eventually the entire *Sacred Books of the East* series. However, Müller

---

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*; J. Brockington, "William Carey's Significance as an Indologist." Unpublished manuscript, 1997.

<sup>97</sup> E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy, but to Fulfil*, 26.

taught and lectured in Oxford from 1848 until his death in 1900 without ever having visited India.<sup>98</sup> However, none of these were missionaries nor were they particularly interested in the establishment of Christianity in India. One notable exception might be the Orientalist scholar John Muir (1810-1882) whose admiration of Hindu thought is evidenced by his five volume work *Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India* and yet who also published a series of missionary pamphlets describing Christianity in Sanskrit.<sup>99</sup> However, most Protestants, especially those outside of academia, shared a negative attitude towards Hinduism.

## **2. Catholic versus Protestant Attitudes Concerning the Relationship of Hinduism to Indian Culture**

The evidence indicates that the Catholic and Protestant negative, sometimes confrontational, attitude continued unabated until the 1870's when more positive attitudes were expressed by missionary scholars such as T. E. Slater (1840-1912), F. W. Kellett (1862-1904) and the famous 'fulfillment' theologian, J. N. Farquhar who was born in 1861. However, the way Catholics versus Protestants viewed the relationship between Hinduism and Indian culture is quite distinct.

Examples from the missionaries noted above will demonstrate that Catholics, unlike Protestants, did not necessarily equate the evils of *Hinduism* with the variegated social and cultural expressions in being *Indian*. Beginning with the Protestants, the attitude of each will now be examined.

---

<sup>98</sup> G. Studdert-Kennedy, *British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 60. For a summary of Max Müller's views regarding Hinduism see, R. Neufeldt, "Christianity and 'Other Religions:' Contributions from the Work of F. Max Müller," *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin*, vol. 5 (1992): 9-12.

<sup>99</sup> E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy, but to Fulfil*, 36.

### a. Protestant attitudes concerning Indian culture

There are several factors which Eric Sharpe in *Not to Destroy, but to Fulfil* points out as contributing to the Protestant identification of the evils of Hinduism with the evils of Indian culture. First, the heritage of the Evangelical Awakening reinforced the importance of morality in true religion. Thus, the immoral practices witnessed by the early Protestant missionaries such as *suttee* and *devadāsī* clearly reflected in their mind the outward manifestations of a degenerated Hindu religion. Second, the ecclesiology of the Pietistic movement had emphasized a separate, 'gathered church' which had withdrawn from mainstream society and culture. This 'mission compound' approach forced the new Indian converts to be extracted from their culture. Often these new converts were disowned and disinherited by their families and thus were forced to take refuge in the missionary compound where the cultural forms from the West were inevitably reinforced. A third factor is that Protestant evangelical missions of the period tended to focus on mass movements from among the lower castes. It is among the low and non-caste groups that many of the abuses of Hinduism and a degenerate Indian culture could be most poignantly observed. The horrible legacy of casteism was a constant, festering sore. Thus, the Protestant missionaries were generally united in their condemnation of the evils of Indian culture and caste which was declared to be "contrary to the spirit of Christian brotherhood...and should be utterly rejected by all converts to Christianity."<sup>100</sup>

The Serampore mission, while unyielding on the issue of caste, was generally far more accommodating than is often cited. In 1806, when Ward was approached by an old woman who said she "wished to become a *Feringee*," he replied that "the

---

<sup>100</sup> The three points are made in E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy, but to Fulfil*, 26-30, the quote is on p. 31.

Baptists desired to convince people of the truths of Christianity, not to make *Feringees*.”<sup>101</sup> The Trio allowed converts to eat at the same table with Europeans and did not insist on giving converts English names or promoting English dress or diet. However, E. Potts in *British Baptist Missionaries in India* argues that the Serampore practice “greatly contrasts with the practices followed by the Trio’s successors.”<sup>102</sup> Indeed, Protestant mission attitudes towards caste “became generally associated with an emphatically hostile attitude towards Indian culture as a whole.”<sup>103</sup> Lamin Sanneh agrees arguing that the Protestants became increasingly aware that they were being “swallowed up in the *Advaita* world of Hinduism,” and therefore “clung tenaciously to western cultural forms as insurance for their separate identity.”<sup>104</sup>

#### **b. Catholic attitudes concerning Indian culture**

The Catholic attitude concerning the relationship of non-Christian religions and the indigenous cultures is set forth in the famous *Propaganda Fide*, known since Vatican Council II as the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or the Propagation of the Faith. This Catholic missions program was founded by Pope Gregory XV on 6 January, 1622. The Catholic Church was seeking to promote global mission coordination and cooperation concerning Christian propagation without appearing to threaten the colonial powers who opposed them. The 1622 *Propaganda Fide* documents contained the following guiding principles regarding

---

<sup>101</sup> E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1967), 225.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 226. To cite one example, the students admitted to an Indian Christian boarding school near Calcutta in 1834 were given Old Testament names because their own were those “of the heathen gods, whom their ancestors have served.” See, Potts, 226.

<sup>103</sup> D. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), 28.

<sup>104</sup> L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 104.

how the Catholic Faith should relate to temporal powers as well as the indigenous cultures:

1. The separation of missionary work from colonial politics;
2. The exclusion of every form of interference by the temporal powers in missionary concerns;
3. The sending out of well-qualified and trained missionaries;
4. The formation of indigenous priests;
5. The consecration of native bishops;
6. Adaptation to the customs and practices of the peoples.<sup>105</sup>

The final, sixth point is the seed for what is later known as the principle of adaptation, which is an early general term describing what would later be referred to by a wider selection of terms such as accommodation, indigenization, contextualization or inculturation, each with its own shade of meaning. In a later explanatory document written by the Sacred Congregation in 1659 to its Apostolic Vicars, the following statement was made explaining the principle of adaptation:

Beware of forcing the people to change their way of life, their customs and traditions as long as these are not in open contradiction

---

<sup>105</sup> J. Metzler, O.M.I., "The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or the Propagation of the Faith: The Mission Center of the Catholic Church in Rome," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 5, #3 (July, 1981): 127. The policy of non-interference with colonial powers may be viewed as merely a way to circumvent the *padroado* which successive popes had granted to the Portuguese monarchy during their imperial expansion. Rome wanted a way to propagate the faith without appearing to violate Portuguese sensitivities. This is significant for this research because in 19th century India the East India Company, even prior to the Charter Act of 1813, gave regular financial help to Roman Catholic missions. The East India Company apparently did this not only to create Catholic dependence on the Empire, but because it was better "to favour Italian or French missionaries operating under *Propaganda Fide* rather than Portuguese missionaries or Goanese priests operating under the archbishop of Goa." For a full discussion of this see, K. Ballhatchet, "The East India Company and Roman Catholic Missionaries," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 44, #2 (April, 1993): 273-288, quote taken from page 275. The tension between *Propaganda Fide* and the *Padroado* is evident in 19th century Bengal because the Sacred Congregation "appointed Vicars Apostolic, with episcopal rank *in partibus*, to areas where Portugal might claim spiritual jurisdiction but lacked all claim to political power." The controversy between Rome's Fr. Robert and the Portuguese Fr. Texeria is a classic illustration of how Calcutta particularly felt the tension between the Jesuits working under the *Propaganda Fide* and Augustinians under Portuguese authority. For more on the Jesuit Mission in Calcutta see, K. Ballhatchet "Missionaries, Empire and Society: The Jesuit Mission in Calcutta, 1834-1846," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* vol. 7 (1978): 18-34. The quote is from page 19.

to religion and good morals. Is there anything more foolish than to transplant France, Spain, Italy or any other European country (i.e. its customs and practices) to China! That is not what you should bring them, but the Faith which neither despises nor rejects the life style of any people or their customs as long as they are not evil in themselves but rather desires their preservation and promotion.<sup>106</sup>

While there are obvious examples of the clear directives of the Sacred Congregation being ignored,<sup>107</sup> the theological position of the church was clear. It was further reinforced by the establishment of Polygot Press in 1626 to print and distribute books in indigenous languages and in 1627 the founding of a college (Collegio Urbano) and a university (Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana) for the training of indigenous priests.<sup>108</sup>

Allowing for exceptions on both sides, it is nevertheless fair to speak of a general Protestant attitude which tended to identify Indian culture with their already negative assessment of Hinduism. Indian social practices were viewed as the fruit of a depraved religion. In contrast, the Catholic missionaries did not tend to equate Indian social practices with the Hindu religion.

De Nobili, for example, despite his negative assessment towards Hinduism, was not interested in imposing western culture on Indians.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, he shared

---

<sup>106</sup> J. Metzler, O.M.I., "The Sacred Congregation," 127.

<sup>107</sup> Despite, for example, the clear reference to China in the statement, it did not prevent the "Chinese Rites Controversy."

<sup>108</sup> J. Metzler, O.M.I., "The Sacred Congregation," 127.

<sup>109</sup> The major exception to this would be his refusal to adopt any local variations in the observance of the Mass. He used the Latin formula for consecration and he used bread and wine imported from Europe rather than locally produced rice-cakes and wine. See, Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 100. However, the overall assessment of Indian culture was clearly more positive, which explains why the Catholic church is responsible for much of the early anthropological work in India. Indeed, Pater Schmidt (1868-1954), a German Catholic contemporary of Upadhyay, was a pioneer in the concept of missiological anthropology. Schmidt once said that "the cooperation of ethnology with the mission is one of the most effective means used by divine providence." See, S. Dietrich, "Mission, Local Culture and the 'Catholic Ethnology' of Pater Schmidt" *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, vol. 23 (1992): 112. It was during the period of the development of Schmidt's ethnology that the Catholic church expanded the principle of accommodation or adaptation and exhorted the missions to respect the "inalienable right of non-Christian peoples," 112.

the Catholic distinction between *Hinduism* and *Indian culture*. For example, when de Nobili witnessed the rite of *suttee*, he “hung back from self-righteous condemnation and instead tried to understand the custom from the Hindu point of view.”<sup>110</sup> Duncan Forrester sums up an important insight into the Catholic understanding of mission when he wrote that “at the ritual and social levels he (de Nobili) followed a policy of accommodation, but on theology he was uncompromising.”<sup>111</sup> Indeed, this underscores this important distinction which is so vital to understanding the Catholic, as opposed to the Protestant, attitude concerning the relationship between Hinduism and Indian culture. Catholic missions, as a rule, made a very firm distinction between the Hindu religion and Indian culture. The Catholics were more ready to affirm, or at least ignore, certain aspects of Indian culture, regarding them as irrelevant to the real confrontation with the Hindu religion.

The other obvious example is the Catholic attitude toward caste. De Nobili assimilated into the Śaivite Brahmin caste of Rāja and never questioned the social institution itself. Assuredly, he may have found aspects of the caste system which needed reform, but like Gandhi’s position three centuries later, de Nobili made a clear distinction between reforming caste and opposition to the institution itself which he felt must be protected because it undergirded the whole of Indian culture. Thus, caste practices were generally upheld by Catholic missions. De Nobili once wrote that “by becoming a Christian one does not renounce his caste, nobility or usages. The idea that Christianity interfered with them has been impressed upon the

---

<sup>110</sup> L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 99.

<sup>111</sup> D. Forrester, “Christian Theology in a Hindu Context,” *South Asian Review*, vol. 8, #4 (July-Oct., 1975): 349. In another revealing statement, de Nobili once said that “adaption to local customs is of absolute necessity for the preaching of the gospel.” See, S. Vikrant, “De Nobili’s Missionary Method,” *Indian Missiological Review*, vol. 1, #2 (April, 1979): 179.

people by the devil and is the great obstacle to Christianity.”<sup>112</sup> It was therefore entirely consistent, from de Nobili’s point of view, to remain a Catholic within the Hindu society. That this was not a position unique to de Nobili, is testified by the fact that despite early criticism of the Jesuits “it became generally accepted among Catholics that caste was a civil institution which could be used for evangelistic purposes and maintained with only minor modifications within the Church.”<sup>113</sup>

In contrast, when Ziegenbalg allowed a minor concession to caste by permitting a screen to be set up between high caste converts and Pariahs, he received condemnation from his Protestant contemporaries. Lutheran missionaries, influenced by Luther’s ‘two kingdoms’ theology tended to have the most liberal views of culture among Protestants.<sup>114</sup> Carey’s attitude to caste was more typical of the Protestant attitude. Carey, like many Protestant missionaries before 1860, was sent out by a small English missionary society. Forrester observes that they “came from the class of ‘skilled mechanics,’ artisans and tradesmen with an almost innate desire to better standards and a deep distrust of rigid hereditary hierarchies.”<sup>115</sup> They deeply mistrusted the rigid structures of caste and by virtue of their own backgrounds, argues Forrester, they were “predisposed to be antagonistic to the caste system.”<sup>116</sup> In contrast, the Jesuits arrived under royal patronage and widely accepted the tradition of hereditary hierarchies. When Father Fernandez brought his criticism of de Nobili’s ‘accommodation theory’ to the authorities, Father Robert maintained that

---

<sup>112</sup> D. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity*, 15.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>114</sup> P. Thomas, *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1954), 157. For reflections on Luther’s two kingdom theology as it applies to the Indian context see, D. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity*, 17f.

<sup>115</sup> D. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity*, 23.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

“caste was a social convenience and had nothing to do with the fundamentals of Hindu religion.”<sup>117</sup> After all, “did a nobleman of rank dine with a plebeian in Europe? Were not seats reserved in European churches for the lordly? Europe certainly did not practice social equality, so why should India do so?”<sup>118</sup> The purpose of Catholic missions was not to send out social reformers, but Christian missionaries, a distinction which would be difficult for many 19th century Evangelical Protestants to accept.

Perhaps the most significant point is that Upadhyay himself believed that the Catholic church had a more open policy regarding Indian culture and customs. He once wrote that “the Catholic Church has never taught her converts to give up national customs and habits which are not expressive of superstition.”<sup>119</sup> It is this theological distinction between Hindu beliefs and Indian culture which seems to be the most important reason for Upadhyay’s decision to unite with the Catholic church.

### **E. Conclusion**

This chapter has analyzed three historical stimuli which all served to shape the life and thought of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. First, the Anglicist - Orientalist debate in 19th century India is of crucial importance because, on the one hand, the Anglicist influence, fueled by the demands of the British colonial rule, helped to create the *Bhadralok* class, out of which Upadhyay was born and educated. On the other hand, the Orientalist influence encouraged many Indians, including Upadhyay, to re-examine their own Hindu philosophical and theological heritage in a more positive light. The Orientalist influence ultimately proved more significant as

---

<sup>117</sup> P. Thomas, *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*, 69.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>119</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #9 (Sept., 1894); Lipner, 45.

Upadhyay, throughout his writings, grew decidedly more convinced of the value of the indigenous Hindu traditions and, eventually, with his growing involvement in the nationalistic movement, turned to an almost exclusive use of the Bengali medium in his journalism. Likewise, despite remarkable theological development in his writings and a wide variety of involvements and interests, Upadhyay never strays from his basic commitment to journalism and the popular use of the printing press to express his views. Second, an appreciation of the basic positions of the major 19th century Hindu Reform movements is essential since, as shall be particularly evident in chapters four and five, much of Upadhyay's theology emerges out of written, public disputations with these groups. Finally, understanding the attitude of 19th century missionaries to Hinduism, as well as the varying Catholic and Protestant perspectives on Indian culture, is vital for an appreciation of Upadhyay's conviction that Catholicism was a more universal church and held a more positive assessment of Indian thought and culture than did Protestantism. His own self designation that he was a "Brahmin by birth and a Christian and Catholic by faith" succinctly sums up his desire to be both a good Christian as well as a good Indian.<sup>120</sup> The following chapters will explore how successful he was in this attempt.

---

<sup>120</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov, 1895): 8.

## Chapter Three

### Philosophical/Theological Context

#### A. Introduction

The cultural translatability of the Christian gospel is crucial to the universal claims of the gospel message. The New Testament documents demonstrate that Hellenism successfully provided a new vocabulary capable of articulating the mystery of a fulfilled Jewish hope. Indeed, the translatability of the gospel from the Jewish to the Hellenistic context is the earliest demonstration of the universal appeal of the gospel message. However, can Hinduism, like Hellenism, play a comparable role, providing a new vocabulary and philosophical framework while yet remaining faithful to the essential gospel message? Clearly, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay thought so and sought to demonstrate it in earnest. In seeking to find the indigenous vocabulary, thought forms and philosophical framework for this endeavor, Upadhyay turned to the Vedas and to the Vedānta for his inspiration. The context of each of these will now be explored.

#### B. The Vedic Tradition

##### 1. The Vedic Corpus

The canon of the sacred Hindu oral tradition is known as the 'Vedas,' a Sanskrit word meaning 'knowledge' or 'wisdom.' Traditionally, the term Vedas is used in the proper sense to refer to the four most ancient and sacred oral traditions of classical Hinduism: *Ṛg-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*.<sup>1</sup> The first three Vedas were probably composed between 1200 B.C. and 1000 B.C., and the *Atharva-*

---

<sup>1</sup> There are differences between the use of the term 'Veda' and 'Vedas.' Indian scholars tend to use the term 'Veda' almost synonymously with *śruti*, whereas western scholars tend to use 'Vedas' to refer to the four *Samhitās*, sometimes including the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas*, but not the *Upaniṣads*. This is discussed in more detail on page 99f of this chapter.

*Veda* by 900 B.C.<sup>2</sup> The first three Vedas are sacred manuals (*saṃhitās*) used by the ancient Vedic priests. The ‘*ṛg*’ refers to the words or hymns uttered by the priest, the ‘*sāma*’ the chant, and the ‘*yajur*’ the sacrificial formulas used by the priests who presided over the sacrifice. The *Atharva-Veda* is unconcerned with sacrificial rituals, but is a collection of various spells and esoteric formulae to aid the worshipper in everything from casting demons out to procuring the love of a woman.<sup>3</sup> While the Vedas continues to the present as an oral tradition, they have also been written down and thus form a literary tradition as well.

The *ṚgVeda* is the oldest and most sacred book of Hindu literature. It is a collection of 1,028 metrical hymns, divided into ten books known as *maṇḍala*. These Vedic hymns are addressed to various members of several pantheons of gods, often associated with aspects of nature such as *dyaus* (sky), *agni* (fire), *sūrya* (sun), *uṣas* (dawn) and *vāta* (wind). Indeed, the multiplicity of the Vedic gods reflects the many aspects of nature. The simplest and most convenient way of classifying the deities is under the three divisions of the universe: celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial. It is difficult to assess how many gods are worshipped in the *ṚgVeda*. In the early Vedic writings there are seven gods in the pantheon. This number is gradually expanded to twelve and, eventually, to thirty-three.<sup>4</sup> However, the later texts repeatedly refer to “the thirty three gods,” who are identified as the 12 *Ādityas*, 8 *Vasus*, 11 *Rudras* and 2

---

<sup>2</sup> There is considerable debate about the correct dating of the Vedic materials. Many scholars, such as A. A. Macdonell, argue for a much later date. Macdonell, for example, dates the *ṚgVeda* at 600 B.C. See, *Hymns from the RigVeda* (London: Oxford University Press, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> While the actual dating of the *Atharva-Veda* is difficult to assess, the reference to the Vedas and even the earlier Upanishads to “the three Vedas” is significant. It demonstrates beyond doubt the later acceptance of the *Atharva-Veda* in the Vedic corpus and implies a later date as well. See, for example, *ṚgVeda X.90.9, Brhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.2.5*.

<sup>4</sup> There is considerable debate about the reasons for the various numbers of gods. Some argue that the number of gods corresponds to days of the week or months of the year. See, Griswold, *Religion of the RigVeda* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 138.

*Aśvins*.<sup>5</sup> These pantheons of Vedic gods seem to be united only by their relationship to the impersonal 'eternal order' known as *ṛta*.

Much of the material in the *Sāma-Veda* and *Yajur-Veda* is borrowed directly from the *ṚgVeda*. For example, of the 1,549 stanzas of the *Sāma-Veda*, 1,474 are derived from the *ṚgVeda*.<sup>6</sup> This is why the Vedas are often referred to as recensions of the *ṚgVeda* since they are using the same essential material, but putting it to a different use. The *Yajur-Veda*, unlike the *ṚgVeda* and the *Sāma-Veda*, contains partly prose material. In fact, while the other *Ṛg* and *Sāma* Vedas each have two separate prose commentaries associated with them, known as the *Brāhmaṇas*, a recension of the *Yajur-Veda*, known as the *Black Yajur*, contains the *Brāhmaṇa* directly alongside the sacrificial formulas. The other recension of the *Yajur-Veda*, known as the *White Yajur*, contains a massive *Brāhmaṇa*, but is a separate work attached to the Veda in the traditional manner.

At the end of each of the *Brāhmaṇas* there appears another appendix known as the *Āraṇyakas*, or forest treatises. It is not entirely certain why these portions are called 'forest' treatises. Some argue that the name is given because of its mysterious nature which meant that it could not be imparted to the student in the village, but only secretly in the forest. The more likely explanation is that these were the instructions and insights given to a Brāhman who was prepared to renounce household life and become an ascetic 'forest dweller.'<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 39. Clayton offers an alternative division of the pantheons into "eleven which dwell in the sky, eleven on earth, and eleven in the atmosphere." See, Clayton, *RigVeda and Vedic Religion* (London and Madras: CLS, 1913), 53, 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Deussen, P. *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906), 2.

Nevertheless, the *Āraṇyakas* are esoteric texts concerned with the inmost nature of man. There is a clear tendency in these writings toward a more speculative, inward orientation which clearly anticipates the development of the final appendix, or 'end of the Vedas' known as the Upanishads. Thus, each of the four Vedas is divided into the following strata: *Samhitās*, the earliest collection of Vedic hymns; the *Brāhmaṇa*, the Brahminical commentaries on the hymns; the *Āraṇyaka*, treatises given to those who would be forest dwellers; and the *Upaniṣads*, which are speculative, esoteric treatises on the nature of the universe and the inner nature of the self.

The four Vedas and the four strata of each Veda may be pictured as follows:

<b>SAMHITĀS</b>	<b>BRĀHMAṆAS</b>	<b>ĀRĀṆYAKAS</b>	<b>UPANIṢADS</b>
<b>Ṛg-Veda</b>	+ commentaries	+ Forest treatises	+ esoteric treatises
<b>Sāma-Veda</b>	+ commentaries	+ Forest treatises	+ esoteric treatises
<b>Yajur-Veda</b>	+ commentaries	+ Forest treatises	+ esoteric treatises
<b>Atharva-Veda</b>	+ commentaries	+ Forest treatises	+ esoteric treatises

Recognizing the four strata of the Vedas is important because there is a tendency to artificially separate the four *Samhitās* from the rest of the material. One must remember that the Vedic corpus is primarily an oral tradition and therefore clear-cut distinctions between 'books' is lacking. Because of this confusion there are discrepancies in what various writers mean by the term 'Vedas.' Some scholars (particularly western scholars) use the term 'Vedas' to refer only to the four original *Samhitās* or collections. However, the dominant use of the term 'Veda' (particularly among Indian scholars) refers to the entire four-strand corpus, including the Upanishads. It seems the early Vedic Indians were as concerned with the actual use of the hymns in various contexts reflected in the strata as they were in the hymns themselves. Nevertheless, even for those who do not consider the Upanishads to be,

strictly speaking, 'Vedas,' nevertheless acknowledge that the relationship of the Upanishads to the earlier Vedas is an important one. The Vedāntic or 'end of the Vedas' philosophers believe that the Upanishads represent the natural culmination of the Vedic doctrine and spirit. The inter-relationship of the four strata is important, in part, because their very interconnectedness provides the basis for their shared authority.

All of the sacred literature of Hinduism is divided into two major groups: *śruti* and *smṛti*. *Śruti* is the most sacred of the two categories meaning 'that which is heard,' implying an outside source. *Śruti* is generally thought to be eternally present in the universe, without origin or author. *Śruti* comprises all four strata of the Vedas: *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*. *Smṛti* means 'that which is remembered' because it has been passed down through the generations by the wise sages. *Smṛti*, unlike *śruti*, has an earthly origin and generally includes the well known philosophic *Sūtras*, the *Law Books*, the *Purāṇas* and the two great epics of India, the *Mahābhārata* (including the *Bhagavad-Gītā*) and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, since the Upanishads and the *Ṛg-Veda* are both considered *śruti*, it is generally believed that there should be a consistency and continuity between the two traditions. Furthermore, even the *smṛti* documents are considered fully authoritative, not because of their own inherent nature, which is of a second rank, but because they are regarded as reliable expositions of *śruti*.

---

<sup>8</sup> The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is the most famous portion of the *Mahābhārata*, and is classified as *smṛti*, though some scholars believe that it is based on *śruti* which has been lost and should be regarded along with *śruti*. In general, while in theory *smṛti* can never rise to the level of *śruti*, in practice it is frequently regarded as comparable sources of revelation. The *śruti-smṛti* distinction is akin to the Islamic distinction between the *Qu'ran*, (which has no human author) and the *Hadith* (which does accept human authorship).

## 2. Theistic Themes in the Vedas

Das Gupta once said that “the passage of the Indian mind from the Brahmanic to the Upanishadic thought is probably the most remarkable event in the history of philosophic thought.”<sup>9</sup> While there is much truth in this statement, it is important to recognize that the Upanishads represents a long *process* which began in the early Vedic period and culminates in the Upanishads. In other words, many of the insights of the Upanishads are actually implicit in Vedic thought but are made explicit in the Upanishads and, indeed, carried forward to new and dazzling philosophical heights. Hindu thought has a beginning, middle and final development. The beginning is found in the Vedic hymns, the middle is in the Upanishads and its final development is found in the philosophic ‘Systems’ (*darśanas*) such as *Vedānta’s Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.<sup>10</sup> The remarkable aspect of the Upanishads is how they manage to introduce so many fresh ideas without breaking continuity with the past. It is these ideas from the Vedic past as viewed from the perspective of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is important to this research. The two areas which will be examined will be theism and the relationship of Brahman to the cosmos.

### a. Theism

There is a generally held misconception that the Vedas represents a polytheistic pantheon of gods which eventually gives way to the pantheistic world-view of the Upanishads and later Vedāntism. What, in due course, will become clear is that both the terms ‘polytheism’ and ‘pantheism’ cannot be applied to the Indian context without significant qualifications. Before examining the full flowering of philosophical

---

<sup>9</sup> W. S. Urquhart, *Vedānta and Modern Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 22.

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Bloomfield offers a similar explanation in reply to Professor Garbe of the University of Tübingen who said of the Upanishads, “all at once, lofty thought appears upon the scene,” See, M. Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda: The Ancient Religion of India* (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972), 221.

discourse, therefore, it is important to be clear on the actual theistic world-view of the Vedas and its development through the Upanishads.

### (1) Polytheism and henotheism in the Vedas

It is a gross oversimplification to regard the Vedic gods as merely an example of ancient polytheism which is later discarded by the Upanishadic seers. Indeed, even in the early Vedic hymns one begins to see incipient yearnings after one God. First of all, even in the Vedas the many gods are not independent powers, but are all related to the one concept of *ṛta* or Moral Law. The concept of *ṛta* lies at the base of the entire cosmic order and is unquestionably one of the most remarkable conceptions of the entire period. The entire visible world, the events of nature and even the gods themselves are regulated by *ṛta*:

By Rita is the earth sustained,  
and by the sun are the heavens;  
by Rita the Adityas stand  
and Soma is set in the sky.  
*ṚgVeda X.85.1*

The *Ādityas* represents the largest pantheon of Vedic gods with Varuṇa as their head.<sup>11</sup> They are pictured here as dependent on *ṛta*. In *ṚgVeda VIII*, we encounter people who are doubting the existence of *Indra* because he does not make a physical appearance:

‘There is no Indra,’ one and another say,  
‘Who has ever seen him? Whom shall we praise?’

The hymn answers the question by pointing to the all-pervading workings of *ṛta*, translated here as Eternal Law:

Here am I, Singer! Look upon me here!  
All that exists I surpass in my glory.  
The Eternal Law’s commandments make me mighty;  
and, while I rend, I rend the worlds asunder.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Griswold, 138.

The doctrine of *ṛta* is so significant that centuries later when the founder of the *Ārya Samāj*, a monotheistic Hindu reform movement, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati wanted to demonstrate that polytheism was alien to true Indian religion, he cited the concept of *ṛta* to prove that India has never been polytheistic.<sup>13</sup> Clearly the concept of *ṛta* which is found even in the earliest Vedic tradition and is a dominant doctrine throughout raises questions about the appropriateness of the designation 'polytheistic.'

Second, throughout the oral Vedic corpus various gods in the pantheon are regarded as the highest. It seems that "each Vedic poet seeks to exalt the particular god whom he happens to be singing about to a position of supremacy and to endow him with all the attributes of supremacy."<sup>14</sup> For example, *Sūrya* is addressed in ten hymns of the *ṚgVeda* and is one of the heavenly deities. His very name is a designation for the sun which is often called "the eye of *Sūrya*." *Sūrya* is described as both omnipresent and immanent in creation:

He has pervaded air, and earth, and heaven:  
The soul of all that moves and stands is *Sūrya*.  
*ṚgVeda I:115,1*

*Indra*, often referred to as the national god of the Vedic people, is addressed more often than any other deity in the *ṚgVeda*. Many hymns express his greatness and superiority over all the gods:

He who was just born as chief god full of spirit  
Went far beyond the other gods in wisdom:  
Before whose majesty and mighty manhood  
In whose control are horses and all chariots;  
In whose control are villages and cattle;  
He who has generated sun and morning,

---

<sup>12</sup> *ṚgVeda VIII.100.3,4*. These two hymns concerning *ṛta* are translations taken from Abinash Chandra Bose, *Hymns from the Vedas* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 127, 273. In this chapter, all quotations from *ṚgVeda* are from Bose, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>13</sup> Griswold, 106-110.

<sup>14</sup> Clayton, *RigVeda and Vedic Religion* (London and Madras: CLS, 1913), 59.

Who leads the waters: he, O men, is Indra.<sup>15</sup>  
*RgVeda II:12,1,7*

Similar texts could be cited concerning *Soma* who, for example, in one hymn is declared to be the maker of both *Sūrya* and *Indra* or of *Varuṇa* who is declared to be “the supreme and all-mighty.”<sup>16</sup> This, by itself, is not necessarily surprising or inconsistent with polytheism. Someone who is worshipping a particular god is under no compulsion to acknowledge the powers or the areas which other gods may control. However, the unexpected feature is that these gods, even in the Vedic period, begin to be viewed as different names or epithets for the One God. The Atharva-Veda specifically states that worshippers were free to call one god by the name of another:

Man calls the one deity by the other’s name  
 before sunrise and before dawn.<sup>17</sup>  
*Atharva-Veda X:7.31*

Even the *RgVeda* seems to imply that there is an underlying unity behind the plurality of names by which the deity is worshipped:

They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni,  
 and it is the heavenly bird that flies.  
 The wise speak of what is One in many ways  
*RgVeda I:164.45*

This remarkable feature of the Vedic literature is what led Max Müller to coin the phrase ‘henotheism’ as the proper way to express what he regarded as “the peculiar character of the ancient Vedic religion.”<sup>18</sup> Henotheism can be viewed as either a variation of polytheism or monotheism, depending on one’s perspective. From the polytheistic perspective, it may be regarded as the worship of one particular deity

<sup>15</sup> These two translations are from A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the RigVeda* (London: Assoc. Press, 1969), 29, 48, 49.

<sup>16</sup> Clayton, 59.

<sup>17</sup> Bose, 325.

<sup>18</sup> Clayton, 59, quoting Max Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 533-534.

without necessarily denying the existence of other gods. From the monotheistic perspective, it may be regarded as something similar to what Idowu in the African context refers to as 'diffused monotheism,' i.e. a belief in one God who is manifest in various ways and under various epithets.<sup>19</sup> Many of the hymns lean toward the former interpretation, but the emphasis on *ṛta* and the subsequent development of Vedic thought tends towards the latter. Thus, either the use of the term 'polytheism' must be significantly qualified or, more appropriately, the term 'henotheism' should be used as a more accurate description of Vedic religion.

## (2) Indian monotheisms and monism

With the doctrine of *ṛta*, the growing emphasis on the One and the dimming distinctiveness of the gods in the Vedic pantheon, one might expect that Indian religion would emerge with one Supreme Being such as *Indra* or *Prajāpati* in a way which is, perhaps, similar to the triumph of *Zeus* in the Greek pantheon. However, in India, once again, the unexpected happens in that several trends occur simultaneously under the great umbrella which we generously refer to as 'Hinduism.' Several deities do eventually emerge and are worshipped as Supreme Beings by their various devotees. Deities such as *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* are obvious examples. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, for example, reinterprets older Vedic hymns demonstrating that they are merely reflections of the supreme personal deity and creator, *Rudra* or *Śiva*. Likewise, the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* similarly interprets many of the same Vedic texts to point out that the many gods are merely reflections of *Nārāyaṇa*, who later becomes identified with *Viṣṇu*.<sup>20</sup> Thus, India eventually produces several monotheistic religions which is sometimes

<sup>19</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, *Oludumare God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longmans, 1962, 1966), 204.

<sup>20</sup> J. Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity* (London: MacMillan Press, 1992), 7.

clouded over by the all-encompassing term 'Hinduism' which leaves the impression of a single monolithic system of belief and practice.

Thus, on the one hand we have the emergence of several Indian monotheisms. On the other hand, even in the later *Sāma* and *Yajur-Veda* there is a simultaneous submergence of all the deities into an all-pervading, Absolute. Increasingly, the gods are becoming merely names marking a single Reality, while the emergence of and devotion to individual gods as Supreme continues unabated. A growing *personalization* and attainment of super-anthropomorphic status occurs right along side of a growing *impersonalization* with all of the dynamic gods of the Vedic pantheon retreating into an impersonal Absolute.

By the time of the *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the Brahmin Vidagdha Śakalya asks the sage-King Yājñavalkya how many gods there are. A most revealing dialogue ensues beginning with the sage responding,

'As many as are mentioned in the *nivid* of the hymn of praise to the Viśve-devas, namely, three hundred and three, and three thousands and three.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but how many gods are there, Yājñavalkya?' 'Thirty Three.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but how many gods are there, Yājñavalkya?' 'Six,' 'Yes,' said he, 'but how many gods are there Yājñavalkya?' 'Three.' 'Yes,' said he, 'but how many gods are there, Yājñavalkya?' 'One and a half.' 'Yes,' said he, 'but how many gods are there, Yājñavalkya?' 'One.'<sup>21</sup>

*Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad III.9:1-2*

The conversation concludes by the sage saying that the three hundred and three, and three thousand and three are but manifestations of the thirty-three gods. This is a classic example of the way the Upanishads can demonstrate continuity with the past, yet introduce new philosophic and metaphysical ideas which later form the basis for

---

<sup>21</sup> Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1953), 235. All translations from the Upanishads are taken from Radhakrishnan's edition, unless otherwise noted.

Vedāntic thought. The sage identifies the number of gods as thirty-three, which is clearly taught in the *ṚgVeda*, but manages in the process to introduce the idea of the plurality of gods being merely manifestations of the One. It is not an 'either-or' proposition. The Upanishads are comfortable with the plurality of gods as long as they are seen as ultimately pointing to the One.

Even the Upanishadic idea of a monistically conceived Absolute is prefigured in the *ṚgVeda*. There are three hymns in the tenth book of the *ṚgVeda* which prefigure this. In *ṚgVeda* 10:121, for example, the hymn could be asking the question "who is the true god to whom I should worship?" indicating more evidence of the growing dissatisfaction even in the *ṚgVeda* with sheer polytheism as discussed above. In this case, the poet is in search of a true, All-powerful God. The hymn could also be understood as being addressed to 'Ka,' which is the Sanskrit word for 'who.' In this case it is a hymn to an unknown god. However, in either case, this god being adored is at first identified with the Creator who is "lord of all created beings." Verse eight asks once again, "Who (or which God) shall we adore with our oblation? He is "the god of gods, and none beside him." Finally, in the last stanza the hymn reaches a climax and the question is asked again, "Who (or which God) shall we adore with our oblation?" Though the actual identity of the Supreme Being is probably a later interpolation into the text<sup>22</sup>, the answer is a resounding one, "*Prajāpati!* thou only comprehendest all these created things, and there is none beside thee."

---

<sup>22</sup> Max Müller's conclusion that *Prajāpati* was a later interpolation into the text supplying the specific 'answer' to the question 'who' led him to separate the tenth verse from the rest of the passage and to say this is a god 'Who,' whom he dubs "*Deus Ignotus*," See, O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 26.

But what is more significant than the actual identity of the Supreme Being is that the hymn, even in its original form, actually identifies the Supreme Being as creation itself: "His arms are these, his thighs these heavenly regions."<sup>23</sup> Clearly this unknown God is being identified as not only the Creator and ruler of the universe, but "he *is* the universe and the life force that pervades it."<sup>24</sup> This characteristic aspect of Hinduism is here displayed in classical form: a merging of theism with monistic pantheism. *Prajāpati* is both a Transcendent Lord as well as an immanent spirit who pervades all living things. It is not difficult to see how later Vedāntism could easily look back at this hymn and find a precedent for the *advaitic* world-view.

Another R̥gVedic hymn which deserves special attention is 10:129. In this hymn it declares that in the beginning "there was neither being nor non-being." From heat or *tapas*, a word which was later used to mean austerity or ascetic practices, came forth that One:

There was no death then, nor immortality,  
nor of night or day was there any sign.  
The One breathed airless by self-impulse;  
other than That was nothing whatsoever.  
Darkness was concealed in darkness there,  
and all this was indiscriminate chaos;  
that One which has been covered by the void  
through the might of Tapas was manifested.

It goes on to affirm the point that the polytheistic pantheon is actually a later manifestation of the One:

The Devas are later than this world's production;

---

<sup>23</sup> Clayton, 167, 168. Zaehner, unlike Müller, interprets it as simply asking 'who.' See, Zaehner, R. C., ed., *Hindu Scriptures* (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1966), 40.

<sup>24</sup> Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, 41. This statement by Zaehner is made specifically in a comment on this hymn. Zaehner goes on to say that *Prajāpati* is portrayed as both 'Father' and 'Spirit' in the text in that he is the exalted Absolute as well as the immanent presence. The hymn is also quoted in Clayton, 167, 168, Clayton and in O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda*, 26-29.

Then, who knows from where it came into being?<sup>25</sup>

*R̥gVeda 10:129*

Thus we see forms of qualified polytheism, henotheism, strands of monotheism and monism all present in the Vedic materials. Some of this theistic theology is explicit, much of this is not explicitly taught, but is clearly present in seed form. Later, *advaitic* Vedāntism will complete the process, as we shall see under Śaṅkara, by positing a rigid form of absolute monism. But the point here is that even Śaṅkara's position should not be viewed as a bolt of lightning out of a dark sky, but as the bold systemization of what he considered to be clearly taught in the Upanishads which was, in turn, stating explicitly what was believed to be implicitly present in the *Samhitā* portion of the Vedas.

### (3) Brahman in the Vedas

With a theistic/monistic pantheism already in seed form in the Vedas the question naturally arises as to the use of the word '*Brahman*' which in later Hinduism is the designation of the Supreme Absolute. There are various words associated with the root *Bṛh* in the Vedas. First there is the neuter *Brahman* meaning "sacred utterance." Second, there is the masculine *Brahman* which means "one imbued with the power of the sacred utterance or word," which could be a god or a man. As a god it is usually referred to in the nominative singular, *Brahmā*. In time, *Brahmā* became identified as the Supreme Creator. Another derivative from *Brahman* is the term, *Brāhmaṇa*, and is used both of the group who recite or transmit the sacred word as well as the second category of Vedic literature, the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 25,26.

<sup>26</sup> Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, 46, 47. For clarity, this thesis will refer to these high caste guardians of the sacred word as *Brahmins*, and use the term *Brāhmaṇa* exclusively to refer to the second category of sacred writings.

The transition from *Brahman* as a general word for “sacred formula, word or utterance” to a class of priests, *Brāhmaṇa*, who were endued with sacred power and, indeed, shared the same *Brāhman* which was in God is a transition which occurs within the pages of the Vedic writings. In the *R̥gVeda* the term *Brahman* is used only in the sense of “sacred formula, prayer or spell.”<sup>27</sup> However, by the time of the *Atharva-Veda* the idea of *Brahman* has clearly undergone significant development. In the tenth chapter of the *Atharva-Veda* it is declared that “It is *Brahman* that attains the highest Lord...It is *Brahman* that measures the year... the earth is sustained by *Brahman*” (X.2). *Brahman* emerges as pervading the entire universe. Zaehner comments as follows:

In this hymn it is implied that man, through his participation in Brahman, is co-extensive with the universe; in Brahman macrocosm and microcosm meet, but this union is only fully achieved in the Brāhman who is the depository of Brahman...Already in the *Atharva-Veda* the apotheosis of man has begun.<sup>28</sup>

In another hymn in *Atharva-Veda* X.7, all the Vedic pantheons (12 *Ādityas*, 8 *Vasus*, 11 *Rudras* and 2 *Aśvins*) are declared to be encompassed by the body of Brahman who pervades and is the ground of all existence:

In his body existed the three and thirty Devas (gods)  
by dividing themselves into its limbs;  
those alone who knew Brahman knew  
the three and thirty Devas. (27)  
People know the Divinity in his splendour  
as the Supreme, far beyond any expression.  
It was the Support of the universe who in the beginning  
poured forth that splendour. (28)  
Man calls the one Deity by the other's name  
before sunrise and before dawn.  
When at first the Unborn sprang into being  
he won his own dominion beyond which  
nothing higher has been in existence. (31)  
Homage to supreme Brahman

---

<sup>27</sup> Griswold, 339.

<sup>28</sup> Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, 48.

of whom the earth is the base,  
 the mid-region the middle,  
 and who has made the sky his head.  
 Homage to the supreme Brahman  
 of whom the sun is the eye,  
 and the moon that becomes new again and again,  
 and who has made Agni his mouth...<sup>29</sup>

The many *devas* are actually only partial and fragmentary manifestations of the Supreme Being Brahman, who encompasses and surpasses them all. Verse 30, as noted earlier, clearly acknowledges that the worshipper is free to call one *deva* by the name of another. This is possible because the many *devas* are really all part of the One Absolute. "Hence, a proper understanding of the *devas* comes only from a knowledge of the Supreme Being."<sup>30</sup> In the closing verses of the hymn the actual language of "One among many" is used to describe the support or ground of the universe:

Tell me of the Support of the universe:  
 who, the One among many, is he  
 to whom holy men with their hands and feet  
 and word and ear and eye,  
 offer unmeasured worship in a measured hall of sacrifice?  
*Atharva-Veda X.7*

In the *Brāhmaṇas* the rituals are known as Brahman and are regarded as omnipotent. To know the rituals (i.e. to be a Brahmin) is to control the universe. Thus, it was not long until "Brahman becomes the primal principle and guiding spirit of the entire universe."<sup>31</sup> Brahman began as the effective power underlying the sacrifice and by the end of the *Brāhmaṇas* is actually the power underlying the entire universe. It is this development which finds its full flowering in the Upanishads.

---

<sup>29</sup> Bose, 325.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Radhakrishnan, tr., 53.

### **b. Brahman's relationship to the cosmos**

The second crucial theistic theme to be explored is the nature of creation and the relationship of Brahman to the material world. This is of crucial importance to later philosophical and theological formulations.

#### **(1) Creation texts in the Vedas**

In the earliest R̥gvedic texts the cosmos is bipartite containing heavens and earth. Gradually this becomes a more complex tripartite cosmos: heaven, earth and atmospheric region. While this theme continues to be elaborated on in a wide variety of ways in later tradition, the tripartite cosmos is the most popular view of the cosmos in the *R̥gVeda*. "By the late Vedic period the most significant expression of the cosmic image is found in the figure of the cosmic man (*Puruṣa*)" who forms the "shape of the cosmos."<sup>32</sup>

The Vedic texts describe the creation of the cosmos through various metaphors, some of which are developed in later Hindu mythology.<sup>33</sup> However, the most dominant image is that of the primordial sacrifice of an anthropomorphic figure. Rather than a blood sacrifice, we encounter the dismemberment of the Primeval Man (*Puruṣa*). Three quarters of the *Puruṣa* rose upwards and one quarter of the Primeval Man actually becomes the ground of all creation:

When they divided the Man, into how many parts did they disperse him? What became of his mouth, what of his arms, what were his two thighs and his two feet called? His mouth was the Brahmin, his arms were made into the nobles, his two thighs were the populace, and from

<sup>32</sup> Herman W. Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma/Cosmos as Man in Ancient Indian Myth and Ritual* (New York: SUNY, 1989), 49, 50.

<sup>33</sup> The earliest cosmological metaphor, reflecting the early bipartite cosmos, is that of a cosmic battle between *Indra* and *Vṛtra*. *Indra* slays *Vṛtra* and then separates the heavens and the earth by setting up a cosmic tree or pillar. This is a reconstructed myth based on several hymns. See, H. W. Tull, 54. Another metaphor is that of an act of primeval incest. When the father shed his seed in his own daughter, he spilt his seed on the earth as he united with her. This creative act resulted in the womb of the earth opening up in which the father (*Prajāpati*) placed his daughter's embryo. See, O'Flaherty's *Hindu Myths*, 26; also, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 3:33-34. Other images of creation are found in O'Flaherty's edition such as a sculptor, a smith, a woodcutter and a carpenter. See, *Hindu Myths*, 34f.

his feet the servants were born. The moon was born from his mind; the sun was born from his eye. From his mouth came Indra and Agni, and from his vital breath the wind (Vāyu) was born. From his navel the atmosphere was born; from his head the heaven appeared. From his two feet came the earth, and the regions of the sky from his ear. Thus they fashioned the worlds.<sup>34</sup>

## (2) Development of Vedic Cosmology in the Upanishads.

Later, this Vedic theology will be developed in the Upanishads, demonstrating continuity with the *ṚgVeda* while reinforcing its own distinctive theology. The Upanishads utilize the dismemberment metaphor in various ways to describe creation. The *Brhad-Āraṇyaka* begins with a cosmic interpretation of a dismembered sacrificial horse whose parts become various aspects of the universe (1.1.1-2).

The second chapter describes *Prajāpati* who divided himself into three parts and his parts become the material world. Later in the fourth chapter of the *Brhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* another variation of the dismemberment theme is presented, but one which emphasizes the non-dual nature of the Absolute:

He, verily had no delight therefore he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in close embrace. He caused that self to fall into two parts. From that arose husband and wife. Therefore, as Yājñavalkya used to say, this (body) is one half of oneself, like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore this space is filled by a wife. He became united with her. From that human beings were produced. (1.4.3)

The woman sought to conceal herself and became, in turn, each of the animals. When she became a cow, for example, he became a bull and united with her, thus producing all cattle. When she became a mare; he became a stallion and so forth. This process continues “even down to the ants” (*Brhad-Āraṇyaka* 1.4.1-6). This primordial sacrifice theme becomes the theological basis for the entire sacrificial system whereby individual

---

<sup>34</sup> O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 28.

sacrifices were a way of reenacting the original creative event. By repeating the event it was hoped that one would be able to reactivate the inherent power of the original primordial sacrifice and thereby “integrate himself with the cosmos.”<sup>35</sup> This is apparent because when the story is retold in more elaborate form in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it occurs as a prelude to the building of an altar for the performance of sacrifice and it becomes, what Herman Tull calls “a paradigm for the sacrificer’s own activity.”<sup>36</sup>

### (3) Creation and the doctrine of *māyā*.

DeBary in his *Sources of Indian Tradition* says the following about the Hindu view of creation: “all distinctions including the entire phenomenal world, have only a relative reality but are ultimately false and the result of the creative illusion (*māyā*) of the Brahman.”<sup>37</sup> However, this understanding of *māyā* as ‘illusion’ is of a comparatively late date. There is the danger, therefore, of reading back into the earlier texts an understanding of *māyā* which is not present, as if the term were a static one within Hindu thought. In the passages cited above, Brahman is clearly declared to be the sole source of the universe and there is no suggestion that creation is only illusory.

The word ‘*māyā*’ comes from the root ‘*mā*’ which means “to measure, fashion, form, make, exhibit.”<sup>38</sup> In the earlier Vedas, *māyā* is the ‘uncanny power’ by which gods such as Varuṇa and *Indra* created the world. *Māyā* in these early texts cannot be properly understood as illusion. In fact, it is precisely the opposite. It is the power by which a real universe is created; one that is neither illusion nor appearance. There was,

---

<sup>35</sup> Tull, 54.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 60. These texts are particularly important because of the implications they have for future theology and Indian Christian response.

<sup>37</sup> DeBary, *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1958), 201.

<sup>38</sup> Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954, 1969), 223.

perhaps, “some suggestion that, because it (*māyā*) was beyond man’s comprehension, it could be deceptive” and the gods sometimes used the power of *māyā* to conceal themselves. Nevertheless “neither in the Vedas nor in most of later Hinduism does it indicate the unreality of the world.”<sup>39</sup> While *māyā* does not denote illusion in the Vedic corpus, there does appear in seed form in the Upanishads the idea that the phenomenal world, because it is not to be identified with the higher Brahman (*nirguṇa*) is of lesser significance and, opens the door to an interpretation of *māyā* as ‘illusory:’

By meditating on Him, by uniting with Him, by reflecting on His being more and more, there is complete cessation from the *māyā* of the world.  
*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I.10*

Radhakrishnan, in *The Principal Upaniṣads* (favoring a Śāṅkara interpretation) translates *māyā* in this text as “illusion.” On the other hand, R. C. Zaehner, in *Hindu Scriptures* (favoring Rāmānuja), translates *māyā* in this text as “the world of appearance.” Both agree that *māyā* as applied to the creation in this text clearly teaches that the multiplicity of the world’s phenomenal existence is not to be regarded as Ultimate Reality. However, this is not necessarily to equate the world with pure illusion.<sup>40</sup>

The ongoing development of the word *māyā* continues in the *Pañcāgala Upaniṣad* which states that when nature (*prakṛti*) undergoes change, it becomes known as the unmanifested and has the power of veiling (the nature of Brahman). What is reflected in it becomes the *Īśvara* consciousness:

That (principle of *Īśvara*) has *māyā* under his control, he is all-knowing, the first cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world, he takes the form of the sprout of the world ... and causes the entire world resting in it to become manifest (*I.4*).

<sup>39</sup> Brockington, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 715; Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, 204.

*Īśvara*, not Brahman, is here presented as the creator of the world and *Īśvara* has the power to project the world. Once *nirguṇa* Brahman is established as the only Reality it was quite easy to see the world as illusory. Indeed, one can then look back even at the *R̥gVeda* and see verses such as *1:164.45* quoted above in a new light:

They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and it is the heavenly bird that flies. The wise speak of what is One in many ways.

If this verse is teaching that all plurality is only “a matter of words,” to use the later Upanishadic phrase (*Ch. Up. 6.1.3*), then, by implication, one could argue that the plurality of the phenomenal world is likewise illusory since we perceive it wrongly as varied, when the only Reality is that of Absolute *nirguṇa* Brahman. In this light everything else becomes illusion.

Later when the philosophy of Śaṅkara is analyzed, there will be a closer examination of how he develops the concept of *māyā*. However, this late interpretation of *māyā* by Śaṅkara is important as Upadhyay seeks to grapple with the relationship of Brahman to the created world.

### 3. Conclusion

This survey of the key theistic themes in the Vedic corpus is important because it demonstrates that many of the themes in the Upanishads are often developments of ideas which are found in seed form in the Vedas. However, in examining what the ‘end of the Vedas’ actually teaches one must be careful not to overstate the teaching of the Upanishads by reading back into the Vedic texts what is actually the fruit of later philosophical interpretation and speculation. Indeed, the Upanishads represent a process which began with the *R̥gVeda* and continues beyond the Upanishads, reaching its apex in the classical philosophy of Śaṅkara.

Śaṅkara, in turn, serves as an important starting point of Indian Christian theology by Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. Thus, it is to this great philosopher of Vedāntic Hinduism that attention will now be focused.

### C. The Philosophical Theology of Śaṅkara's Advaita

#### 1. Introduction and Historical Context

Rudolph Otto has referred to the Hindu philosopher Śaṅkara as one of the “great Magnitudes” of philosophical and theological history, and representing one of the “great metaphysical tendencies” in the entire history of human thought.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Śaṅkara is widely recognized as the most dominant figure in the philosophy of Vedāntism. Furthermore, because of the dominant nature of Vedāntism within modern Hinduism, it is to some aspect of this great tradition that the early Indian Christian theologians responded, either by virulent attack or some form of careful reasoning in order to demonstrate some level of continuity between Vedāntic and Christian thought.<sup>42</sup> In either case, it is the Vedāntic tradition which sets the agenda for discussion, dialogue and debate between Hindus and Indian Christians between 1831 and the end of the 19th century.<sup>43</sup> Thus, before one can effectively examine the writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay it is essential that one understand the philosophic and theological context to which he spoke. Thus, the central ideas of Śaṅkara will now be examined.

---

<sup>41</sup> W. S. Urquhart, 59.

<sup>42</sup> I am not implying that all Indian Christian theologians can be classified in the modern technical sense as discontinuous or fulfillment theologians. Rather, I am referring to general tendencies along a wide spectrum of Indian Christian responses to Hinduism along what J. Lipner refers to as the general dialectic vs. dialogic approaches, without any specific reference to any of the modern schools of thought.

<sup>43</sup> It is important to note that I am referring to *Indian* Christians who are responding to the Vedāntic tradition. Many of the Western missionaries completely ignored the Hindu tradition. I specify the date 1831 because that represents the year of the baptism of Krishna Mohan Banerjea, the first Indian to become a priest in the Anglican church, and considered by many to be the Father of Indian Christian apologetics in India.

Śaṅkara (788-820) is universally recognized as one of the greatest Indian philosophers of all time. Many regard Śaṅkara as India's greatest philosopher and his non-dualist philosophy, known as *advaita* Vedānta, the pinnacle of India's philosophical contribution to the world. Much of what is known about Śaṅkara's early life is based on inferences from his own works and statements by later disciples. According to tradition, Śaṅkara was "born of Nambudari Brahmin parents at Kalati in Kerala, deep in the south west corner of India."<sup>44</sup> However, it is common in the Indian tradition for the date of birth of a well-known teacher to be pushed back to accommodate a favorable chronology for a teacher/disciple relationship. For example, some *advaitin* scholars insist on a 768 birth for Śaṅkara to assure that he was, in fact, the disciple of the famous Gauḍapāda.<sup>45</sup> Other scholars, finding it difficult to accept how someone who only lived to thirty-two could be such a prolific and insightful philosopher, insist that 788 must be the date of his becoming a *sannyāsi*, not his birth. While most scholars accept 820 as a fairly reliable estimation of his death, some argue that the 820 date actually represents his final renunciation from all ties with the world.

The tradition states that at age seven Śaṅkara underwent the famous investiture of the sacred thread which, as a Brahmin, he was entitled to wear. However, after completing his Vedic studies in only two years, he resolved to become a *sannyāsi*. According to the legend, his mother did not want to give her permission because, as a *sannyāsin*, Śaṅkara would not be allowed to attend her funeral or perform the funeral rituals. However, one day when Śaṅkara was bathing "a crocodile pulled him by the

---

<sup>44</sup> Alston, A. J., ed. *Śaṅkara on the Absolute* (London: Shanti Sadan, 1980), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Sharma, B. N. K. *The Brahmasūtras and their Principal Commentaries*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971), xix.

foot and, on the point of drowning, he wrestled from his mother permission for 'emergency renunciation,' often practiced when death is near."<sup>46</sup> Śaṅkara survived the close brush with death, but held his mother to her commitment. Śaṅkara left the village and traveled north in search of a guru. He is believed to have joined an ashram on the banks of the Narmada River and was accepted as a pupil by Govinda.<sup>47</sup> Sometime later, Śaṅkara traveled to Benares where the bulk of his theological and philosophical work is thought to have taken place. Finally, as a wandering holy man, Śaṅkara established four monastic study centers (*maṭhas*) in each corner of India to promote the mendicant life of study and meditation, all of which are still in existence today. However, his most significant legacy is contained in his writings which include over twenty books of commentaries and philosophical treatises in both prose and verse.<sup>48</sup> Of his writings, the most significant work is his commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which has long been recognized as the official manual of Vedānta. The second major group of writings are his Upanishadic commentaries. He wrote commentaries on the *Brhad-Āraṇyaka*, *Taittirīya*, *Īśa*, *Aitareya*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads*. Another important work, *Upadeśasāhasrī*, is not a commentary but a partially prose, partially metrical work whereby Śaṅkara expounds his ideas. There is little doubt as to Śaṅkara's authorship of these three works. Finally, there is widespread agreement, but not as conclusive, that Śaṅkara also wrote the earliest known commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Since these works represent the substance of his thought, it is these works which will serve as the basis for summarizing Śaṅkara's thought. His thought

---

<sup>46</sup> E. Deutsch, and J. A. B. van Buitenen, eds., *A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 122. Many scholars believe that Śaṅkara probably broke with *sannyāsi* tradition and did perform the funeral rituals for his mother.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>48</sup> Rashvihary Das, *Introduction to Shankara* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), i.

will be summarized under the following three headings: Monism (non-duality), *Māyā* (illusion), and *Mokṣa* (salvation).

## 2. Monism

### a) Śaṅkara's monism defined

Śaṅkara begins his search for truth by seeking to understand the impermanence and frustration of ordinary human experience. Our normal way of coping with reality is to view ourselves as separate individuals. Subsequently, we have conflict with others and we are consumed with a desire for material things. Yet, for Śaṅkara, it is precisely because of our viewing ourselves as separate individuals that we experience the misery of physical and emotional pain.<sup>49</sup> Śaṅkara's solution has become the most distinguishing feature of his philosophy, which is why his philosophy is known as *advaita* (non dualism). He asserts a rigorous form of monism. The phrase 'rigorous monism' or 'rigorous non-dualism' is used to differentiate a view of non-dualism which believes that the observed particularity of the universe is *actual*, but not ultimate, as opposed to a truly rigorous monism whereby non-dualism means the observed particularity is *neither actual nor ultimate*.<sup>50</sup> Of course, Śaṅkara is far from the first

---

<sup>49</sup> J. G. Wilson, "Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and the Function of Religious Language," *Religious Studies*, vol. 6, (1970): 58.

<sup>50</sup> Urquhart, 102. I am using the term monism because it is the philosophical term accepted by western conventions. However, in the Indian context the term may be somewhat misleading since Brahman is beyond numerical distinctions. The idea of 'One,' for some scholars, implies a numerical distinction. Thus, they prefer the term 'non-dualism.' However, the present author does not see how the term 'non-dual' improves the situation, since the term merely affirms what the ontology is not. Furthermore, while not diminishing Śaṅkara's use of "*neti-neti*," he nevertheless seems quite comfortable using the term "One" in reference to the Supreme Absolute. It should also be noted that although Śaṅkara's advaitism is characterized here as "rigorous monism," it was made much more explicitly so by his later disciples. As shall be demonstrated in chapter five, Upadhyay will exploit to his theological advantage Śaṅkara's actual teaching if, in his view, the development of Śaṅkara's thought is not consistent with Śaṅkara's own teaching.

Indian to teach monism, but he developed the philosophical basis for it more thoroughly and applied it with more rigor.<sup>51</sup>

As examined earlier in the chapter, there were actually two tendencies in the Upanishads occurring simultaneously. One trend was toward some form or forms of theism such as occurs in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (Rudra-Śiva). The other trend was a monistic one, which sought to discover some kind of underlying unity behind all the observed particularity of the world. It is this strand of thought which Śaṅkara develops as primary, though, as we shall see, he finds a way to incorporate the other into his overall metaphysical position, bringing unity to what could otherwise be seen as two conflicting trends within the Upanishads. For him, there is only one universal reality and, therefore, no such thing as plurality or particularity. No distinction is to be made between the individual and the universal, only pure undifferentiated unity. For Śaṅkara, reality is non-dual because no distinctions are made between subject and object, the knower and the known. Thus, “both the epistemological distinction of subject and object and the ontological distinction between the finite being and being itself is unreal.”<sup>52</sup> Śaṅkara affirms this in his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* saying, “the distinction of enjoyers and objects of enjoyment...does not exist.”<sup>53</sup> He

---

<sup>51</sup> According to Vedāntic tradition, the first available treatise on *advaita Vedānta* is the *Kārikās on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, written by Gaudapāda, who was the guru of Śaṅkara’s guru Govinda. He must have lived sometime in the seventh century. The main doctrine that Gaudapāda puts forth is called *ajātivāda* - the theory of no-origination. According to *ajātivāda*, the entire world of duality is merely an appearance: nothing ever really comes into being, for nothing other than Brahman really exists - the whole world is an illusion like a dream. At times, Gaudapāda blurs the distinction between waking and dream consciousness, a distinction which Śaṅkara later insists upon, and suggests that the whole of our waking experience is exactly the same as an illusory and insubstantial dream. See, E. Deutsch, and J. A. B. van Buitenen, eds., 119.

<sup>52</sup> Moti Lal Pandit, *Śaṅkara’s Concept of Reality*, *Indian Theological Studies*, Vol. 17, #4, (Dec., 1980): 319.

<sup>53</sup> George Thibaut, tr., *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa with the Commentary by Śaṅkara*, pt. 1, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 34 (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1890), 320.

finds theological support for this in the following passages from the sixth chapter of the

*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*:

As by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only a name, arising from speech, but truth being that all is clay... thus vanishes what we call fire, as a mere variety, being a name arising from speech...In that all this has its Self, it is the True, it is the Self, *thou art that* (6:1.4; 6:4.1, 6:8.7).

Śaṅkara interprets these passages as teaching that our view of particularity arises from our giving names to things which appear different. However, this view of particularity arises from a false view of the universe. We mistakenly view clay or fire as separate realities, yet, for Śaṅkara, nothing impermanent can be identified as Reality. Therefore, the entire visible world, including what we call ourselves, must be illusory. The fact that we have knowledge, however, leads Śaṅkara to affirm that within each of us there is an Inner Self which is not illusory, but is one with the Absolute undifferentiated Unity of the universe. The illusory nature of the world and the nature of this Inner Self will be examined in due course. However, the nature of this undifferentiated ultimate reality which Śaṅkara calls Brahman must be examined first.

#### **b) Monism and the nature of Absolute Brahman**

Ultimate Reality for Śaṅkara is “non-alteration in past, present or future.”<sup>54</sup>

Thus, only Brahman can be truly Real; all else must either be identified with Brahman or dismissed as ultimately unreal. However, as noted above, the Upanishads do not speak with a single voice regarding the nature of Brahman. Śaṅkara reconciles the monistic interpretation of Absolute Brahman with the more personal, theistic statements in the Upanishads by positing that there are two levels of Brahman: One which, to use his words, is “qualified by limiting conditions owing to the multiformity

---

<sup>54</sup> A. J. Alston, 174.

of evolutions of name and form, and the opposite of this, i.e. One which is free from all limiting conditions whatsoever.”<sup>55</sup> The higher Brahman is the Brahman of Ultimate Reality, which he refers to as *nirguṇa* Brahman, i.e. Brahman without qualities or distinctions. This *nirguṇa* Brahman is “devoid of all form, colour and so on, and does not in any way possess form.” This Brahman is “non-connected with the world and is devoid of all qualities.”<sup>56</sup> The other passages which refer to Brahman as qualified by form, “do not aim at setting forth the nature of Brahman, but rather at enjoining the worship of Brahman.”<sup>57</sup> This lower Brahman is identified as *saguṇa* Brahman, i.e. Brahman with qualities or distinctions. This Brahman is the personal Lord or *Īśvara* of popular Hinduism and is ultimately illusory:

As the one luminous sun when entering into relation to many different waters is himself rendered multiform by his limiting adjuncts, so all difference in Brahman is unreal, only due to its limiting conditions.

*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya III.2.18*<sup>58</sup>

Brahman is worshipped with forms and qualities and “spoken of as if it were embodied” only because of ignorance (*avidyā*). Brahman as *saguṇa* is assigned qualities and ‘special locality’ only because it “serves the purpose of devout meditation.” However, through proper knowledge “the conception of duality (is to be) uprooted by the conception of absolute unity.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, Śaṅkara’s exegesis is able to deftly respond to the conflicting texts by relegating them to two different levels of Brahman, one real, one illusory.

---

<sup>55</sup> E. Deutsch, and J. A. B. van Buitenen, eds., 160.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 197, 162, quoting *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

The Upanishads seem to anticipate Śaṅkara somewhat in both the concept of two Brahmanas as well as Brahman either possessing or not possessing qualities. The *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says that “there are two forms of Brahman, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the unmoving and the moving, the actual (existent) and the true (being) (II.3.1). Likewise, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* declares in VI.11 that the one God is “devoid of qualities,” only to say five verses later that “He is...possessor of qualities” (VI.16). It is the genius of Śaṅkara which brings these various strands of Upanishadic teaching into a consistent monistic system. However, problems arise for Śaṅkara because there are several texts which refer to the Universal Self, the Absolute Brahman, as possessing qualities which seems to contradict the *nirguṇa-saguṇa* distinction which forms the basis for his two Brahman theology. Śaṅkara responds to this objection as follows:

What, then, it may be asked, is the meaning of those Vedic passages which speak of the highest Brahman as something to be seen or to be heard, and so on? They aim, we reply, not at enjoining the knowledge of truth, but merely at directing our attention to it. Similarly in ordinary life imperative phrases such as ‘listen to this!’ or ‘look at this!’ are frequently meant to express not that we are immediately to cognize this or that, but only that we are to direct our attention to it.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, passages which refer to Brahman anthropomorphically or with qualities are, in fact, not intended to communicate with theological precision the nature of Brahman any more than Old Testament passages which speak of Yahweh’s ‘hands’ or ‘nostrils’ are meant to be taken as statements of his true nature. Śaṅkara says all such passages which speak of the “abode” of Brahman or, the highest Lord as “having a beard bright as gold” and so forth are only to be taken analogously.<sup>61</sup> Using this

---

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

exegetical methodology, Śāṅkara is able to maintain a consistent and rigorous monism which ascribes sole Reality to *nirguṇa* Brahman.

### c) *Nirguṇa* Brahman defined

If *nirguṇa* Brahman is “devoid of all difference, transcending speech and mind, to be described only by denying of it all other characteristics”<sup>62</sup> then how can one speak of Brahman? Śāṅkara makes a careful distinction between ascribing “qualities” to Brahman and making positive affirmations about the “nature” of Brahman. There are several examples in the Upanishads where when an inquiring student seeks to press the teacher about Brahman’s attributes he is only told “*neti - neti*” (not this, not this, *BĀU II.3.6*). This is viewed as a negation of qualities consistent with what one would expect with the *nirguṇa* doctrine. However, Śāṅkara is reluctant to apply the “*neti-neti*” to the Higher Brahman “since that would imply the doctrine of a general Void.”<sup>63</sup> Śāṅkara is careful to distinguish his doctrine from Buddhism. Instead, Śāṅkara says,

Whenever we deny something unreal, we do so with reference to something real; the unreal snake, e.g. is negated with reference to the real rope. But this is possible only if some entity is left. If everything is denied, no entity is left, and if no entity is left, the denial of some other entity which we may wish to undertake, becomes impossible, i.e. that latter entity becomes real and as such cannot be negated.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, while qualities of Brahman are negated, positive statements are made about the nature of Brahman. The most significant expression used by Śāṅkara in giving positive expression to Brahman is his definition of Brahman as Reality, Knowledge, Infinity which are “indications” (*lakṣaṇa*) of the total nature of the Absolute. In his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, Śāṅkara states the following:

In the phrase, ‘The Absolute is Reality, Knowledge, Infinity’ it is the

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Absolute that is being defined, because the Absolute is being presented as the primary thing that one has to know. Therefore the reason why the words 'Reality, knowledge, Infinity' are set in the same grammatical case as the word for the Absolute, and in apposition with it, is that they represent the characteristics by which it is to be defined.<sup>65</sup>

Śaṅkara goes on to carefully distinguish between a definition of the Absolute and a characterization. Characterizations, he argues, "serve to distinguish what they characterize from other members of its own class," such as calling a lotus blue to distinguish it from another one which is red. The Absolute has no other members of its own class, and so cannot be distinguished in this way. A definition, in contrast, "marks it off from *everything* else."<sup>66</sup>

Reality or Being is understood by Śaṅkara as that which does not change, in the past, present or the future. Only the Absolute can be deemed 'real' since everything else in the universe is subject to change and modification. The term 'knowledge,' for Śaṅkara, does *not* refer to "the knower in an act of cognition... for if the Absolute were the agent in an act of cognition it would be subject to modification which would contradict Brahman as Reality and as Infinite." Indeed, 'Knowledge' as applied to the Absolute means not an act, but a state (*bhāva-sādhana*).<sup>67</sup> Another translation of the word translated above as 'knowledge' (*cit*) is 'consciousness' which perhaps more adequately expresses Śaṅkara's concern not to equate the Absolute as Knowledge with ordinary empirical knowledge in the world which is by definition finite. It is the infinite, unchanging nature of the Absolute which sets Brahman apart from everything else. Which is why, he argues, that the third word is infinity. Śaṅkara says that the

---

<sup>65</sup> A. J. Alston, 178.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis mine.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

Absolute is Infinity, thus assuring that as Being and as Consciousness, Brahman does not change or suffer any kind of modification. He states in his commentary, “In this connection, the term ‘infinity’ characterizes the Absolute by negating finitude.”<sup>68</sup>

Śaṅkara goes on to clarify that “Being, Consciousness and Infinity” are not attributes or characteristics of Brahman, but indirect pointers to the nature of Brahman:

In this way the terms ‘*Sat*,’ ‘*Cit*,’ ‘*Ānantya*’ placed next to one another, condition each other mutually and negate their own direct meanings of the Absolute, while at the same time serving to indicate it indirectly.<sup>69</sup>

One further note needs to be said about this important three-fold definition of Brahman by Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara’s followers tended to develop the three-fold definition as Being, Consciousness and *Bliss*, rather than Being, Consciousness and Infinity. The famous work, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, attributed to Śaṅkara but actually composed centuries after his death by his followers, devotes 10% of the 580 verses to the topic of bliss.<sup>70</sup> Śaṅkara only rarely used the term bliss (*ānanda*) in his authenticated works and often uses only the two part designation “Being and Consciousness.” Śaṅkara refers to the bliss of the Absolute as available to a person in a dreamless sleep when all ignorance is absent. Śaṅkara says, “when the distinction set up by nescience between subject and object has been abolished through knowledge, then what remains is the natural infinite Bliss alone, one without a second.”<sup>71</sup> Later, commenting on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara addresses the objection that the phrase “that which consists of bliss” does not

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 221. The English title of this work is “*The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*.” One of Upadhyay’s major sources of information about *advaita* is the post-Śaṅkara work *Pañcadaśī* in which the entire structure of this Vedāntic teaching manual is structured around the threefold affirmation of Brahman as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. For a recent publication of this work see, Śrī Vidyāraṇya Swāmi, *Pañcadaśī* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Matha, 1967).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

refer to the highest Brahman. Śaṅkara responds by saying that “by the Self consisting of bliss we have to understand the highest Self...for the word bliss is repeatedly applied to the highest self.”<sup>72</sup> Śaṅkara then quotes several Upanishadic texts such as “He who knows the Bliss of Brahman fears nothing” and “Bliss is Brahman.” Śaṅkara points out that the word bliss is used repeatedly with reference to Brahman. Thus, he concludes that “the Self consisting of bliss is Brahman also.”<sup>73</sup> Later, in his commentary on this passage, Śaṅkara makes it quite clear that “the Brahman meant is the Absolute Brahman devoid of qualities.”<sup>74</sup>

In another passage, Śaṅkara responds to the objection of how Brahman can be conscious of bliss when there is nothing outside of Brahman of which Brahman can be conscious. Śaṅkara responds: Brahman knows no object; it simply is knowledge. It takes pleasure in no object; it simply is bliss.<sup>75</sup>

This is important not only because it is developed significantly by Śaṅkara’s later followers, but it is the three-fold definition of the Absolute as Being, Consciousness and Bliss which the early Indian Christian theologians interact with, rather than Being, Consciousness and Infinity. In this case, they are reflecting the subsequent development of Śaṅkara’s thought rather than his own language and precise words. Unfortunately, because of its late emergence, Śaṅkara never commented on the most important Upanishadic text which declares Brahman to be “Being, Consciousness and Bliss”:

Meditate on Brahman, the Self who is being, consciousness and bliss,  
without a second; meditate on Brahman, the Self who is being,

---

<sup>72</sup> G. Thibaut, tr., 65.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 67, 68.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>75</sup> Daniel H. Ingalls, “*The Study of Śaṅkarācārya*,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vol. 33 (1952): 2. In another passage, Śaṅkara clearly equates infinitude with joy.

consciousness and bliss without a second. This is the Upanishad.

*Vajrasūcikā Up., vs 9*

#### d) *Ātman* is Brahman

To maintain his consistent and rigorous monism, Śaṅkara can only allow One Absolute reality; everything else must be either identified with that Reality or be deemed ultimately illusory. Śaṅkara concludes that “our own consciousness is in reality an indistinguishable part of the Supreme Consciousness or Brahman.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, in continuity with the Upanishads, Śaṅkara identifies the inner Self, the *ātman*, with Brahman; all else (non-self) is illusory.

In all of his extant works, Śaṅkara frequently quotes long lists of Upanishadic texts in support of the Vedāntic doctrine which identifies *ātman* with Brahman. Such texts as “I am Brahman” and “Thou art That” are among his favorite. These are quoted in order to demonstrate, to use his words, “that there is in reality no such thing as an individual soul absolutely different from Brahman.”<sup>77</sup> Through “Nescience in the form of duality” we superimpose (*adhyāsa*) the non-self onto the Self which falsely makes us think that our souls have a separate, individual existence such as is espoused by the

---

<sup>76</sup> J. G. Wilson, 59. It is important to note that Śaṅkara’s monism is not to be confused with the term ‘pantheism.’ Pantheism completely identifies God with the world (the Divine is All) or the world with the Divine (All is Divine). However, while monism says that there is One Reality, it does not affirm that this Reality is completely immanent in the world. All that is truly real in the world *is* Brahman, but there is also Reality which transcends our world which is also Brahman. One of the most important supporting texts for this is *R̥g Veda X.90.3,4* which speaks of the sacrificial self-dismemberment of the Cosmic Person known as *Puruṣa*. According to the myth, “the universe is said to be the product of only one quarter of the Cosmic Person’s sacrifice, three-quarters, therefore, is transcendent to the cosmos.” See, Richard King, “*Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in Advaita Vedānta*,” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 12, (Aut. 1991): 109-110. Interestingly, one later Indian philosopher, Vallabha (1479-1531) attacked Śaṅkara as not a true monist because of the emphasis he places on *māyā*. He claimed that Śaṅkara’s *advaita* is flawed by its acceptance of *māyā* as a ‘second’ to Brahman, thus a form of dualism. Vallabha asserts that the whole world is real and is Brahman (which for him is another name for *kṛṣṇa*), with individual souls and matter having no separate existence from Brahman.” See, J. Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity* (London: MacMillan Press, 1992), 12. This, indeed, is a form of pantheism, but should not be confused with Śaṅkara’s position.

<sup>77</sup> Deutsch and van Buitenen, 162.

*Sāṃkhya* philosophy. In classic Socratic form, Śaṅkara raises hypothetical objections to his argument and then responds to them. These philosophical dialogues have been described as “magnificent dramatic literature, quite aside from the question of philosophy.”<sup>78</sup> A student raises the objection saying “when my body is burned or cut, I evidently receive pain,” so how can the “I” be One with Brahman who cannot be affected by change or modification? Śaṅkara responds as follows:

When a man is asked ‘where do you have pain?’, he points to the locus where the body is burned or cut and not to the perceiver, saying, ‘I have pain in the head’ or ‘in the chest’ or ‘in the stomach.’ If pain or the cause of pain such as burning and cutting were located in the perceiver, he would point to the perceiver as the locus of pain.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, Śaṅkara concludes,

A man possessed of nescience, being differentiated by body, etc., thinks that his *ātman* is connected with things desirable and undesirable; ...but the scripture gradually removes his ignorance concerning this matter and uproots nescience which is the view that *ātman* is different from Brahman.<sup>80</sup>

Through many such arguments, Śaṅkara is able to maintain a consistent monism, identifying Brahman as Absolute Reality, vigorously insisting that our consciousness or *ātman* is an indistinguishable part of this Reality, and that all manifestations of plurality are, in fact, illusory. It is his interpretation of the world as illusory which is, perhaps, the most original contribution of Śaṅkara and it is to this theme in Śaṅkara’s philosophy that we now turn.

---

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Ingalls, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Deutsch and van Buitenen, 162.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

### 3. *Māyā*

#### a) The problem stated

The moment Śaṅkara raises a monistic flag in his explanation of reality he encounters a major problem. Put succinctly, if Brahman is the only reality there is, then how do we account for the seemingly obvious plurality of the universe? Furthermore, what is the relationship of the real Brahman to the unreal universe? All theistic religions encounter this tension between the transcendence and the immanence of God; Deism on one extreme, Pantheism on the other.<sup>81</sup> Where on the spectrum is Śaṅkara's *advaita* Vedānta? These are difficult questions which every Vedānta philosopher must face:

Under Śaṅkara's guidance we may have floated upwards from the lower knowledge to the higher, we may have reached that mystical union with the characterless Absolute which he indicates as the goal of all our philosophical and religious searching, and which constitutes our salvation, but under the pressure of experience we have to come back again to that world from which we have so painfully detached ourselves and which we still find cannot be left out of consideration.<sup>82</sup>

Śaṅkara answers these difficult questions with his interpretation of *māyā* which has been called "the key concept around which his entire system revolves."<sup>83</sup> Through this doctrine Śaṅkara explains how Brahman, the non-dual, undifferentiated reality appears as differentiated and particularistic as well as Brahman's relation to it.

---

<sup>81</sup> Because Ultimate Reality is found only in Brahman there has been a tendency among western scholars to characterize the Indian ontology as pantheistic: Brahman is all there is, therefore whatever is must be Brahman. Thus, Vedāntism is pantheistic. However, R. King has argued that "no Hindu school has ever upheld the unqualified immanence of the supreme deity." See, R. King, 108 and fn. 35. A more careful examination of the doctrine of *māyā* will further demonstrate the unsuitability of the term pantheism as applied to Vedāntism.

<sup>82</sup> W. S. Urquhart, 128.

<sup>83</sup> John Grimes, "*Radhakrishnan and Śaṅkara's Māyā*," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 10, (Spring, 1989): 51.

### b) Śaṅkara's *māyā* analogies

We have already examined how the word *māyā* is used in the Vedic materials to indicate an 'uncanny power' attributed to the gods, especially to Varuṇa, Mitra and Indra. In many of the ancient hymns, *māyā* is actually what Radhakrishnan calls "a world sustaining power."<sup>84</sup> Occasionally, one encounters the *asuras* using *māyā* to deceive the *devas* with whom they are fighting. For Śaṅkara, however, the doctrine of *māyā* in its starkest expression simply states that the world has only the *appearance* of reality. It is due to our ignorance or misperception that we view the universe falsely. It is the false illusion of *māyā* which produces the following:

1. All of the visible phenomena of the external world
2. The idea of an individualized Self, and the superimposition of non-self onto Self
3. A Personal God (*Īśvara*) or Brahman with qualities (*saguṇa*)

Because Brahman is itself beyond linguistic description and because the nature of Brahman's relationship with the world is so mysterious, Śaṅkara relies heavily on metaphorical analogies to express how the non-dual, undifferentiated Reality appears as differentiated. Richard King in, "Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in *Advaita Vedānta*," has provided a helpful analysis of the various kinds of analogies used by Śaṅkara. These analogies deserve close scrutiny because there is a tendency to regard them all as expressing the same truth about *māyā* when, in fact, there are significant differences in the metaphors which one needs to be aware of in light of later Indian Christian responses to Śaṅkara's Vedāntism.

---

<sup>84</sup>S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927), 565. See, *RgVeda* III.38.7, IX.83.3; I.159.4; V.85.5.

### (1) Subjective delusion

The first set of analogies presents the world as a *subjective delusion*. “The manifestation of the empirical world and the individual self are the result of some form of delusion or subjective mistake.”<sup>85</sup> Śaṅkara’s favorite analogy of this type is that of a man who walks into a hut at dusk. He looks down and in his horror he sees a snake. The man jumps back in fear but, upon closer examination with a lantern, he realizes that it was not really a snake, but only a rope. This analogy, along with others which present the world as a mirage or a dream, clearly emphasize the subjective ignorance which leads us to view Brahman falsely. On a subjective level, we *think* we see something, but there is absolutely no objective basis for it. Another favorite metaphor of Śaṅkara which falls in this class is that of a man who, walking by the seashore, sees something glittering. Thinking it is a silver coin he excitedly rushes to the spot to pick it up only to discover that it is mother-of-pearl. Both metaphors picture the world as a subjective delusion; we think it is real, but upon closer examination discover the truth. Śaṅkara’s *advaitism* is all about providing this ‘closer examination.’ These analogies tend to equate *māyā* with *avidyā* (ignorance) and thus, the path of liberation is defined as “the eradication of individual ignorance.”<sup>86</sup>

It is important to notice that the two metaphorical analogies given above describe two very different reactions to the world, one of fear and aversion, the other of excitement and delight. Likewise, people may have different experiences with the world, but in either case they are presented as individuals deluded by subjective ignorance.

---

<sup>85</sup> R. King, 120.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

## (2) Objective illusion

Another set of analogies presents the world as an *objective illusion*, i.e. “an erroneous appearance caused by some objective circumstances.”<sup>87</sup> Śaṅkara often uses the analogy of people walking along the seashore who see the sun reflected multitudinously in the water. In this case there is an objective reason for the appearance. In the rope-snake analogy, the rope is clearly not a snake; and a second person entering the hut may not think the rope is a snake. However, in the reflection of the sun in the water, all observers see it, and the sun truly is causing the display upon the surface of the water. Another metaphor in this class would be that of Brahman, the cosmic magician who produces the world as “mere play” (*līlā*). A magician creates an illusion which everyone collectively sees as something other than it really is. This metaphor has important implications for the relationship of Brahman to the created world which will be discussed shortly but, for the present, it should be noted that both analogies in this class present an objective cause of the illusion and in both cases the illusion is something collectively experienced. In this case, objective Brahman, not the subjective individual, is the source of the illusion and it is an ignorance collectively shared, not just individually experienced. Śaṅkara is careful to avoid a nihilistic attitude concerning the reality of existence and these analogies do provide an objective basis for the world’s appearance. However, the danger of looking only at the metaphors in this class is that they could be used to imply dualism since in the analogy there is an objective basis for the illusion. Thus, the various models must be balanced by one another.

---

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

### (3) Non-difference from Brahman

A third and final class of analogies presents the world as *non-different from Brahman*. These analogies provide a very different perspective on *māyā* by “stressing the absolute non-difference of the world and Brahman.”<sup>88</sup> Śaṅkara describes a clay pot with space inside. If someone breaks the pot they find that the space inside the clay pot is actually ‘non-different’ from the surrounding space. Likewise, the world appears to have separate, individual existence, but is actually ‘non-different’ from Brahman.

Another powerful metaphor used by Śaṅkara in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* is that of the waves and the ocean. Here is the analogy in Śaṅkara’s own words:

We see, for instance, the waves, foam, bubbles and other modifications of the sea, although they really are not different from the sea-water, exist, sometimes in the state of mutual separation, sometimes in the state of conjunction etc... From the fact of their being non-different from the sea-water, it does not follow that they pass over into each other; and again, although they do not pass over into each other, still they are non-different from the sea...so the enjoyers and the objects of enjoyment do not pass over into each other, and yet they are not different from the highest Brahman. And although the enjoyer is not really an effect of Brahman, since the unmodified creation himself, in so far as he enters into the effect, is called the enjoyer, according to the passage “having created he entered into it” (*Taitt. Up. II.6*), still after Brahman has entered into its effects it passes into a state of distinction, in consequence of the effect acting as a limiting adjunct; just as the universal ether is divided by its contact with jars and other limiting adjuncts. The conclusion is, that the distinction of enjoyers and objects of enjoyment is possible, although both are non-different from Brahman, their highest cause, as the analogous instance of the sea and its waves demonstrates (*II.1.13*).<sup>89</sup>

These metaphors present *māyā* as a temporary misapprehension of unity as multiplicity. In these analogies the essence of *māyā*’s power or operation is that it makes unity (*abheda*) appear as diversity (*bheda*). However, in actual fact, there is no

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Deutsch and van Buitenen, 178.

fundamental distinction between the two; the air inside the jar is, in fact, the same as that on the outside; the waves are really part of the ocean itself. In our ignorance we view the world as multitudinous or particularistic, but with correct knowledge we will perceive that we were wrong and, in fact, the world is but a deceptive veil which shrouds the Absolute Unity of the universe. The distinctiveness of this third class is not in the individual subjective delusion versus corporate objective illusion axis, but in the ultimate identity of creation with Brahman.

In the first class of analogies such as the rope-snake metaphor, the snake is not a rope, but only an apprehension based on fears and preconceptions. In the second class of analogies, such as the magician performing an illusion, the magician creates the illusion, but is never identified with the illusion itself. Śaṅkara says “as the magician is not at any time affected by the magical illusion produced by himself, because it is unreal, so the highest Self is not affected by the world-illusion.”<sup>90</sup> However, in this third class of analogies, the two sides of the metaphor are actually identified, such as the air inside the pot and the air outside the pot or the waves and the ocean. This last class of metaphors provide a powerful illustration of monism, but risks sacrificing Brahman’s transcendence on the altar of complete immanence. Thus, as noted earlier, all these metaphors must be viewed in balance, yet none can be isolated from the others if one is to gain a clear understanding of Śaṅkara’s view of *māyā*.

The underlying theme in all three classes of *māyā* metaphors is that unity and multiplicity cannot be equally real. For Śaṅkara, *māyā* is “the phenomenon of multifarious distinct existence, based on wrong knowledge...although there is only one

---

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

highest Self devoid of all distinction.”<sup>91</sup> However, the exact relationship of Brahman to the multiplicity of the phenomenal world needs closer examination.

### c) Relationship of Brahman to the world

Śaṅkara arrives at his basic view of *māyā* through a rather simple syllogism:

Brahman alone is real and undifferentiated, the world is differentiated, therefore, the world must be unreal. Yet, how does this deceptive, illusory *māyā* attach itself so effectively to Brahman and what is the exact relation of Brahman to creation? These questions touch upon one of the great mysteries of Hindu philosophy. If, on the one hand, Brahman is too closely identified with the creation, then matter has to be viewed as unchanging and eternal or Brahman risks being identified with diversity and delusion. On the other hand, to separate Brahman too far from creation risks the possibility of a nihilistic denial of existence itself or, if one views the world as an objective reality apart from Brahman, dualism. Śaṅkara carefully avoids these pitfalls, primarily through his use of the levels of Brahman (higher and lower Brahman), and the corresponding two levels of knowledge. In reading Śaṅkara, one must exercise great caution not to forget that this two tiered framework informs everything Śaṅkara says concerning the relationship of Brahman to the world.

From the perspective of Ultimate Truth and the highest level of knowledge, the whole question of Brahman’s relationship to the world is, for Śaṅkara, illegitimate. Radhakrishnan makes the point that once Śaṅkara accepts Brahman as Absolute, then “the question of the nature of the world and its relation to Brahman *does not arise*, for the truth which disarms all discussion is seen as fact.”<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Śaṅkara’s

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* In contrast to Śaṅkara, the identification of unity and multiplicity is closer to Rāmāṅjua’s thought.

<sup>92</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 566. Śaṅkara’s dilemma is equally shared by the Christian scholastics who discuss such matters as ‘*simplicitas Dei*’ i.e. the belief that God is free from all composition whether physical, rational or logical and that He is not merely the sum of the Divine

commitment to monism renders any such questions which presuppose two distinctions which must be related to one another in some way (e.g. Brahman and creation) as questions of a lower rank, i.e. from the standpoint of a lower level of truth. As Śaṅkara himself says:

From the standpoint of ultimate truth, there can be no talk of any dichotomy between a Lord and His subjects, or of qualities such as omniscience etc... in the Self. For from the standpoint of highest truth no external conditions exist in the Self.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, from the standpoint of ultimate truth Absolute Brahman cannot be called the creator of the world. A truly enlightened person will, according to Śaṅkara, become awake to the non-difference of the individual soul and the Absolute through such texts as 'thou art that,' thus putting an end to the notion that the individual soul is suffering transmigration and also to the notion that the Absolute is a world creator.<sup>94</sup>

However, Śaṅkara is not content merely to state truth from the highest perspective and leave it at that, for he is motivated by the practical religious needs of people as much as he is by philosophical constructs. He argues vehemently against the *Sāṃkhya* philosophers, insisting that Brahman as *Īśvara* is the creator and sustainer of the phenomenal world. The *Sāṃkhya* philosophers believe that nature or matter (*prakṛti*), though unconscious, is an eternal, ultimate reality. Śaṅkara is particularly vigorous in his attack on the *Sāṃkhya* idea that Brahman is the efficient, but not material cause of the universe. The *Sāṃkhya* analogy is that of a king ruling over a realm. As king he is the efficient cause of whatever happens in the realm, but no one would argue that a king is also the material cause of his realm. Likewise, the *Sāṃkhya*

---

attributes. The discussion concerning '*Deus otiosus*' centers around God's involvement with contingent existence. Indeed, these are issues discussed throughout most religious traditions.

<sup>93</sup> Alston, 7, quoting Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahmasūtra II.1.13*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

philosophers say Brahman is like a Supreme Overlord who is the efficient cause (like a ruler) of the universe, but not the material cause since, from their perspective, the unconscious creation cannot proceed from the conscious Absolute.

In response, Śaṅkara says that the “Absolute has to be accepted as both the material and the efficient cause of the universe.”<sup>95</sup> He begins with the verse from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which states “In the beginning, my dear, there was Being alone, one only without a second.” (VI. 2.1,2) For Śaṅkara this verse dispels any dualistic formulations. Thus, he says that when we consider the cause of creation “we must admit the presence of an agent.” Śaṅkara continues,

The texts speak of the springing forth of the universe from the Absolute and its dissolution back into it... that from which anything springs forth and into which it dissolves back *is universally recognized to be its material cause.*<sup>96</sup>

The *Sāṃkhya* philosophers object to this because, they reason, if Brahman is the cause of the material world, then, when the universe is dissolved, Brahman would be infected with its impurity. Using analogies, Śaṅkara responds by pointing out that from a single lump of clay various dishes could be made, some of good, some of poor quality. But “when they are dissolved back into clay they do not infect the latter with their erstwhile qualities. Nor do various ornaments when melted back into gold infect the latter with their particular properties.”<sup>97</sup> Likewise, Brahman can be the material cause of the universe, but unaffected by its imperfections.

As to how unconscious matter proceeds from conscious Being, Śaṅkara uses an analogy of the intelligent potter who forms the unconscious clay pot. Of course, to

---

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 20, emphasis mine.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

admit a 'potter' and a 'pot' implies dualism, so Śaṅkara immediately returns to one of his favorite analogies mentioned earlier, that of the waves on the ocean. The waves appear to be "mutually distinct" just like the experiencer and the objects of experience appear to be distinct (e.g. a potter making a clay pot). The potter is different from the clay pot as the foam, water and waves are "not mutually identical." Yet, this does not affect that they are, from an ultimate sense, "non-different from the sea." This means, to use Śaṅkara's words, that:

It is the Creator Himself, not subject to modification of any kind, who enters into His effect as the ultimate experiencer. Nevertheless, when He has entered into the effect (the world) distinctions (i.e. apparent distinctions) are set up through external adjuncts, like the apparent distinctions arising in the ether through such external adjuncts as pots. Hence we maintain that there can very well be the distinction into experiencers and objects of experience, even though neither are different from the Absolute, just as in the case of the sea and its waves.<sup>98</sup>

It is clear that Śaṅkara is quite vigorous in his defense of the Absolute as the efficient as well as material cause of the universe. Yet, after his argument he is careful to qualify that he has been arguing only from the perspective of nescience. All the Vedic texts which teach about creation, Śaṅkara argues, "are not concerned with proclaiming the ultimate truth." Their subject matter is the lower realm of truth which "falls within the realm of practical experience." This, concludes Śaṅkara "is a point which should never be forgotten"...since "from the standpoint of ultimate truth these distinctions do not exist."<sup>99</sup> Thus, though Śaṅkara uses the word 'Absolute' throughout his argument, it is clear that he means the Absolute as *Īśvara*, a manifestation of *māyā*. He is thereby able to argue forcibly for the causal relationship of the Absolute and the

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 39.

universe and then, in the final analysis, relegate the entire argument to the realm of *māyā* and the whole discussion illegitimate within his monistic ontology.

This raises the more perplexing question as to the relationship of *māyā* to Brahman. Some *advaitins* have accused Śaṅkara of raising the importance of *māyā* to such a degree that he has, in affect, created a form of dualism. Vallabha, for example, calls his own metaphysical doctrine *śuddhādvaitavāda* (pure non-dualism) to distinguish it from Śaṅkara. Vallabha rejects the *māyā-vāda* (doctrine of cosmic ignorance) and, consequently, views Brahman as unaffected by anything whatsoever, and, therefore, to be pure (*śuddha*).<sup>100</sup> Śaṅkara does emphasize the relationship of *māyā* to *avidyā* (ignorance) but argues that precisely because the manifestation of *māyā* is rooted in our ignorance, it is not a *necessary* correlative to Brahman.<sup>101</sup> *Māyā* mysteriously hangs on Brahman, but Brahman is completely unaffected by *māyā*. It is through *our* ignorance that *māyā* is able to deceptively manifest itself as all of the particular objects of human knowledge and experience, including God. According to Śaṅkara, under the power of *māyā*, Brahman who is without attributes (*nirguṇa*) becomes *Īśvara* (Personal Lord) who is Brahman with attributes (*saguṇa*). Thus, all of the popular worship of Hinduism, as well as Muslim and Christian worship is relegated to the level of *māyā* and *avidyā*. As de Smet says, “Most Vedāntins really think that the Supreme God of Christianity corresponds to *saguṇa* Brahman and that our worship does not reach the real absolute which is *nirguṇa*.”<sup>102</sup> The implications this view has for Christian witness and dialogue are far-reaching and engenders a wide variety of

<sup>100</sup> Nikunja Vihari Banerjee, *The Spirit of Indian Philosophy* (London: Curzon Press, 1975), 207.

<sup>101</sup> W. S. Urquhart, 141.

<sup>102</sup> Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Madras: CLS, 1969), 240. Boyd is quoting de Smet in *Religion and Society*, vol. 10, #3 (1963): 22.

responses from the early Indian Christian theologians. The last component of Śaṅkara's philosophy to be examined is his understanding of salvation, or Hindu *mokṣa*.

#### 4. *Mokṣa*

##### a) *Mokṣa* defined

The third and final term in surveying the theology of Śaṅkara is the term *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the term used to describe the liberation received when one breaks through the veil of ignorance and realizes the true relationship of the soul to Absolute Brahman. According to the Upanishads, through ignorance humanity is trapped in the cycle of transmigration (*samsāra*) or rebirth. The transmigration of souls, certainly one of the most distinctive doctrines of Hinduism, does not emerge until the Upanishads. The *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (6:2.15-16) distinguishes three classes of souls: the soul that perceives its Oneness with Brahman, the soul that faithfully performs the appropriate Vedic sacrificial duties, and the soul that remains in ignorance. "The first is liberated from the round of rebirth, the second returns to this world in human form, while the third is condemned to the life of an insect or reptile."<sup>103</sup> Every act a human performs has a cause-effect relationship either helping to liberate (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of *samsāra* or further to embed the person into the ignorance and illusion of *māyā*. The term used in Hinduism for 'act' is *karma*. Escaping the web of *samsāra* and *karma* is the goal of Vedāntic Hinduism, and in terms of its place within the system, is tantamount to what would be called 'salvation' in the Christian tradition.

##### b) *Mokṣa* as the breaking of ignorance

For Śaṅkara, the key to experiencing *mokṣa* is to be liberated from ignorance. Śaṅkara envisions a system whereby the "unholy alliance" between ourselves and

---

<sup>103</sup> Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 59.

*avidyā* is broken and, experiencing *mokṣa*, we shall “exist unimpededly as the pure, undifferentiated bliss-consciousness that is Brahman.”<sup>104</sup> This is achieved when we recognize our true nature and the true nature of the universe. Thus, for him, the key to the truly enlightened man is right knowledge (*jñāna*) more than right works (*karma*).<sup>105</sup> At the early stage there should be a cooperation between knowledge and works, but the truly enlightened man will be liberated from the fetters of works, whether good or evil. The *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* sums up Śaṅkara’s view when it says, “all who worship what is not knowledge enter into blind darkness.”<sup>106</sup> The only true knowledge, and the essence of salvation in Śaṅkara, is found in realizing that our soul (*ātman*) is Brahman, anything less is ignorance and ‘blind darkness.’ Śaṅkara, in his *Upadeśasāhasrī*, says that the “one who has knowledge of the highest *ātman* is not subject to transmigration.”<sup>107</sup> Knowledge of the highest *ātman* means the realization of the identity of *ātman* and Brahman:

These *śruti* passages indeed reveal that transmigratory existence results from the understanding that *ātman* is different from Brahman... and thousands of *śruti* passages reveal that final release results from the realization of the identity of *ātman* and Brahman, as for example, “thou art that.”<sup>108</sup>

For Śaṅkara, only true knowledge truly liberates. The relationship of right knowledge with that of right action in *mokṣa* will now be examined.

---

<sup>104</sup> L. Stafford Betty, “A Death-Blow to Śaṅkara’s Non-Dualism? A Dualist Refutation,” *Religious Studies*, vol. 12, (1976): 281, 282.

<sup>105</sup> One of the most familiar analogies of *mokṣa* is that of the dirty mirror found in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*: Even as a mirror stained by dust shines brightly when it has been cleaned, so the embodied one when he has seen the (real) nature of the Self becomes integrated, of fulfilled purpose and freed from sorrow. When by means of the (real) nature of his self he sees as by a lamp here the (real) nature of Brahman, by knowing God who is unborn, steadfast, free from all natures, he is released from all fetters, (2:14-15).

<sup>106</sup> Urquhart, 125, quoting the *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

<sup>107</sup> Deutsch and van Buitenen, 126

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

c) *Mokṣa* as the liberation from the effects of *karma*

Unlike the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* school who believe that *śruti* texts motivate us toward right action which aid in our deliverance from *saṃsāra*, Śaṅkara asserts that “the *brahmavijñāna* (knowledge of Brahman) does not result from meditation, and it is not the result of action.”<sup>109</sup> The various acts called upon in the *śruti* texts to produce good *karma* are, for Śaṅkara, only concessions to the lower tier of knowledge and relate the worshipper to the qualified Brahman (*Īśvara*) who is associated with the power of *māyā*. Śaṅkara finds support for this familiar distinction in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* which, as part of the *Atharva Veda*, distinguishes between the higher knowledge of the Supreme Brahman and the lower knowledge of the empirical world. The most famous analogy in this Upaniṣad is that of the two birds:

Two birds, companions always united, cling to the same tree.  
Of these two, the one eats the sweet fruit and the other looks on without eating.  
*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad III.1.1*

Śaṅkara argues that the two birds must be understood metaphorically. The bird which “eats the sweet fruit” represents the individual self which strives and works, while the bird which “looks on without eating” represents the highest Self which has been delivered from all works, whether good or evil. For Śaṅkara, “good as well as evil works are annihilated through knowledge.”

Śaṅkara tends to be very skeptical of classifying *karma* as ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ since, in his view, we are unable to adequately discern between the two. One of his favorite analogies is that of a man standing on a moving ship looking at the shoreline. When the ship is in motion the trees on the shore appear to move, though, in fact, it is he who is moving. Thus, action may appear as inaction and inaction may appear as

---

<sup>109</sup> Moti Lal Pandit, 335.

action; we simply do not know. Thus, in the highest state of realization, all action must be transcended if one is to experience *mokṣa*.

Such a view placed Śaṅkara in direct conflict with such schools as *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* which taught that *karma* is inherent in all actions and cannot be avoided or transcended since it is an impersonal law of the universe. In contrast, Śaṅkara asserts that Brahman is the Inner Ruler (*antaryāmin*) “who distributes fruits to all active beings in accordance with their acts.”<sup>110</sup> Like a master who rewards or punishes his servants, so the Lord distributes the fruits of action to each person. To the charge that such a doctrine unduly associates Brahman with all of the cruelty, injustice and change associated with *karma*, Śaṅkara is quick to point out that the entire creation is an illusion and it is only through *māyā* that the individual soul is awake to these various external acts known as *karma*. It is therefore *saguṇa* Brahman, i.e Brahman as *Īśvara* who “proceeds with due regard to merit and demerit and thereby creates a universe having inequalities.”<sup>111</sup> The *samsāric* process is dependent on *Īśvara* as he is the causative agent. However, *Īśvara* is not responsible for the status of one’s birth since he merely “arranges the necessary fruits for the actions the soul has committed.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, *Īśvara* cannot be charged with either partiality or cruelty. Unfortunately, nor can there be room for grace whereby *Īśvara* may allot a birth status by “regarding previous merit but disregarding previous demerit.”<sup>113</sup> However, once we apprehend true knowledge, then all of this; creation, *karma* and even *Īśvara*, will fade away as if one has awakened from a dream. Thus, Śaṅkara is able to posit Brahman’s role in *karma*,

---

<sup>110</sup> A. J. Alston, *Śaṅkara on Creation* (London: Shanti Sadan, 1980), 45.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>112</sup> Moti Lal Pandit, 347.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

while transcending it all in the light of *mokṣa* whereby one realizes that there is only the One Absolute Brahman.

The implications of Śaṅkara's view that *mokṣa* involves transcending the whole notion of *karma* is significant because, as a true monist, this is consistently applied to all the fruits of *karma* such as ceremonial purity, caste, ritual, wearing of the sacred thread, etc. All of this is transcended in the light of the higher knowledge. Śaṅkara, in his *Upadeśasāhasrī*, tells the story of a Brahmin boy who came to his teacher in search of *mokṣa*. The teacher asks him, "Who are you, my dear?" The boy answers, "I am a Brahmin's son belonging to such and such a family etc." If such an answer is given (or, I was a householder or I am a wondering ascetic etc...) the teacher is to respond, "how do you wish to get out of the ocean of transmigratory existence?"...because you have wrongly identified "the *ātman* which is free from caste, family and purifying ceremonies, with the body." Thus, all the externals of ritualism, including caste and all the fruits of *karma* are ultimately to be transcended by right knowledge.<sup>114</sup> Even Scripture itself is ultimately to be transcended, for Śaṅkara says that "when knowledge springs up scripture ceases to be valid" (*BS 4.1.3*). *Mokṣa*, for Śaṅkara, is ultimately a matter of right knowledge; specifically, the knowledge which identifies *ātman* with the Absolute, Universal Brahman. All other components of liberation expounded in much of Hinduism, both philosophical and popular, are relegated to the level of *māyā*.

### 5. Conclusion

The single summarizing phrase of Śaṅkara's *advaita* is "*Brahman satyam, jagan mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva nā' paraḥ*" (Brahman is real; the world is unreal; the

---

<sup>114</sup> Deutsch and van Buitenen, 126-128.

individual is non-different from Brahman).<sup>115</sup> This phrase corresponds to the three main focal points of this survey of Śaṅkara. “Brahman is real” refers to Śaṅkara’s belief that Brahman alone constitutes the only reality in the universe, thus the doctrine of strict monism. The phrase “the world is unreal” reflects Śaṅkara’s understanding of *māyā* as the illusory nature of the phenomenal world. Finally, “the individual is non-different from Brahman” represents the supreme, liberating insight of Śaṅkara’s *advaita*. Through right knowledge we recognize that our *ātman* is “non-different” or One with the Absolute, undifferentiated, all-pervading Brahman of the universe.

The three areas which have been examined in both the Vedic and *advaitic* contexts are highly relevant to an understanding of Upadhyay’s theological work. The Vedic and *advaitic* perspective on God, the world, and salvation seem poles apart from the positive Thomistic statements about God and Aquinas’ integration of an Aristotelian respect for creation into his theology. Nevertheless, Upadhyay seeks a creative synthesis of the Hindu and Christian theological traditions. Chapter four will examine his belief in universal, primitive theism as well as his attitude toward the use of human reason in apprehending truth. Chapter five will focus on Upadhyay’s attempt to reconcile Śaṅkara’s *advaitism* with neo-Thomism.

---

<sup>115</sup> This common summarizing phrase can be found in many sources. For example, A. J. Alston, *Śaṅkara on the Absolute*, 62 who translates it as “This universe of plurality is verily an illusion. The reality is the undifferentiated Absolute and I am that.” See also, John Grimes, “*Radhakrishnan and Śaṅkara’s Māyā*”, 51 or, R. King, 107 or, Max Müller, *Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), 172. Müller claims that the summarizing Vedāntist preceded the phrase by saying, “in one half verse I shall tell you what has been told in thousands of volumes.” Müller used this phrase to complete his famous Royal Institution lectures given in March of 1894.

## Chapter Four

### **Brahmabandhav Upadhyay and Natural Theology: Building Christian Theology on the Foundation of Primitive Theism and Human Reason**

#### **A. Introduction:**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay concerning natural theology, especially as it relates to his understanding of universal theism and revelation. Influenced by his Brāhmo background, his extensive study of Thomism as well as the general milieu of 19th century thought, Upadhyay placed great value on the reliability and potential of human reason in constructing his natural theology. While reason had definite limitations for Upadhyay, it nevertheless remained vital in his understanding of natural theology. This chapter will seek to explore these issues, keeping in mind that, for Upadhyay, theology is never a subject for dry, dispirited analysis. Rather, his theology emerges out of his engagement with several contemporary movements such as Theosophy, 19th century Protestant Christianity and Neo-Hinduism, including the *Ārya Samāj* and various strands of the *Brāhmo Samāj*.

#### **1. Natural Theology**

Natural theology refers to the attempt to attain an understanding of God and his relationship to the universe apart from special revelation such as the Scriptures or God's revelation in Christ. Natural theology is particularly interested in proving God's existence by advancing several arguments based on reason and/or nature. The four most important of these arguments are as follows: The ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, and the moral arguments. The ontological argument, developed by Anselm in his 11th century publication *Proslogion*, is a rational argument for the existence of God. In the second chapter, Anselm defines God as

“that, than which nothing greater can be conceived.”<sup>1</sup> Essentially, he argues that to exist in reality is greater than to exist in thought; therefore, since we have the mental conception of God it is a logical necessity that God must exist. Two centuries later Thomism would reject Anselm’s argument.<sup>2</sup> The cosmological argument first appears in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, but finds a new and more influential expression in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and is developed by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* (I:2:3).<sup>3</sup> The cosmological argument observes that everything in existence has a cause and nothing is self-caused. Therefore, there must be a self-caused first cause, otherwise the chain of cause and effect could never have a beginning. Our very existence implies an ultimate first cause which is self-caused. The cosmological argument identifies this first-cause with God. The teleological argument, also rooted in Aristotle and developed by Aquinas, argues that the world everywhere reveals intelligence, harmony, order and purpose. The fantastic design and purpose demands a Designer and a cosmic mind outside of nature. Finally, the moral argument observes that there is a sense of the divine and an acknowledgment

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Charlesworth, *St. Anselm’s Proslogion*, 2nd. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 117-119. The 1st edition was published by Oxford University Press in 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Aquinas’ refutation is stated as follows: “Perhaps not everyone who hears this word ‘God’ understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word ‘God’ is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this precisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.” See, *Summa Theologica* I, 2, 2; P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 57. As James Barr said more recently in the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, “What about the famous words of Psalm 14:1, ‘The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God’? Scholars tend to assure us that these words imply no ‘theoretical’ atheism: they are not so much denying the existence of God, rather they question his active presence, his power in action. Maybe so. But I do not really see why this *must* be so; I do not see why the fool should not have thought, as the words directly say, that there is no God at all, that no God exists.” See, J. Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 153.

<sup>3</sup> The Vatican Council of 1870 endorsed Aquinas’ view of natural theology by declaring “the same holy mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can certainly be known by the natural light of reason from created things.”

of moral values and obligations which are present among all peoples of the world which cannot be dismissed as mere convention. Thus, there must be a personal, moral being who is the source of moral values in the universe and to whom all moral beings are ultimately responsible.<sup>4</sup> In addition to providing rational proofs for the existence of God, natural theology seeks to go beyond the mere fact *that* God is, and explores how much can be known about God. Thus, one's view of natural theology plays a particularly important role in the way Christians have understood revelation.

Natural theology has generally played a more central role in Catholic theology than in Protestant theology. This is due, in part, to the *duplex cognitio Dei* (two-fold knowledge of God) distinction which Calvin emphasized in his 1559 edition of the *Institutes* which was accepted by Reformed orthodoxy. A rigid barrier was erected between the general, non-saving knowledge of God and the special, saving knowledge of God as Redeemer. In contrast, through the writings of Aquinas, the Catholic church continued to accept a much greater continuity between *theologia naturalis* and *theologia revelata*. Thus, as a Catholic and as one guided by the *philosophia perennis*<sup>5</sup>, Upadhyay relies heavily on natural theology in his own writings.

## 2. Influences on Natural and Revealed Theology in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Thought

There were three main influences in 19th century thought which helped to shape the various formulations of natural theology in the Indian context. First, there

---

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller discussion of the arguments for the existence of God, see, J. Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God* (London: Macmillan, 1970). These four arguments represent the most important in Upadhyay's thinking, but do not reflect all of the arguments which had, even at that time, been suggested by thinkers such as Augustine, Descartes, Kant, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) commended Thomism as the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church.

was the influence of Positivism through the literary activity of Comte. The emergence of Positivism was marked by a growing confidence in the natural sciences and an accompanying emphasis on empiricism as the only verifiable path to true knowledge. Humanity had passed from the theological method to the metaphysical method to the positive method. To put it another way, humanity had passed from belief in the supernatural, to belief in abstract forces, to an unwavering faith in human reason, scientific observation, and discovery buoyed by the human spirit.<sup>6</sup> This philosophy placed great confidence in the ability of humanity to direct its energies toward constructing a new social ideal. Comte once wrote: “The object of our philosophy is to direct the spiritual reorganization of the civilized world.”<sup>7</sup> The force of this philosophy was felt globally as even India’s Hindu renaissance was influenced by positivism as is evident, for example, in the growing emphasis on reason which was exhibited by many of the neo-Hindu reformers.

Second, there was the influence of Darwinian evolution on 19th century views concerning God and revealed theology. Darwin’s famous treatise entitled, *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859, only two years before Upadhyay’s birth. Darwinian evolution coupled with the writings of Herbert Spencer who applied evolution to the field of philosophy (synthetic philosophy) made an important impact. Spencer sought to confine religious inquiry to the mystery of the absolute and the infinite. This left the natural world open for explanations based solely on human observation and reason with no input from any form of revealed theology. Spencer’s

---

<sup>6</sup> H. Sheldon, *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Robert Culley, n.d.), 79-81.

<sup>7</sup> A. Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, IV, 321 as quoted in H. Sheldon, *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*, 82.

synthetic philosophy rejected any causation which was rooted in intelligent agency, but looked to the impersonal and observable forces of matter and motion.<sup>8</sup>

Third, there was the influence of 19th century scholarship on the field of comparative religion. One of the most important shifts which occurred in discussions concerning natural theology was the shift from viewing natural theology from the perspective of what can be universally apprehended by human reason and intellect to an effort to do comparative examinations of the various theologies of world religions. Max Müller made this point in the Gifford Lectures delivered in Glasgow in 1888 when he said, “Natural Theology differed from what is now called Comparative Theology in that it paid but scant attention to the historical religions of the world, framing its ideal of what natural religion ought to be from the inner consciousness only.”<sup>9</sup> The emergence of the history of religions movement and comparative theology encouraged comparative analysis of the different world religions on a level without parallel up to that time. Upadhyay’s theological comparison of Śaṅkara’s *Advaita* Vedāntism with Aquinas’ Thomism is one of the fruits of this movement.

In addition to his knowledge of Indian philosophers, Upadhyay seems to be well acquainted with many of the key writers and thinkers in 19th century Europe. Quotes and responses to ideas prevalent in Darwin, Spencer, Comte, Müller and others all find their way into his writings.

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>9</sup> M. Müller, *Natural Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889), 53.

### 3. Thomas Aquinas and Natural Theology

It is impossible to examine the writings of Upadhyay without being impressed by his indebtedness to the writings and thought of St. Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274)<sup>10</sup>. Aquinas is widely regarded as the most important representative of natural theology in the thirteenth century. Indeed, his *Summa contra Gentiles* has been cited as the central work of the entire Middle Ages on Natural Theology.<sup>11</sup> This work was addressed to a Muslim audience which, like Upadhyay's Hindu audience, did not accept the authority of the Christian Scriptures. Thus, we are able to see how far Aquinas is willing to rely on natural theology. Aquinas also addresses, in both his *Summa Theologica* and his *Summa contra Gentiles*, issues which are of particular relevance to the Indian context. For example, he is convinced that an improper view of natural theology leads to the worship of natural objects. Furthermore, he argues against all views which "make God the mover and not the maker of the spheres,"<sup>12</sup> a view held by Aristotle and many Hindus, including many neo-Hindus of Upadhyay's time who accepted, almost without question, the eternity of matter.<sup>13</sup> As a Catholic, Upadhyay is extremely influenced by the Thomistic system, which he accepts. Robin Boyd's remark about Upadhyay that "all through his expositions one feels that the Angelic Doctor looms too large and the Bible too small"<sup>14</sup> fails to appreciate that, for

---

<sup>10</sup> The exact date of Aquinas' birth is uncertain, normally cited sometime between 1225 and 1227. Both Aquinas and Upadhyay died before they reached their fiftieth birthday.

<sup>11</sup> C. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1915), 235. In this chapter, wherever possible, Aquinas' quotations will be taken from the *Summa Theologica* rather than the *Summa contra Gentiles* if a similar thought is found in the former since the *Summa Theologica* often states the argument in a more condensed form. However, whenever relevant, the location of the elaborated argument in *Summa contra Gentiles* will be cited.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>13</sup> The Islamic professors, known as Mutakallemin, whom Aquinas addresses had sought to prove that the world was *not* eternal. Aquinas, following the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, argued that reason alone could not prove that the world was not eternal. See, Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, 255.

<sup>14</sup> R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 1994), 77.

Upadhyay, Thomism was the greatest exposition of the Bible. Thus, Thomism is an important source for Upadhyay's views not only on his understanding of natural theology which will be explored in this chapter, but in much of his theology.

### **B. Natural Theology in Upadhyay's Writings**

Upadhyay developed his understanding of natural theology and applied it to the Indian context through two major themes: First, his belief in Primitive Theism as the original and universal revelation to humanity; Second, his application of the Thomistic distinction between the natural foundation and the supernatural structure to the Indian context. In the first half of this chapter these themes will be explored, including an analysis of how Upadhyay's views were applied and differentiated in his disputes with various contemporary Hindu reform groups.

#### **1. Primitive Theism**

Traditionally, natural theology refers to our capacity, by nature and, indeed, by virtue of our humanity, to have a certain degree of knowledge about God. Furthermore, this awareness exists anterior to any special revelation through Christ, the Church, or the Bible.<sup>15</sup> This implies theistic universalism which is, essentially, what Upadhyay means by Primitive Theism. His thought on this is found recorded in the pages of the *Sophia Monthly*, *Sophia Weekly* and *The Twentieth Century* which he founded, edited and contributed to between 1894 and 1901.

In January 1894, Upadhyay founded the monthly periodical entitled *Sophia*. In the very first issue he sets out the purpose of the journal in very general terms. He lists the following five purposes of the journal:

1. To solve the fundamental problem - what is the end of man and how to attain it.
2. To represent faithfully to the Indian public the essential teachings of

---

<sup>15</sup> J. Barr, 1.

the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Darśanas, Samhitās and Purāṇas.

3. To expound the doctrines of the Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ.
4. To facilitate the comparative study of different religions - especially the ancient religious systems of India, modern Theism, and the Christian and Catholic Religion, - by setting forth their distinctive features in a popular way, and thus to help the seekers after truth to arrive at the true knowledge of the True Religion.
5. To discuss social and moral questions affecting the well-being of Indians.<sup>16</sup>

It is clear that this purpose statement was intended to cast a wide net to gather a large readership rather than appear too narrow or divisive. However, from the beginning one of the driving concerns of the journal is to demonstrate the universality of Primitive Theism. As shall be examined in due course, in a later re-statement of the journal's purpose this will be listed as the first purpose of the journal.

In the first issue, Upadhyay writes the first of what will eventually be a series of four articles entitled "Theism in the Vedas." In this first article he highlights two opposing interpretations of the Vedas. He contrasts the traditional view of *Sāyaṇa*, an ancient expounder of the Vedas, who taught that the Vedas embraced physiolatry, with the current *Ārya Samāj's* claim that the Vedas were monotheistic. Upadhyay does not openly endorse the views of Dayananda, but merely states that the two conflicting interpretations should be "put to the test of grammar and common sense." Nevertheless, it is clear that he favors the *Ārya* view and even points out that if it is proved true then it will be "a signal triumph over the opponents of Theism." However, while Upadhyay would welcome any support from the *Ārya Samāj*, he

---

<sup>16</sup> *Sophia: A Monthly Catholic Journal*, vol. 1, #1, Karachi: Printed at the "Phoenix" Press, (Jan, 1894): 1, 2; Lipner, ed., 3. Hereafter, this journal will be referred to as simply *Sophia Monthly*.

believes that natural Theism is rooted in the original creation of one man and one woman and is confirmed by the dictates of human reason.<sup>17</sup> He writes: “A man [sic]<sup>18</sup> is a born Theist. At the first dawn of his reason he naturally becomes a partaker of the universal light of Theism.”<sup>19</sup> This “universal light of Theism” serves as the foundation stone for Upadhyay’s understanding of natural theology.

Theism, as stated repeatedly in his writings, means belief in three things:

1. The existence of God
2. The moral sense in man
3. The law of retribution according to individual merit or demerit.<sup>20</sup>

For Upadhyay, these three statements affirm a universally revealed *personal* and *monotheistic* God who will hold us all accountable for our deeds. It is this personal, monotheistic God who is the ultimate source of all revelation and has provided a witness to himself without which there would be no basis for Primitive Theism. Upadhyay develops the theological basis for Primitive Theism along two major lines: the decree of God, and the presence of human conscience. A third, more traditional line of thought, which seeks to establish a basis for Primitive Theism

---

<sup>17</sup> That Upadhyay believes the 19th century Catholic affirmation of an historic Adam and Eve is made explicit in his article entitled “The Origin of Man,” also in the inaugural issue. He states that “the Catholic Church teaches that in the beginning God created one man and out of his substance created one woman and they were the procreators of the human race.” See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #1, (Jan. 1894): 6.

<sup>18</sup> I will not distract the reader by placing [sic] each time Upadhyay uses the word “man” to mean humanity. While this use of man sounds increasingly strange to modern ears, it was normative in most 19th century writings.

<sup>19</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #1, (Jan. 1894): 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* This three-fold definition is often repeated by Upadhyay. See, for example, *Sophia Monthly* (Jan., 1896), his public address against Theosophy in *Sophia Monthly* vol. 3, #4 (April, 1896): 1, or his article “Imagination in Religion” in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 11.

through the witness of the external creative order is not developed significantly by Upadhyay.<sup>21</sup>

### a) Sources of Primitive Theism

#### (1) The decree of God

In another article in the inaugural edition entitled “A Study of Hindu Philosophy,” Upadhyay asserts that the two most influential philosophies in India are the Vedānta and *Sāṃkhya* systems. Though *Sāṃkhya* is more ancient, he affirms that the Vedānta is more widely venerated. Nevertheless, he argues that despite the sublime efforts of all the Hindu philosophers, there are genuine limitations to our intellect which prevent us from adequately knowing the true essence of a being, whether a created being, or the Infinite Creator who is Being itself. Upadhyay states that “we are naturally incapable of having an immediate perception of the intrinsic nature of a being.” Yet, we are incurably interested and speculative about the essence of God. This, he argues, is due to our original, creational endowments. At creation our progenitors received the *donum superadditum* which Upadhyay describes as a “gift of sanctifying grace, a quality infused into their soul for which they were adorned with a special likeness to the divine nature, being raised to the rank of adopted children of God.” Though they were naturally incapable of knowing God, this was a superadded endowment of grace which enabled them to see Him as He is and gain the right of “the beatific vision.”<sup>22</sup> In another issue, Upadhyay writes on a

---

<sup>21</sup> I believe this is intentional. As will be explored in more detail in chapter five (p. 218f), Upadhyay is convinced that the emphasis on establishing God’s existence *via* creation ultimately reinforces the relatedness of God to creation and does not adequately preserve the important distinction that God has a necessary existence, while creation has a contingent existence.

<sup>22</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #4 (April, 1897): 1; Lipner, ed., 281. This demonstrates Upadhyay’s appreciation of Aquinas who taught that the *donum superadditum* was part of the original constitution of man as a divine gift. It cannot be regained after the Fall since it was not merited in the beginning. This is in contrast to the teaching of the Franciscan theologian Scotus who believed that it was a gift merited after the first act of Adamic obedience and could, therefore, be merited again through acts of obedience (*puris naturalibus*). The Protestant tradition, of course, rejected any notion of any innate

similar theme saying that “God designed from the outset to raise man, by some gifts higher than his nature could lay claim to, into an order which, not in degree only, but in its very essence, was superior to the mere position of a creature.”<sup>23</sup> Though this was lost in the Fall, Upadhyay declares that “our supernatural destiny remains intact because the *decree of God is immutable*.”<sup>24</sup> Upadhyay defines the doctrine of original sin as “the privation of sanctifying grace brought upon Adam’s descendants by his disobedience.”<sup>25</sup> Even though, through the Fall, we were deprived of this sanctifying grace, the decree of God remains. This decree is responsible for the universal aspiration after God and, therefore, forms an important building block to Upadhyay’s natural theology.

Following the Scholastics, Upadhyay distinguished between *cognitio actualis* (actual knowledge) and *cognitio habitualis* (latent knowledge). Despite the Fall, we have a latent aspiration after God even if we have no conscious or actual knowledge of that fact. The Scholastics further distinguished between *cognitio infusa* (infused knowledge) and *cognitio insita* (implanted knowledge). *Cognitio infusa* refers to knowledge gained by the ordinary operation of the mind and senses. *Cognitio insita*, on the other hand, refers to knowledge implanted by God. For Upadhyay, even though our adoption as the children of God is lost in the Fall, the decree of God

---

ability in man and insisted that any response to God or ability to do good is the result of *gratia praeveniens* (prevenient grace).

<sup>23</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #10 (Oct., 1895): 1; Lipner, ed., 268.

<sup>24</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1894): 9, emphasis mine. Throughout this thesis, unless otherwise noted, all emphasis in Upadhyay quotations occurs in the original articles.

<sup>25</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894): 12; Lipner, ed., 245. Upadhyay is influenced by the Thomistic idea that only the good has true metaphysical status. Evil has no positive reality, but is merely the privation of the good, a view which is present throughout Upadhyay’s writings.

continues as *cognitio insita* because it is not a learned knowledge, but is divinely implanted knowledge which lies latent in human hearts.<sup>26</sup>

For Upadhyay, the Christian position stands in direct contradiction to what he refers to as neo-Hindu revelation, namely post-Vedic Hindu philosophical thought.

In the July 1896 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, he states that

neo-Hinduism teaches that highly developed human reason can see God in his fulness, that revelation consists of messages about the supersensual world communicated to fallen humanity by great souls, that faith is the acceptance of truths, unperceivable by ordinary individuals, on the authority of commanding personalities who have perceived them by going through the process of culture and purification.

This is contrasted with Catholic doctrine which teaches

that finite reason, be it highly developed or not developed at all, is, by its nature, incapable of seeing God as he is. But the omnipotent power of grace, which neither belongs nor is due to human nature, but which is superadded to it by divine munificence, elevates man to a plane higher than the utmost reach of his innate capacity, impels him to penetrate into the very depth of the Infinite and Absolute.

This 'elevation' occurs by grace and is the result of a divine fiat. It is an act of God which is freely decreed, not "a development by culture and discipline which entitles man to such a supernatural privilege."<sup>27</sup>

## (2) Human conscience / Innate moral law

The second basis for universal Primitive Theism is the presence of human conscience. Upadhyay defines conscience as "that mysterious power within us which bids us avoid certain acts as displeasing to God or morally evil, and do other acts as morally commendable or pleasing to God."<sup>28</sup> He uses the term "conscience"

---

<sup>26</sup> This is not to be confused with the Scholastic *cognitio Dei intuitiva* which is available only through the Beatific vision, nor should this be confused with the Platonizing language of *cognitio innata* since, for the Scholastics, this knowledge is ultimately rooted in God's free activity.

<sup>27</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896): 8-14; Lipner, ed., 60, 61.

<sup>28</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #3 (Mar., 1895): 5.

interchangeably with a range of similar expressions such as, “interior voice,” “voice of nature,” and “innate moral Law.”

Traditionally, conscience has been understood to contain two key elements: *synderesis* and *conscientia*. *Synderesis* refers to humanity’s collective knowledge of certain universally binding rules or principles of moral conduct. *Conscientia* refers to the ability to relate these general rules or principles to specific cases. Upadhyay’s writings concerning conscience are overwhelming directed toward *synderesis*.<sup>29</sup> He seeks to establish the antiquity and universality of human conscience.

The antiquity of human conscience was challenged in the 19th century by Darwinian evolution which taught that human conscience developed gradually from extremely primitive instincts and without any reference to a Creator. Upadhyay, who regularly responds to evolutionary arguments, argues that the presence of conscience is rooted in the original creation. For him, conscience must necessarily precede the Fall and is a necessary feature of any free being. Presumably the first man had performed many acts in agreement with the voice of his conscience prior to the Fall which was the first time its dictates were disobeyed.

Upadhyay roots the universality of conscience in his prior acceptance of the classical moral argument for the existence of God. First, he affirms that there is a moral Law which is binding on the entire universe. Second, a true Law, by

---

<sup>29</sup> The one reference I found related to *conscientia* is found in the June, 1894 issue of *Sophia Monthly* where Upadhyay gives the following syllogism: “Theft is contrary to the Eternal Law. The appropriation of a certain article is theft. Therefore I cannot appropriate that article without violating the Eternal Law.” He goes on to cite the narrative from Herodotus who wrote about Greeks who refused, in reference to conscience, to eat the bodies of their fathers who died and Callatians who normally eat their fathers who, in reference to conscience, refused to cremate them. Upadhyay, quoting Father Rickaby’s *Moral Philosophy*, says of the apparent contradiction of the two consciences that “Callatian and Greek agreed in the recognition of the commandment, honour thy father and thy mother...the difference was upon the *applying minor*, (vol. 1, #6): 3; Lipner, ed., 250. Some theologies prefer the term *synteresis* rather than *synderesis* as used in this research.

definition, must be promulgated or it is not true law. Upadhyay states that “promulgation constitutes an essential condition of law.” Third, a law must support the general good and it must emanate from a party responsible for the welfare of the community. There is no question that God’s law supports the general good and that He has ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the community. The important issue is promulgation. Upadhyay argues that the divine promulgation has occurred by virtue of the fact that God “impresses upon the minds of his subjects his will as a norm of their actions.” As Divine Ruler, he promulgated the Eternal Law by placing it as a “precept to all nature.”<sup>30</sup> This Eternal Law governs all being, inanimate, irrational and rational. The uniqueness of human rationality is that we are not only subject to Eternal Law, but we are “free to regulate [our] actions in conformity or deformity with it.”<sup>31</sup> God has written on the fleshly tablets of all human hearts not only His decrees, but knowledge of His Person: “It is through conscience, then, that we come to the knowledge of the All-Holy God in conforming to Whom lies our perfect well-being.” Likewise, “it is through conscience we know that sin is the only evil that deprives man of his filial right by defacing the Divine image impressed upon his soul and making him unlike his Creator.”<sup>32</sup> In the absence of this universal gift of conscience “all religion, worship, law and morals will be reduced to mockery.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, the antiquity and universality of conscience provides the second basis for Primitive Theism.

---

<sup>30</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894): 12-15; Lipner, ed., 246. For Upadhyay, this universal precept can be rationally determined and is therefore more than merely *e consensu gentium*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* The longer passage from which this quote is taken may be seen on page 200 of this chapter.

<sup>32</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #11 (Nov., 1896): 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

### **b) Moral argument for Primitive Theism**

One of the challenges to the classical arguments for the existence of God is that they were articulated by people who lived within a Christian milieu. What they sought to prove from “nature” did not arise, to use James Barr’s phrase, “from any dispassionate examination of the world,” but was, even unknowingly, viewing the natural world through the eyes of revealed theology.<sup>34</sup> The first three classical arguments make no reference to any other religions which, for example, may not define God as “that, than which nothing greater can be conceived,” or, as in the case of *advaitins*, do not see the created world as a glorious testimony to God’s presence.

The moral argument for the existence of God is the only one of the classical arguments which makes reference to the beliefs and practices of other religions as a universal testimony to a moral being who has infused the universe with Divine values. Upadhyay remains optimistic about the usefulness of this argument and employs it in support of his belief in Primitive Theism and to refute what he sees as the distorted conception of God present in neo-Hindu thought.

#### **(1) Contribution of other religions in establishing Primitive Theism**

The existence of a universal Moral Law which has been promulgated into the hearts of all humanity would naturally find its expression, however distorted, in the multifarious expressions of human religion. Upadhyay writes,

even in extremely corrupt systems of religion we find fragments of

---

<sup>34</sup> J. Barr, 147, 148. Barr states, “once explorers and missionaries began to travel into Africa, among the Pacific islands, and among the native Americans, they were puzzled to find persons who did not conform to the outlook that dogma considered to be universal to humanity. God? Never heard of such a being. Sin? No idea what you are talking about. Creation? No one here ever bothered about that. In other words, the view of humanity in traditional Christianity, whether built upon biblical grounds or upon natural theology, was the product of a particular religious history and cultural situation.” Upadhyay is far more optimistic about certain universal conceptions present in all religions. He attributes any major deviances from the three central affirmations articulated earlier in this chapter as a testimony to the blinding effects of willful sinfulness. See, J. Barr, 154.

Theism. It is desirable that these fragments be gathered together to demonstrate historically the universal and primitive character of Theism to those who have departed from it, and thus enable them to apprehend the supernatural which elevates nature to partake of immortal perfection and bliss.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, Upadhyay is willing to accept evidence from other religions, but is able to dismiss it as a corruption whenever its declarations are at variance with Catholic doctrine. He triumphantly declares that the Catholic doctrine of Primitive Theism “has been marvelously corroborated by modern researches. Almost all modern antiquarians are inclined to believe in the Catholic theory and they have been so encouraged by fresh explorations of ancient records.” Indeed, Upadhyay goes on to argue that,

the theory that the primitive religion of man was fetishism or nature-worship arose from the error of considering the savage tribes as prototypes of our primitive parents. Now-a-days few well informed men hold the opinion that the religion of the modern savages was the original religion of man. The worship of stocks and stones and natural agencies is a corruption of pure ancient Theism. Theism has not been evolved, as the Comtists and Agnostics think, out of fetishism or physiolatry; rather the latter is a degenerate offspring of the former.<sup>36</sup>

Because Upadhyay roots universal, Primitive Theism in the creational decree of God and the presence of human conscience, he does not feel bound to find

---

<sup>35</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (July, 1900); Lipner, ed., 138.

<sup>36</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 11, 12; Lipner, ed., 65. It is worth noting that Upadhyay is articulating this view many years before W. Schmidt published *The Religion of Earliest Man* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1934). Upadhyay’s denunciation of the founder of Positivism is based on his awareness of the emerging Kulturkreis anthropology which was challenging the evolutionary hypothesis. Yet, as is characteristic of Upadhyay, he heaps praise on positivism when he finds a point of agreement. See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #3 (March, 1897): 13. In this article entitled “The Thirteenth Century,” Upadhyay praises Mr. Frederic Harrison, the leader of Positivism in England at the time. Harrison’s denial that the Middle Ages were “dark” supported Upadhyay’s position of the enlightened Catholic splendor of the medieval papacy under Innocent III. Upadhyay, likewise is free to agree with the *Ārya Samāj* when their teachings coincide with his own and attack them when he sees them in error. For example, Upadhyay applauds the *Ārya* desire to uncover Primitive Theism in the Vedas and their belief in a personal God. However, they are routinely condemned for their belief in the eternity of matter.

monotheistic theism in the Vedas, even though this would strengthen his own position. In his second article entitled “Theism in the Vedas” which appears in the February 1894 issue, Upadhyay makes good his promise from the January issue to compare the teaching of Dayananda and Sāyaṇa with “grammar and common sense.” However, rather than the expected endorsement of Dayananda’s views, Upadhyay exposes his faulty exegesis of the Vedic texts, especially his understanding of the word “*purohita*” which Dayananda used to support primitive belief in the eternity of matter.

In the first mantra of the *R̥gVeda* there are five attributes given to *Agni*. The first is the word “*purohita*” which in this context means ‘one who is placed before’ or ‘placed in front.’<sup>37</sup> In its normal usage it refers to those noted for their piety who are placed before the altar of a god to offer prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the people. Thus, the word “*purohita*” commonly means “priest.” However, when used in reference to a god, as it is here, it carries the connotation of ‘intermediary.’

Dayananda, in contrast, translates it as “one who holds this universe,” meaning one who holds the eternally existent materials which will form the universe.<sup>38</sup>

Dayananda and the *Ārya Samāj* affirmed the eternality of matter and thus God was not the Creator, but the Maker, of the universe. He merely organized pre-existing matter. Upadhyay argues that Infinite power emphatically implies absolute self-sufficiency:

A power is finite simply because it cannot act without an auxiliary.  
A power is infinite because it can act without an auxiliary. Is it not  
a mockery to say that God is infinite, but cannot create, that he is

---

<sup>37</sup> In the original this is a beautiful play on words. For *Agni* is the first word in the *R̥gVeda*, the first deity invoked and the first intercessor to be “placed before” to intercede for others.

<sup>38</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 12.

like a potter in need of some external agency to carry out His design?<sup>39</sup>

Thus, even though the *Ārya Samāj* supported universal theism and sought to prove it from the Vedas, Upadhyay would not accept their evidence since he considered the theism to which they were bringing India a deficient theism positing a God who could not create. The God extolled by the *Ārya* is often called the “potter” God in Upadhyay’s writings and serves to highlight an important distinction within traditional Hinduism which Upadhyay was unwilling to regard as acceptable Christian theology in the Indian context.

### (2) God of Primitive Theism versus “Potter God”

Upadhyay’s application of Primitive Theism to the Indian context calls for a response to the prevalent Indian distinction between *upādāna kāraṇa* and *nimitta kāraṇa*, rooted in the Indian belief in the eternity of matter. Many Indian theologians argue that the world has two causes, the substantial or material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*), and the agent cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*). The relationship between God and the world is likened to a potter and the clay pot. The potter shapes and forms the clay, he is the *causal* agent, but he is not the *material* cause of the clay. Likewise, God is the causal agent of the universe, but the material substance of the universe is eternal.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (Mar., 1894): 10, 11.

<sup>40</sup> This seems to be one of the perennial issues in philosophy. According to Kant, the question whether the world is eternal or has a beginning in time is the first and basic problem of human reason. The early Greek philosophers assumed that matter was eternal. Aristotle (later challenged by the Stoics and Epicureans) “proved” that the world was eternal, which seemed in direct contradiction to revealed theology. In the Middle Ages, this problem had to be resolved if the marriage of faith and reason was to be consummated. Aquinas believed that revelation teaches that the material universe has a beginning. Philosophically, the infiniteness of God as the Cause of all Effects implies the possibility of infinite series of causes “in the great chain of being” and thereby infinite effects. This opens the door to the theoretical possibility of an eternal universe. In *Summa Theologica* I, 46, 1 Aquinas (refuting the Latin Averroists) argues that “nothing except God can be eternal... for it has been shown above that the will of God is the cause of all things.” On the other hand, while demonstrating that reason cannot *disprove* the doctrine of creation, St. Thomas goes on to admit that reason cannot *prove* it either. In I, 46, 2 Aquinas states (against the Augustinians) “that the world did not always exist we hold by faith alone: it cannot be proved demonstratively; which is what was said above of the mystery of the Trinity. The reason for this is that the newness of the world cannot be demonstrated from the

Upadhyay calls such a theism a “childish” understanding of the infinite nature of God. The fundamental quality of God’s infinite nature is that it not only exceeds the finite, but it utterly transcends it:

A painter or an architect requires some external auxiliary or substratum to transfer his idea to reality. How could God act without any help? The greater the competence the less is the help required; the infinite the competence, infinitely less, that is, *nil* is the help required. God is omnipotent. He is not in need of any auxiliary in his act. To say that he must have a substratum as a basis of his action is to predicate limitation of him.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, Aquinas made this same point in *Summa Theologica* I, 45, 2 when he said,

For when anyone makes one thing from another, this latter thing from which he makes [the material cause] is presupposed to his action, and is not produced by his action; thus the craftsman works from natural things, as wood or brass, which are caused not by the action of [his] art, but by the action of nature. So also nature itself causes natural things as regards their form, but presupposes matter. If therefore God did only act from something presupposed, it would follow that the thing presupposed would not be caused by Him. Now it has been shown above (Q. 44, AA. 1, 2), that nothing can be, unless it is from God, who is the universal cause of all being. Hence it is necessary to say that God brings things into being from nothing.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, Upadhyay dismisses Dayananda’s God because he “only exceeds finite beings in degree, but does not transcend them. He is only a stronger creature.”<sup>43</sup> However, rather than cite Aquinas as an authority, Upadhyay wisely uses the very Vedas which Dayananda had used to substantiate a God who cannot create. In contrast, Upadhyay claims that the Vedas substantiated the Thomistic position:

Neither there was mortality nor immortality nor the knowledge of night and day; that alone breathed without air, self-sustained; there

---

world itself.” See, Anton Pegis, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1945), 449, 453. This issue will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

<sup>41</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 4; Lipner, ed., 208.

<sup>42</sup> A. Pegis, 435, *Summa Theologica*, 1.45.2.

<sup>43</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (Mar., 1894): 11.

was nothing else besides that (*RgVeda* 8.7.17.2).<sup>44</sup>

In his view, this verse precludes the possibility of the eternity of matter. Upadhyay concludes by declaring that the more he studies the ancient literature of India, the more is he “convinced of the primitiveness of Theism.” Indeed, “amidst the darkest aberrations of the Indian intellect, irrepressibly flashes out the sublime idea of the One True God, to be darkened and corrupted again by the perversity of man.”<sup>45</sup> Of course, the Primitive Theism which Upadhyay celebrates is not a “Potter God,” but a transcendent God who is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. This leads to the other major argument for the existence of God used by Upadhyay; namely, the cosmological argument.

### c) Cosmological argument for universal theism: The Indian application

Aquinas’ famous five proofs, or more accurately ‘ways,’ to substantiate the existence of God are, in fact, five aspects of the one cosmological argument.<sup>46</sup> Like Aquinas, Upadhyay is optimistic about the cosmological argument which, as has been observed, states that everything in existence has a cause and nothing is self-caused. Therefore, there must be a self-caused first cause, otherwise the chain of cause and effect could never have a beginning. Upadhyay affirms that any reflecting human mind should recognize the reality of a transcendent, eternal Creator. The only other option is to “swallow the absurdity that being proceeds from non-being.”<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay is using the Indian notation of the Vedas. In common western Indological notation this reference would be 10.129.2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa*, 62. The five “ways” of Aquinas are argued in *Summa Theological* I, 2, 1-3 and in *Summa contra Gentiles* I, 13f. They are elucidated in the greatest detail in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. Kreeft makes the point that, although Pascal observed that “the God of the philosophers is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,” Aquinas is primarily concerned to refute the atheist. Nevertheless, for him, the Biblical God is the only viable candidate for First Cause, Unmoved Mover, Perfect Being, Cosmic Designer, etc. Kreeft, 62.

<sup>47</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898): 10-14; Lipner, ed., 20.

Upadhyay criticizes John Stuart Mill who could not accept an eternal, uncaused being because he had a “wrong idea of causality.” Mill, in Upadhyay’s view, viewed causality as a necessary sequence of events whereby one phenomenon is related to the next as cause and effect. However, in creation we often see phenomena in a necessary sequence which are not in a causal sequence. Upadhyay cites the example of day and night which follow a necessary sequence, but it would be “absurd to say that day is the cause of night.” In contrast, Upadhyay argues that “the essential idea involved in causality is the transition of a being from non-being, and not necessary sequence.”<sup>48</sup>

For Upadhyay, this important distinction was clearly derived from Thomism.

In *Summa Theologica* I, 45, 1 Aquinas states the following:

We must consider not only the emanation of a particular being from a particular agent, but also the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God; and this emanation we designate by the name of creation. Now what proceeds by a particular emanation is not presupposed to that emanation. Thus, in the generation of man, we must say that he does not exist before being generated; but is made from *not-man*...Therefore as the generation of a man presupposes the *non-being* which is *non-man*, so creation, which is the emanation of all being, presupposes the *non-being* which is *nothing*.<sup>49</sup>

For Upadhyay, the cosmological argument is attested by reason, but, as seen above in his attack against the “Potter God,” he is willing to cite evidence from other quarters should it appear helpful, especially Hindu sources. Upadhyay advances the cosmological argument within the Indian context by utilizing the famous Vedāntic definition of Brahman as *sat* (positive being), *cit* (intelligence) and *ānanda* (bliss), i.e. the doctrine of *saccidānanda*.

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> *Summa Theologica* I, 45, 1; Pegis, ed., 433, 434.

He begins by quoting Upanishadic evidence that in the beginning there was one Being (*sat*) who is the universal cause of all creation:

The Upanishads declare along with reason: *ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt nānyat kiñcana miṣat* [Ait. Up. 1.1] (in the beginning there was only one being; nothing else existed). This *mantra* (verse) contains the essence of the revelation given to man by God in the beginning - a revelation which has been disfigured and corrupted by human perversity, but whose light is visible even in the darkest religion of the world, and on which is based the supernatural religion of the Catholic Church.<sup>50</sup>

According to Upadhyay, primitive Hinduism taught that the infinite, absolute being (*sat*) who, in the beginning, alone existed should be worshipped as First Cause.

Indeed, all being arose from him. Upadhyay writes, "Parabrahman is the First Cause.

He is also *sat* (being) for *nothing* cannot be a cause. If we affirm the cause we cannot deny that it is. If the cause is not, it is not a cause." He then challenges the

Theosophic interpretation of theism which refused to refer to Brahman as being,

since in their view, any such description implied limitation:

We can never understand how Mrs. Besant and her theosophists say that 'being' cannot be predicated of Parabrahman. He is not only being but a purely positive being. We have already shown that He is infinite. When we say a being is finite we affirm limits; and when we say a being is infinite, we deny them.

He concludes this point by saying, "let the whole world sing out in His praise, who is pure being, the mystic *mantra* of the Vedānta: *Om tat sat* (that is being).<sup>51</sup>

Upadhyay then seeks to demonstrate that when Brahman is properly understood as *cit* (intelligence) it provides additional proof of God's existence. He

---

<sup>50</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898): 10-14; Lipner, ed., 21. This quote anticipates some of the later discussion concerning Upadhyay's views on revelation. It is unclear what religion(s) Upadhyay had in mind when he said that God's light was visible, even in "the darkest religion of the world." He is certainly not referring to *advaitism*, but might be referring to the later pantheistic accretions.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

begins by quoting Jaime Luciano Balmez, a 19th century Spanish writer, philosopher and Christian thinker. Balmez affirms that the First cause has true existence, what Upadhyay has referred to as “positive being.” Defined in this way, no finite, limited “effect” can exist, at least not in any way comparable to the infinite, First Cause. However Balmez goes on to seek the relationship between being and non-being or between infinite First cause and limited, finite effects. He asks, “the cause exists, the effect does not exist, the cause does not produce it, but may produce it; what is the relation of that which exists to that which does not exist?”<sup>52</sup> His answer is that the connection must be intelligence because “intelligence alone can relate to that which does not exist; for it can *think the non-existent*... if something has begun, something must have existed from all eternity, and that which began was *known* by that which existed.”<sup>53</sup>

For Upadhyay, Balmez’ observation of the “intelligence” link between being and non-being is clearly taught in the Upanishads: “Does not the Vedānta, the ancient repository of human wisdom, say the same thing? It affirms with admirable brevity the fact of God’s intelligence: *Sa aikṣata lokān nu sṛjā* [Ait. Up. 1.1] (He beheld: shall I create the *lokas*)?”<sup>54</sup> The crucial point here is that Brahman “beheld” before creating. Upadhyay claims, citing Śaṅkara, that Brahman “beheld the universe not as yet actualized. He beheld the origin, the preservation and the destruction of the universe.”<sup>55</sup> In short, the whole universe existed ideally in the

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*; Lipner, ed., 22.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Jaime Luciano Balmez lived from 1810-1848. His life works, published in Barcelona, compose 33 volumes.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*; Lipner, ed, 23.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* This, as Upadhyay points out, is in direct contradiction to the *Sāṃkhya* theory that the universe is created by impersonal, unintelligent *prakṛti*, i.e. the idea that creation is the result of the impersonal imbalance between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*.

intelligence of God from all eternity. This, for Upadhyay is clearly taught by the Vedāntic Rishis because they wrote that Brahman “created *lokas* (worlds).” The root meaning of the word *loka*, observes Upadhyay, is “that which is beheld.” He concludes this point by remarking how profound it is that even the ancient Rishis knew “that this universe has its root in intelligence (*cit*).”<sup>56</sup>

A proper application of the third part of the Upanishadic definition of God, “*ānanda*” (bliss), to the cosmological proof does not appear in the January 1898 issue. He merely states that the article will be continued in a later issue of *Sophia Monthly*. Unfortunately, the conclusion of this article does not seem to appear in any of the subsequent issues.<sup>57</sup> However, from other more extensive developments of *ānanda* which appear after January 1898 one can reasonably construct Upadhyay’s views. Two themes consistently emerge in relation to how Upadhyay applies the doctrine of *ānanda* to creation. Both of these themes will be briefly explored.

First, *ānanda* emphasizes Divine joy. When before creation God “beheld” the universe it created delight and Divine joy:

If a painter gets an idea of a picture repugnant to him, he never thinks of bringing his idea into actuality. He employs his pencil only on those ideas which please him. God beholds all finite beings contained in his infinitude and takes delight in them because they are like his own self. It is this delight, this complacency, which leads to the transfer of the idea into the actual. If the finite ideas had repelled the divine will, there would have been no actual fructification. Fecundity is the result of the complacent repose of a being upon its like. Creation, then, is the outflow of bliss (*ānanda*) which sweetens the divine bosom.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* *Loka* comes from the root ‘*lok*’ meaning ‘to know’ or ‘to perceive.’

<sup>57</sup> Upadhyay does repeat the first two themes in subsequent issues. For ‘*sat*’ see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #10 (Oct., 1898): 150; for ‘*cit*’ see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (March, 1899): 238, 239.

<sup>58</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #8 New Series (4 Aug., 1900); Lipner, ed., 222.

Significantly, the last line contains a quotation from the Upanishads which states that “creation is an overflow of bliss (*ānanda*).”<sup>59</sup> Perhaps it is this quote which causes Upadhyay to assert in an earlier article that “the Vedānta teaches that *ānandam* (Bliss) is the Supreme Cause of the universe.”<sup>60</sup> *Ānanda* represents the actualization, or to use his words, “the transfer of the idea into the actual” of what was previously only the eternal, divine thought (*cit*).

The second key idea which relates *ānanda* to creation is more explicitly related to the cosmological proof, especially as developed by Aquinas. *Ānanda* reminds us that creation remains an act of Divine freedom, not necessity. To use Aquinas’ language, creation is “contingent being,” i.e. it exists not in its own power, but through the free act of a First Cause. In the August 1898 issue, Upadhyay emphasizes the freedom inherent in *ānanda*:

He is not in need of entering into relationship with the finite for the sustenance of His being and the satisfaction of His nature. Essential bliss (*ānanda*) implies self sufficiency. A being obliged to form alliance with something other than its own self cannot be essentially happy.<sup>61</sup>

Upadhyay’s argument would surely proceed as follows: Before creation, the First Cause alone existed as positive Being (*sat*). The First Cause, identified by the Rishis as Brahman, “beheld” the universe, i.e. an eternal conception in the intelligence (*cit*) of God. Finally, Brahman must not create out of necessity. As *ānanda* Brahman

---

<sup>59</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, tr. *The Principal Upaniṣads*, BĀU IV. 3. 32 (London: Hyman, 1953, 1989), 266.

<sup>60</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (Mar., 1899): 239. This statement occurs in the very last issue of *Sophia Monthly* and comes not unsurprisingly in an article opposing Mrs. Besant and the Theosophical Society’s involvement in the founding of the *Hindu College at Benares*. A similar reference to *ānanda* as the “Supreme Cause of the universe,” may be found in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 114.

<sup>61</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 119; Lipner, ed., 27. See also, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6, New Series (21 July, 1900): 9; Lipner, ed., 86. The relationship of Śaṅkara’s *māyā* and Aquinas’ “contingent being” will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

creates as a free act, with no need to come into any relation with the finite. These three aspects of Brahman testify to the presence of genuine insight within Hinduism. Furthermore, together they form a confirmation of the cosmological proof since, for Upadhyay, the human mind “cannot rest until it reposes on an eternal being which is itself uncaused but is the cause of all phenomena.”<sup>62</sup>

#### **d) *Sophia* and Primitive Theism**

Within the pages of *Sophia Monthly* one encounters not only a growing interest in establishing Primitive Theism, but an increasing optimism about how much can actually be known about God through natural theology. In 1896, two years after the founding of *Sophia*, Upadhyay restates the periodical’s purpose in an article entitled “Our New Programme.” Here we find a much stronger affirmation of the exclusivity of his Christian commitment. Of the eleven points stated in “Our New Programme,” it is the first which is of particular interest here. His first point states that the purpose of *Sophia* is, “To show on rational and historical grounds that Theism was the primitive religion of man; that fetishism, nature-worship, pantheism, polytheism, and other corrupt forms of religion are of later origin.”<sup>63</sup> Upadhyay goes on in this first point to list the exact same three points noted two years earlier in his definition of theism. While this statement in *Sophia* does not represent a major shift in purpose for Upadhyay, it is a rather forceful statement acknowledging what had, in fact, been a key focus throughout the life of the journal. Furthermore, Upadhyay expounds with greater detail the content of what he calls “primeval light, that ancient

---

<sup>62</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898): 10-14; Lipner, ed., 20.

<sup>63</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #1 (Jan., 1896): 4; Lipner, ed., 9.

truth” known as “Primitive Theism.”<sup>64</sup> In the October 1896 edition of *Sophia*

*Monthly*, Upadhyay lists six elements of Primitive Theism:

1. God, the *Father* Almighty, is the *Creator* of all things visible and invisible.
2. He is self-sufficient, all-perfect, all-wise, and His Knowledge, which is identical with His essence, can never be subject to any condition, limitation or imperfection.
3. That man has free-will and can choose good or evil.
4. That he will be rewarded according to his merit or demerit.
5. That sin is a *deliberate* offence against the infinite majesty and goodness of God; that no amount of suffering and humiliation on a sinner’s part can *entitle* him to regain his filial right; that *guilty* suffering has no value in the economy of infinite justice; that a sinner can be saved only by the bounty of God, a bounty that renders to infinite justice its full due and yet remains a bounty.
6. That final bliss consists in being like God and seeing Him; that imagining oneself to be God is not salvation but the height of folly and pride.<sup>65</sup>

The first primitive belief in the existence of God stated two years earlier has now been expanded to include points one and two above. The second affirmation of a universal moral sense in man has been expanded to points three and five above. Finally, the third point regarding the law of retribution according to individual merit or demerit has been expanded to include points four and six. Thus, the same essential ideas are expressed, but the expansion of the ideas reveal several key additions. First, Upadhyay extends the idea of God’s existence to include God as

---

<sup>64</sup> Upadhyay seems to exceed Aquinas in his optimism regarding what can be known about God through nature. Aquinas in *Summa Theologica* I, 2, 1 (Reply Obj. 1) says, “To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, inasmuch as God is man’s beatitude. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching; even though it is Peter who is approaching...” See, A. Pegis, ed., 19. Nevertheless, Upadhyay does have limitations on his use of nature as is pointed out later in this chapter on page 197.

<sup>65</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #10 (Oct., 1896): 7.

Father and as Creator. Second, he identifies God's knowledge with His Essence.

Third, he insists that sin is deliberate and no amount of good works, including what he calls "guilty suffering," can satisfy the justice of God. Finally, he includes his belief in the innate desire for the beatific vision, i.e. to be like God and see Him as he is. These expansions carry theological and polemic ramifications which will be explored in more detail in chapter five.

## 2. Natural-Supernatural Distinction

A broad overview of Aquinas' theological and philosophical writings reveal a consistent distinction between the natural and the supernatural, or nature and grace. Broadly speaking, Aquinas' writings seek to establish three basic principles about the relationship between nature and grace.<sup>66</sup> First, there is an essential harmony between the two. Aquinas rejects any form of *duplex veritas* insisting instead that the light of natural reason cannot contradict the light of faith. Second, "faith presupposes natural knowledge even as grace presupposes nature."<sup>67</sup> In other words, natural knowledge is first, and the gifts of grace are added to nature like a building built on a foundation. Third, "grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it."<sup>68</sup> Human reasoning and philosophical inquiry may be freely used as a foundation upon which to advance articles of faith. Upadhyay accepts all three of these Thomistic principles.

---

<sup>66</sup> These three principles are derived from N. Kretzmann and E. Stump, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34, 35. One example of this distinction in the writings of Aquinas is found early in the *Summa Theologica* when he writes as follows: "It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built by human reason... Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors." See, A. Pegis, ed., 6. A fuller discussion on this same subject can be found in *Summa contra Gentiles* I, 4.

<sup>67</sup> *Summa Theologica* I, 2, 2, Reply Obj. 1; A. Pegis, ed., 21.

<sup>68</sup> *Summa Theologica* I, 1, 8, Reply Obj. 2; A. Pegis, ed., 14.

### a) Natural foundation and supernatural edifice

Upadhyay's natural theology consistently presupposes the Thomistic distinction between nature and grace or the natural foundation and the supernatural edifice. This enables Upadhyay to maintain his commitment to the uniqueness of Christianity without an *a priori* denial of any truth claim which he encountered in Hinduism. This distinction is applied to Christianity and other non-Christian religions when he states that what makes Christianity unique is not that it contains all of the truths of Hinduism (or any other religion) minus their errors. In short, Christianity is not just the purest expression of religion. The difference is that all other religions are natural, whereas Christianity is supernatural. This means that the essence of Christianity transcends both nature and reason. Christianity is built on the foundation of natural truths, but the edifice is supernaturally built. Thus, Upadhyay is not seeking to establish Primitive Theism as an end in itself, but as the foundation upon which Christianity may be built. His position is that Theism is the *earliest* revelation and can be arrived at universally through human experience and rational reflection. However, he goes on to say that even though theism is the primitive revelation of God, this does "not imply that the *fullest possible* light was given at the very beginning of creation, [and] that there was no room left for greater, higher and fuller light."<sup>69</sup> He uses the analogy of the sun at dawn which does not immediately give its noon splendor, but the same sun which appears "mild and beautiful" at day-break is the same sun which appears "strong and dazzling" at noon. Likewise, Primitive Theism "is the natural foundation on which is built the grand superstructure

---

<sup>69</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #3 (April, 1896): 2.

of the higher revelation concerning the inner life of God.”<sup>70</sup> However, the emphasis in Upadhyay’s writings is not merely that Primitive Theism points to Christianity, but that it remains the essential natural foundation to the supernatural edifice. He writes:

Though the religion of Christ is beyond the grasp of nature and reason, still its foundation rests upon the truths of nature and reason. Destroy the religion of nature and reason [and] you destroy the supernatural religion of Christ.<sup>71</sup>

#### **b) Natural religions and supernatural Christianity**

This natural - supernatural distinction is particularly important when applied to the relationship between Christianity and non-Christian religions, especially Hinduism. Upadhyay decried the attempts by some missionaries to claim that similarities between the *Gītā* and the Bible were because the former had borrowed them from the latter. Likewise, he regarded as “equally blinded” a few zealous Indians who sought to demonstrate that the similarity proved that Christianity was actually “an offspring of the Indian soil.”<sup>72</sup> For Upadhyay, such conclusions were born out of an insufficient conception of natural theology. He writes, “It is a dark theology that would have us believe that there is nothing but darkness outside the four corners of a book or a country.” Instead, he extols the Catholic Church which teaches that “the light of God enlightens every man” and that God “vouchsafed to man in the beginning a revelation of His will for the guidance of the whole human race. This primitive religion is the foundation on which stands the new supernatural revelation of the Catholic Church.”<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #1 (Jan., 1895); Lipner, ed., 6.

<sup>72</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #7 (July, 1898); Lipner, ed., 23. This theme will be addressed more thoroughly in chapter six.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*; Lipner, ed., 23, 24.

Thus, the common strands in world religions are not the result of massive borrowing and theological indebtedness of one to the other. Rather, to use his words, “the similarity exists not because of derivation of one from the other, but because of the connection of both with the primitive religion.” Indeed, in an article written several years earlier Upadhyay declares that “we hold that the substratum of all religions is Theism which is the primitive revelation of God.”<sup>74</sup> He acknowledges that the Hindu scriptures “abound with Theistic conceptions,” but have been corrupted by pantheism and idolatry. He says “the more ancient its scriptures, the purer they are. In the Vedas we do not find any trace of the immoral legends of the Purāṇas.” Likewise, “there are mantras which plainly teach that Indra and Agni, Varuṇa and Vāyu, are but different names of the one Deity.” He then publicly declares that he is willing to join with any reformers whose aim it is to “show the Hindus that Theism is the true and primitive religion,” because, he argues, Hindus must become Theists before man can be raised “above his created nature to the rank of being heir to the same eternal felicity of which the Infinite God is the sole possessor.”<sup>75</sup>

This important theological distinction is a vital hermeneutic in understanding Upadhyay’s writings throughout his life. It is his acceptance of all non-Christian religions as *natural* revelation which can serve as foundational to the *supernatural* revelation of Christ which gives him an open door to enter into any religion and harvest ideas or insights which he believes strengthen or provide support to Christianity:

---

<sup>74</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 8,9; Lipner, ed., 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

We hold that the Christian missionary should cheerfully acknowledge the good things in Hinduism and take at their fullest possible value its many noble aspirations...but he should make it perfectly clear that the truths which Hinduism possesses are all such as are attainable and as a matter of fact have been attained by the aid of mere reason assisted in a manner by Divine grace, whereas Christianity stands on an absolutely different pedestal, in that it is purely a Divine revelation the truth of which is attested by the unmistakable seal of tangible and visible Divine acts.<sup>76</sup>

Eventually Upadhyay will move from examining theism in the Vedas, to a more careful examination of theism in the Upanishads as understood through the *advaitic* philosopher, Śāṅkara. However, this distinction stays with him throughout his life. Even as late as 1901, he is still arguing within the same categories. For example, in *The Twentieth Century* he states that “the ordinary plane is called natural and the higher one supernatural. It should be understood that the supernatural is not anti-natural but co-natural. It does not go against nature intrinsically but only perfects it.”<sup>77</sup>

Upadhyay’s ability to recognize *revelatio generalis* in other religions or Hindu reform movements allowed him to extend praise on a group because they shared a common perspective at the level of *theologia naturalis*. This is clearly seen, for example, in a speech Upadhyay gave to the *Dayanand Samiti*. In the speech, a summary of which appeared in the *Indian Mirror* and later was reprinted in *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay openly stated that his religious doctrines were as different from Swami Dayananda as the north is to the south. Yet, he praised Dayananda for his

---

<sup>76</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 10; Lipner, ed., 16.

<sup>77</sup> *Twentieth Century*, (28 Feb., 1901), Lipner, ed., 92. The importance of understanding this distinction can hardly be overemphasized, especially in light of Upadhyay’s mature understanding of Krishna, as explored in chapter six. Personal reflections recorded in *The Blade* reinforce that this distinction lies at the root of the controversial actions later in life rather than an apostasy from Christianity. See, *The Blade*, 185.

labors in showing India that pantheism and idolatry are human corruptions and bringing India back to monotheistic theism. However, in the same *Sophia Monthly* issue which carried the reprint, Upadhyay publicly criticizes Dayananda for his acceptance of *Niyoga*, which permits widows and widowers to enter into temporary connections until a certain number of children are born. He refers to *Niyoga* as “this horrible but prominent teaching of the *Ārya Samāj*.”<sup>78</sup> Likewise, Upadhyay in the same article pays a special tribute to the Sikhs, saying “Blessed be the Sikh name. The Sikhs are to India what Mount Meru is to the earth...They form the backbone of our people. Why? I say because they worship the One, True God.”<sup>79</sup> Understanding Upadhyay’s use of *revelatio generalis* is essential, not only to appreciate his understanding of natural theology, but also as it applies to all of his writings concerning non-Christian religions.

## C. Reason and Revelation in Upadhyay’s Writings

### 1. Revelation Defined

The concept of revelation in Hinduism is normally associated with the concept of *śruti* which was explored in chapter three. The main features of *śruti* are “eternity (*nityatva*), impersonality (*apauruṣyatva*) [*sic*] and the nature of validity (*paramanatya*)[*sic*].”<sup>80</sup> These concepts necessarily preclude the notably Christian concept of revelation as historically and personally revealed since *śruti*, by definition, is both eternal and impersonal.<sup>81</sup> *Advaita* Vedānta accepts that revelation is eternal

<sup>78</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #2 (Feb., 1898): 32.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 25.

<sup>80</sup> S. Arulsamy, “Can the Hindu Scriptures Take the Place of the Old Testament?” *Indian Theological Studies* 2, #3, 4 (Sept. - Dec., 1984): 311. The Sanskrit should read *apauruṣeyatva*, not *apauruṣyatva*. Furthermore, it is difficult to know for certain whether Arulsamy’s term for the nature of validity was intended to be *paramanatva* or if he intended *prāmāṇya* with a ‘*tā*’ or ‘*tva*’ suffix.

<sup>81</sup> *Mīmāṃsā* accepts that the Vedas are eternally self-existing and reject any form of authorship, either human or divine. The *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* modify the *Mīmāṃsā* concept of the eternity of the Vedas by positing that the Vedas are destroyed at every world dissolution and created again by *Īśvara* at the beginning of the re-creation of the world. *Vedānta* accepts that revelation is eternal and impersonal,

and impersonal, but makes the vital distinction that while the content of revelation is eternal, it is temporal in its expression. In other words, at the time of the world dissolution the Veda is destroyed, but when the world is re-constituted the Vedic promulgation is not viewed as a composition of sacred texts, but as merely “the faithful reproduction of a physical medium (i.e. the Vedic words, sentences, sounds) that has always pre-existed. It is the empirical manifestation repeated in separate space-time *continua*.”<sup>82</sup> While revelation in Hinduism does not speak of a personal God exercising divine initiative to self-disclose His purpose and salvific will, it does affirm that the eternal content of revelation (*śruti*) re-appears from age to age through the Divine manifestation in the “*cit* (consciousness) of the Rishi as *anubhava* (experience).”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, in the *Advaita* tradition, language itself, even Scriptural language, “is intrinsically incapable of making known pure, non-differentiated being.”<sup>84</sup> *Śaṅkara* rejects the role of language in revelation because language is subject to differentiation and modification. Likewise, since the world is illusory, we can learn nothing about God from the world.<sup>85</sup> Clearly, Hindu thought, especially as it is manifested in *Advaita Vedānta*, represents a formidable challenge to the Christian conception of revelation.

---

but makes the distinction that revelation is eternal in content, but temporal in its expression. The Hindu theology of world dissolution provides several challenges to those who maintain the absolute eternal and impersonal nature of revelation.

<sup>82</sup> J. Lipner, *The Face of Truth: A Study of Meaning and Metaphysics in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja* (Macmillan, 1986), 8.

<sup>83</sup> S. Arulsamy, “Can the Hindu Scriptures Take the Place of the Old Testament?”, 312.

<sup>84</sup> J. Lipner, *The Face of Truth*, 27. This is one of the main objections Rāmānuja makes against Śaṅkara. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* accepts the validity of language to make positive statements about Brahman.

<sup>85</sup> P. Johanns, *To Christ Through the Vedānta*, vol. 1 (Bangalore: UTC, 1996), 29. This is taken from a two volume, unabridged edition of the series of writings by Fr. Pierre Johanns under the title “To Christ Through the Vedānta” which appeared in monthly installments between 1922-1934 in the periodical, *Light of the East*.

Upadhyay finds that the most fruitful avenue for reconciling Christianity (neo-Thomism) with Hinduism (neo-Hinduism) is to discover bridges which can link *advaitic* and Thomistic thought. The first bridge is to recognize their common link in apophatic theology. In the Christian theological tradition, the transcendence of God has always granted a certain appreciation for the unknowability of God. St. Gregory of Nyssa explored the theme of God's hiddenness and insisted that "the more one becomes aware of God's transcendence, the more one will resort to negations."<sup>86</sup> St. Gregory's theology had a profound impact on Dionysius who understood that God is "above being and unity." He taught that "we can make affirmative statements about God because he is the cause of all things, but at a higher level we must deny the predicates we affirmed of God because God is above everything."<sup>87</sup> Dionysius' view of the two levels of truths is essentially the same as that of *Advaita Vedānta*.

St. Thomas Aquinas inherited this tradition of apophatic theologizing. Aquinas accepts the fact that whenever we speak of God's attributes, we must completely differentiate them from our human experience once these attributes are predicated of God. Aquinas once wrote that "the mind has progressed most in its knowledge of God when it understands that God's essence is above what can be known about him in this life on earth."<sup>88</sup> However, while accepting the unknowability of God, Aquinas believed that through analogy certain knowledge is

---

<sup>86</sup> L. Elders, S.V.D., *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), 141.

<sup>87</sup> Dionysius, *Mystical Theology I 2 (PG 3, 1000B)* as quoted in Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 142.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. In another place Aquinas says that even if we say that God is perfect, good or eternal, we must realize that we do not know what these terms mean when predicated of God.

available through meditation on the material universe. Leo Elders sums up his position when he says that for Aquinas,

Our knowledge of God, obtained from created things, will nevertheless indicate something of God's being, *viz*, it will show how he is (*quomodo sit*), or rather, as Aquinas immediately adds how he is not. The *quomodo sit (non sit)* replaces the *quid sit*.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, apophatic theology coupled with the use of analogy are two aspects of this first bridge between the Hindu and the Christian view of revelation.

The second bridge is to accept the Hindu concept of the promulgation of revelation but relegate it to the *cognitio habitualis*. The Vedāntists teach, as noted earlier, that after the dissolution the promulgation of the Vedic texts “takes place by means of innate mental impression (*saṃskāras*) in the minds of the promulgating seers.”<sup>90</sup> The knowledge of the ancient Rishis is, for Upadhyay, only the result of *cognitio insita*, i.e. divinely implanted knowledge in human conscience and the residual impact of the decree of God, as explored earlier in the chapter.

These two bridges provided Upadhyay with the necessary links to develop his view of revelation and reason in a way which was consistent with Thomism and yet understandable in terms of his own Hindu context.

**a) *Revelatio generalis and revelatio specialis***

Upadhyay defines revelation as “the communication of God's mind to man through His commissioned agents in regard to what one should believe and do to be saved.”<sup>91</sup> As shall be demonstrated in due course, the content of this revelation is the *corpus theologiae* of the Catholic Church. Upadhyay accepts the basic distinction

---

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> J. Lipner, *The Face of Truth*, 12.

<sup>91</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6 New Series (21 July, 1900): 9; Lipner, ed., 85.

between *revelatio generalis* and *revelatio specialis*. On the one hand, Upadhyay refers to “those truths which man can find out by observation or inference” such as the knowledge of God as first cause of the universe. On the other hand, he refers to “those truths which man can never find out but are revealed by God himself or through infallible messengers,” such as the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, atonement and resurrection.<sup>92</sup> However, in consonance with Catholic theology, Upadhyay sees continuity between the two. The Fall has so damaged the reasoning capacities of the human race that we are no longer capable of a complete knowledge of God from creation. However, Upadhyay firmly believed in the *cognitio habitualis* which continues even after the Fall and operates as a form of ectypal theology (*theologia ectypa*), even in the unbelieving.

#### **b) Ectypal theology of revelation**

*Theologia ectypa* refers to a general category into which all true knowledge of God is found, without constructing an artificial barrier between *revelatio generalis* and *revelatio specialis*. Protestants, especially within the Reformed tradition, tended to erect a rigid barrier between the two. The fruits of this can be seen in various later writers such as Barth who denied natural theology or those, such as the presuppositionalists, who argued that the reception of general revelation was

---

<sup>92</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #3 (March, 1896); Lipner, ed., 51. Upadhyay argues that there is a moral and an absolute need for revelation. The moral need for revelation corresponds to natural theology, the absolute need for revelation corresponds to revealed theology. For him the moral need is particularly evidenced by the pluralistic environment of 19th century India. The wide number of religions and groups, all claiming divine inspiration would be utterly bewildering if it were not for a universally revealed, albeit fragmented, natural theology. This morally authoritative revelation has been provided so “that men of God may not be bewildered by their passions or the theories of erratic philosophers.” However, because of the limitations of human reason, God has also provided a final, absolute revelation which unlocks the mysteries of the faith which cannot be known, even through the most profound exercise of human reason. See, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6 New Series (21 July, 1900): 9.

predicated upon an *a priori* acceptance of special revelation.<sup>93</sup> Upadhyay viewed revelation more holistically. He viewed all true revelation, whether general or special, as genuine revelation and never contradictory since all revelation shares the same ultimate aim.<sup>94</sup> For example, in Upadhyay's third colloquy which pits the fictionalized disputants *Philalethes* against his own *persona*, *Catholicus*, the relationship between the newly expanding discoveries of science and the fixed dictates of revelation are discussed. Upadhyay predictably argues that the discoveries of modern science can never refute the facts of revelation.<sup>95</sup>

Upadhyay's articulation of his view of revelation is primarily forged in the fires of his rivalry with three opposing groups: Protestants, Theosophists and the neo-Hindus. Upadhyay's view of revelation as compared with and distinguished from each of these three will now be explored.

## 2. Revelation Distinguished

### a) Protestant view of revelation

There are two main areas within the broad sweep of Protestant attitudes regarding revelation which attract Upadhyay's attention: First, the Reformation concept of 'private interpretation;' Second, the Protestant attitude regarding human depravity as it relates to the possibility of natural theology.

---

<sup>93</sup> C. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* vol. 2, *God Who Speaks and Shows* (Waco: Word Books, 1976), 88f. Barth's famous "Nein!" to Brunner clearly demonstrates his hostility to natural theology which he said is "antichrist" and "like a poisonous snake which will soon hypnotize one and bite."

<sup>94</sup> Louis Berkhof, the American Calvinist, in his systematic theology reflects the dichotomizing of revelation which Upadhyay rejects when he says that general and special revelation are distinct in both "the extent and the purpose of the revelation." See, L. Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 128. Upadhyay would argue that there is no fundamental difference in the "purpose" of natural and revealed theology since both share the same source and the same purpose: His glory and our salvation. It is his view that all truth ultimately conforms to the Divine Archetype which will also lead Upadhyay to reject, in this case agreeing with the Protestant Scholastics, *duplex veritas*, i.e. the idea that something may be true in philosophy, but false in theology or *vice versa*. To Upadhyay, there should be no contradiction between divine revelation and human reason, although he accepts the Thomistic idea of the illuminated and unilluminated aspect of Divine mysteries.

<sup>95</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #6 (June, 1898): 81-87; Lipner, ed., 76-81.

**(1) Protestant “private interpretation” versus  
Catholic “fixed deposit of revelation”**

Upadhyay repeatedly denounces the Protestant view of revelation which he sees as based primarily on the principle of “private interpretation.” In the third of a four part series of articles entitled ‘Was Luther a Reformer?’, Upadhyay declares that “the great distinctive principle of the Reformation was the assertion of the right of private judgment in matters of religion.” For Upadhyay, this created a proliferation of division and Protestant sects such that he declares that “there are almost as many creeds as individuals.” He cites various anathema which Luther hurled against his opponents as evidence that Luther really believed in the “private right of judgment,” not the “right of private judgment.” Furthermore, he cites the historical condemnation of Nestorius and Arius as evidence that the Church must be given final judgment since even the Protestants regard them as heretics, despite the sincerity of their private judgments regarding the nature of Christ. For Upadhyay, the principle of private interpretation amounts to opening the gates of revelation since “you are at liberty to interpret its [the Bible] meaning as you choose.”<sup>96</sup>

Allowing “private interpretation” into the Church is, for Upadhyay, a Trojan Horse, threatening to quietly undermine the very concept of revelation itself. He argues that one could at least understand if such a right was claimed by one who rejects revelation such as a Unitarian or a Brāhmo or an Agnostic. But,

a believer in revelation must necessarily hold that there are certain truths on which God has set his seal and which therefore we are not at liberty to question or alter without denying the fact of revelation altogether. It is plain that if these truths were at the mercy of every individual’s judgment the aim of revelation would be defeated.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #7 (July, 1895): 4-7.

<sup>97</sup> *Sophia Monthly* vol. 4, #3 (March, 1897): 12. Often Upadhyay paints a negative caricature of Protestantism without a full accounting of the actual Protestant position or the dangers inherent in the Catholic Church being the sole and final interpreter of the text.

Scriptural texts must have a God-given sense which is guarded by the Apostolic See of Rome who retains the right to “demand of all who have strayed or been seduced from her fold, unconditional submission to her authority.” The only hope for Protestantism, in his view, is to return “to the unity of the faith under the Vicar of Christ.”<sup>98</sup>

Throughout his writings, the “private interpretation” view of revelation is often contrasted with the Catholic “fixed view” of revelation. As late as July 1900, Upadhyay states in *Sophia Weekly*, “we believe in a fixed, complete religion. Not an iota can be added to or subtracted from the deposit of our faith.”<sup>99</sup> Throughout the length and breadth of his English writings Upadhyay refers to the Catholic Church as the “custodian of revelation.”<sup>100</sup>

## (2) Protestant view of human nature

The second issue related to both revelation and natural theology is the Protestant view of human nature. Upadhyay refers to the “dark theology” of Protestant missionaries who teach “that man’s nature is *utterly* corrupt [and] are incapable of finding anything true and good in India and in her scriptures.” Christianity is thereby looked upon as “a destroyer and not a fulfiller and perfecter of what is true and good in the country.”<sup>101</sup> In contrast, Upadhyay claims that Catholicism has a more charitable attitude and rejects the Protestant theology of

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7 New Series (28 July, 1900): 8.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #7 (July, 1894):3; Lipner, ed., 110; *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 6; *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 11; *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #6 (June, 1898); Lipner, ed., 77. In this latter passage, Upadhyay clarifies his meaning of the content of Divine Revelation when he says, “because [by] divine Revelation, I mean that Revelation which the Catholic Church is depository and guardian of, is an historical fact; and no system or theory, be it ever so ingenious can destroy a fact.”

<sup>101</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #1 (Jan., 1895); Lipner, ed., 4.

depravity. Upadhyay quotes the following from Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster:

There are men so narrow as to say that no soul among the heathen can be saved. The perfections of God, the attributes of mercy, love, tenderness, justice, equity - all rise up in array against so dark a theology...Every living soul therefore has an illumination of God in the order of nature, by the light of conscience, and by the light of reason, and by the working of the Spirit of God in his head and in his heart, leading him to believe in God and to obey Him.

Likewise, Pope Clement XI is quoted as declaring it heresy to say that “no grace is given outside the Church of Christ.”<sup>102</sup> Here is further evidence to add to that cited in chapter one concerning Upadhyay’s motivations for uniting with the Catholic Church. In Upadhyay’s view, the Protestant tradition of limiting, or even denying, *revelatio generalis*, especially as it related to the interface between Christianity and non-Christian religions, is responsible for an overly negative assessment of Indian religion and culture and the presence of universally bestowed grace whereby God “has not left himself without a witness” (Acts 14:17).

### **b) Theosophic view of revelation**

#### **(1) exoteric and esoteric revelation**

In an article entitled “Christianity and Hinduism as Compared by Mrs. Besant,” Upadhyay explores his understanding of the Theosophic view of revelation. In a lecture which Mrs. Besant gave in Hyderabad and in Karachi, she sought to demonstrate the fundamental unity between Christianity and Hinduism by insisting that “the same spiritual truths were the common foundation of all faiths.”<sup>103</sup> On the face of this assertion one could argue that Upadhyay’s understanding of Primitive

---

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 5. For more on Upadhyay’s view of original sin see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894): 9-12; Lipner, ed., 243-245.

<sup>103</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #1 (Jan., 1897): 5.

Theism, as we have observed, essentially argues the same thing. It is Upadhyay himself who writes: “we hold that the substratum of all religions is Theism which is the primitive revelation of God.”<sup>104</sup> But there is a fundamental point of distinction which separates how Besant and Upadhyay would explain the assertion that “the same spiritual truths were the common foundation of all faiths.”

Besant believed that Christian revelation was divided into two categories: exoteric and esoteric. There were certain truths known generally to the masses, but there were other secret doctrines or mysteries known only to a select few. Just as Hinduism has a *guptavidyā* (secret knowledge), so Christianity has an inner and an outer circle. Besant based this on certain texts of Jesus such as his statement to his disciples, “to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Matthew 13:11), or Paul’s statement that “we speak wisdom among the perfect” (I Cor. 2:6,7), which she interprets as “among the initiated.” For Besant, the esoteric truths which are known only to the initiated are shared in common by other groups such as the Hindu *guptavidya*. The exoteric truths, on the other hand, are the basis for doctrinal and sectarian divisions among various religious bodies.

This bifurcated understanding of two different levels of revelation is entirely unacceptable to Upadhyay. He does affirm that all religions share a common theistic base and hold certain truths in common, but the continuity between the primitive foundation and the supernatural structure of the Catholic church remains unbroken:

No distinction is made in His [Christ] Church Catholic between the learned and the unlearned. The profoundest philosopher and the most ignorant peasant recite the same creed. The monk who has scaled the

---

<sup>104</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 8, 9; Lipner, ed., 12.

heights of *via unitiva* (yoga) will be denounced as a proud, fallen heretic, the moment he indulges in the luxury of discovering a *novel* doctrine and adding it to the deposit of faith. What one is taught of the Christian faith at the first dawn of one's reason cannot be altered with age.<sup>105</sup>

He goes on to compare the revelation of Christ to a mountain of sugar. Everyone who partakes of it knows what sugar is, "though some dive deeper into the depths of sweetness than others." He concludes by saying:

Every individual, however low and uncultured he may be, must receive the religion of Christ in its entirety and full integrity at the very threshold of his initiation. There is no division of esoteric and exoteric parts in the Christian system. High and low, rich and poor, foolish and wise, ascetic and worldly, learned and unlearned, must begin and end with the same doctrines. There are no occult truths reserved for the advanced.<sup>106</sup>

In a public lecture against Theosophy, Upadhyay pointed out that whenever Theosophists find their doctrines indefensible they retreat to their own private source of authority in a *Mahātmā*, or great soul. Upadhyay admits that faith in authority is absolutely essential. But, he argues, "the giver of the evidence must be one who can neither deceive nor be deceived." He goes on to expose various frauds within the leadership of Theosophy which helped to demonstrate the unreliability of the "mahātmic" messages.<sup>107</sup>

It is the *continuity* of revelation which is the critical difference between Besant and Upadhyay. Consistent with Thomism, he insists that the New Testament writings are not "*Mahātmic* messages intended only for an individual or two," but are openly declared to all believers.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1901), 115; Lipner, ed., 192.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #4 (April, 1896): 4. The lecture actually took place on 25 Mar. 1896, but was published in the *Sophia* the next month.

<sup>108</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #1 (Jan., 1897): 8.

Besant argues that the esoteric - exoteric distinction is particularly evident in Catholicism because of the ongoing use of a special language (Latin) and the mystical tradition. She concedes that this distinction has largely been eclipsed within Protestantism because of the use of the vernacular and the rational stronghold on the mystic tradition. Upadhyay, in contrast, argues that the mystical tradition within Catholicism is open to any of the faithful. The church does distinguish three levels of perfection: purgative (purging of sin), illuminative (acquisition of virtue to adorn soul) and unitive (contemplation of God as He is in Himself, leading to beatific vision), but these are not associated with different levels of doctrine or higher and lower truths.<sup>109</sup> Upadhyay responds by pointing out that it is the Protestant principle of private interpretation which should be cited as encouraging esoteric knowledge, not Catholicism since every Catholic is bound by a "fixed deposit" of truth and there is no room for individual, private interpretations which could easily drift into gnostic-like expressions.

Finally, Upadhyay, in another article, declares that this Theosophic distinction is contrary to reason:

The Theosophist says that the illiterate must rise from idol worship slowly and gradually to the knowledge of the Supreme Being. This is an utterly erroneous notion; and for this reason: For the concept of a term it is requisite that we have its outline at least. This outline may be filled in later on. Without this outline no knowledge is possible. For the concept of a rose, for instance, a man must know what a rose is, enough to distinguish it from *not rose*...To know him at all we *must* have the outline, the peasant as well as the philosopher. The latter may fill in the outline, with deeper shades but both must adore the same Mysterious Being.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 2, 3.

## (2) Impersonal nature of God

Central to Upadhyay's journalistic endeavors was his desire to demonstrate the universal basis of Primitive Theism which he understood as a personal God. His whole conception of natural theology, as we have explored above, is based on this premise. If the personal nature of God is abandoned, then one is cast back upon the impersonal view of revelation as evidenced in *Advaita Vedānta*.

Indeed, the Theosophic view of an impersonal God is based on the *advaitic* conviction that to affirm that God is personal or self-conscious implies limitation. The Theosophic syllogism proceeds as follows: God is unlimited; to speak of God as personal or conscious implies that God is limited; therefore, God cannot be personal or conscious. This, for Upadhyay, is to embrace the fallacy of bringing the infinite down to the level of the finite. He responds with his own syllogism to demonstrate the weakness of the Theosophic position:

The mouse is a *being* which squeaks but cannot speak;  
Man is a *being*;  
Therefore man also squeaks but cannot speak.<sup>111</sup>

The notion of an immaterial God is fueled theologically by the obvious imperfections and evil present in the world. If God is immaterial, as Theosophy claims, then God cannot be the pattern of matter and is therefore not responsible for the evil in the world. Upadhyay's response gives an insight into not only his doctrine of God, but his doctrine of sin. He says:

Many specious objections are brought by the rationalists against the all inclusive nature of God. They say that there is ignorance [and] there is evil in this world. Is then your God the pattern of ignorance and evil? God is the pattern of perfection, of being, and not of *want* of perfection, of *non-being*. Ignorance is want of knowledge. It is a mere negation, which ought to be present... All evils are so many wants and

---

<sup>111</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #5 (May, 1896): 9.

not positive existences.<sup>112</sup>

Upadhyay is careful to affirm the balance between the knowability and the unknowability of God as noted above. Through revelation he can be apprehended, but never fully comprehended. Upadhyay writes:

We know for certain that the Supreme Being knows and loves Himself and His creatures by one eternal undivided act, but we cannot comprehend the *how* of that knowledge which transcends the relationship between subject and object.<sup>113</sup>

A year earlier in a series of similar disputes with Theosophy, he cites the tension between the apprehensibility and the incomprehensibility of God as being taught in the *Kena Upaniṣad*:

Not that I know Him perfectly, nor is it that I know Him not;  
He who knows, 'not that he knows Him (perfectly) nor is it that he knows Him not,' knows Him.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, Upadhyay concludes, "tear into shreds the unknown and the unknowable God thrust upon India by the teachers of the so-called 'wisdom-religion.'<sup>115</sup> The Theosophic view of revelation, for Upadhyay, stands up to neither the test of continuity, nor the test of reason. It is therefore denounced as unable to regenerate India or aspire to be its national religion.

### c) Neo-Hindu view of revelation

The third and final rival view of revelation to which Upadhyay responds is that proposed by various neo-Hindu groups. The two main criticisms which Upadhyay levels against these various groups are: First, their drift away from rightly

---

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>113</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 6.

<sup>114</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #5 (May, 1896): 14. The text from the *Kena Upaniṣad* (2.2) is as follows: "nāham manye suvedeti no na vedeti veda ca / yo nos tad veda tad veda no na vedeti veda ca."

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

guided reason and second, a growing emphasis on inspired personalities who are not bound by any objective, external revelation.

**(1) Improper views of human reason**

Upadhyay identifies two problems in the changing attitudes of Neo-Hindus to the role of human reason. He cites the *Brāhmo Samāj* as increasingly abandoning their emphasis on human reason and the *Ārya Samāj* for over-extending the limits of human reason.

In Upadhyay's view, The *Brāhmo Samāj*, by abandoning human reason, are in danger of drifting away from Primitive Theism back to pantheism:

They have begun dressing up the absurd doctrine of Pantheism and the immoral and obscene legends of the Purāṇas in a rational and decorous garb... they have given up their belief in the pure Theistic doctrine of the essential distinction between the Creator and the creature.<sup>116</sup>

Upadhyay continues in the February 1896 issue of *Sophia Monthly* with the following lament concerning the group which formerly had his own devotion and allegiance:

Poor Āryavarta (the land of the Āryas)! Thou hadst great hopes in the *Brāhmo Samāj*. There was a time when all eyes were directed towards it as a restorer of the primitive religion of Theism and a destroyer of Pantheism, idolatry and superstition. But it is gradually forsaking its mission.<sup>117</sup>

The *Ārya Samāj* and other neo-Hindu groups, on the other hand, have overestimated the capacities of finite human reason to penetrate the mysteries of the Infinite. The *Brahmavādin*, a neo-Hindu journal, stated that the Hindu mind “gradually ascended from nature to nature's God, and built upon purely intellectual

---

<sup>116</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 8; Lipner, ed., 12.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* Very similar thoughts are expressed in an article published in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #5 (May, 1895) under the title “Notes.” However, it is signed “A Roman Catholic.” In reference to the discussion in chapter one concerning the use of pseudonyms this seems to provide some evidence that the cryptic reference is, after all, Upadhyay. However, the evidence is still inconclusive.

grounds the doctrine of the unity of the *ātman*.”<sup>118</sup> In contrast, Upadhyay argues that “finite reason is naturally incapable of seeing the divine Essence as it is in itself.”<sup>119</sup> The Hindu desire to speculate about the divine essence and their willingness to undergo extreme self-denial, i.e. to “penetrate into the *sanctum sanctorum* of divine Life” testifies to the supernatural decree of God which is universally latent in them. Indeed, their speculations have enabled them to gain *via revelatio generalis* an inferential knowledge of God. But, insists Upadhyay,

No amount of self-culture and self-purification can enable a man to see the divine Essence. The state of the beautiful [*sic*] vision of God is above the highest possible development of created nature. As no evolution can bring out life from dead matter, so no culture or discipline can bridge the gulf between the inferential knowledge of God and the intuitive vision of the divine Essence.<sup>120</sup>

While Upadhyay praises Dayananda and the *Ārya Samāj* for their uncompromising hostility to idolatry, pantheism, polytheism and a host of other “errors and corruptions of Hinduism,”<sup>121</sup> there are, nevertheless, aspects of the *Ārya* writings which Upadhyay cites as clear evidence that their reliance upon nature alone, without the aid of revelation, will lead them into error. The most notable example is the *Ārya Samāj* view that matter is eternal. In their monthly organ, *Ārya Messenger*, the doctrine of creation is declared to be “manifestly wrong, because is it contrary to the teaching of Nature, where we never see nothing producing anything, nor the falling away of anything into nothing.” The passage concludes by declaring

---

<sup>118</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 2.

<sup>119</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896): 12; Lipner, ed., 59, 60.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 13; Lipner, ed., 60.

<sup>121</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896):7; Lipner, ed., 11.

that “if God means that we should learn lessons from Nature, then surely the doctrine of the Christians on Creation deserves to be discarded and given up once for all.”<sup>122</sup>

Upadhyay’s reply reveals, once again, his insistence that the arm of Nature can only reach so far. He declares that their reasoning is based on the faulty supposition that “all truth is to be learnt from the observation of Nature around us.” He goes on to demonstrate that many of the *Ārya* beliefs, such as the infinite and unchangeable nature of God cannot be discerned solely through the eye of Nature. Where in the universe, Upadhyay asks, can we observe anything in Nature which is either infinite or unchanging? Indeed, Nature’s testimony may only be heard, in his view, if coupled with the faculty of human reason and revealed revelation.<sup>123</sup>

Upadhyay remains convinced that because many truths are beyond the reach of human capacities (*ex puris naturalibus*), humanity has been given special revelation which alone can bridge the gulf which stretches between “the end of man...and the reach of his nature.” Indeed, he declares, “it is the Catholic Church which has been given that revelation which declares to man the secrets of the divine Life...the revealed religion of the Catholic Church is above all reason, however high and pure it may be.”<sup>124</sup>

## (2) Reliance on ‘inspired’ personalities

Neo-Hindus, he writes, understand revelation to be “the communication of messages about the invisible world from purified and enlightened souls to impure and darkened souls.”<sup>125</sup> The emphasis is on a single enlightened personality who

<sup>122</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #5 (May, 1897); Lipner, ed., 210.

<sup>123</sup> We assume, but cannot prove, that Upadhyay was aware that St. Thomas’ argument of causality admits the philosophic possibility of an eternal creation.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 14; Lipner, ed., 60, 61.

<sup>125</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896): 13, 14; Lipner, ed., 58, 59.

becomes the conduit of the divine message. Upadhyay quotes from the *Brahmavādin* as follows:

There have always been men who, thanks to divine grace and mercy, have risen above the vanities and fleeting shows of this world carrying aloft the torch of truth. They are the inspired teachers of humanity, the *Aptas* of Hindu theology, the divine founders of great religions who through years of self-culture and self-restraint so purified their intellectual and moral nature as to recognize in their fullness and glory the invisible realities around.... What is called revelation is nothing but the spiritual intuition of the infinite by which the prophet sees things *sub specie eternitatis* in the unity of the Absolute Spirit.<sup>126</sup>

By placing revelation into the hands of certain “commanding personalities,” Neo-Hindus opened themselves up to many of the same charges which Upadhyay levies against the Protestant principle of “private interpretation” and the Theosophic conception of two levels of truth. The *Brahmavādin* stated that truth is “a matter of personal experience and a fact of internal revelation to each inquirer.”<sup>127</sup> For Upadhyay, this creates an environment where revelation is in a constant state of flux because there is a steady stream of self appointed gurus who claim that their experience is unique and that they have “pierced through the veil of *māyā*.”<sup>128</sup>

Upadhyay recounts the story of a newly founded neo-Hindu journal<sup>129</sup> which received correspondence from a reader who wanted assistance in understanding various expositions of the Vedānta. The editor of the journal encouraged the inquirer to “find out a living *guru* or practical guide with the mere object of realizing the truth

---

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; Lipner, ed., 58.

<sup>127</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896): 10, 11; Lipner, ed., 58. This quote is taken from the *Brahmavādin* which stated concerning these commanding personalities: “We act upon them though we realise their significance but dimly because we feel that they are the real experiences of exalted souls who have pierced through the veil of *māyā*, and that we may also realise them in their fullness if we go through the necessary spiritual discipline.”

<sup>129</sup> Upadhyay does not give the name of the journal.

of Vedānta by pondering over what they might hear from his sacred lips.” Upadhyay responds,

Can there be anything more irrational than this? Here is an inquirer who wants to know what Vedānta is and whether he can rationally hold it true. He is forthwith told by our neo-Hindu friends that he must first blindfold his reason, then listen to a *guru* of Vedānta, *practise what this guru says and then get at the “truth,”* and all this because, forsooth, the *guru* is supposed to have realized the “grand truth,” the “unity” underlying the “unreal” phenomena of this world!<sup>130</sup>

Upadhyay concludes by declaring that guruism is “irrationalism to the extreme” and nothing short of “an invitation to commit intellectual suicide.” This neo-Hindu view of gurus, like Theosophy discussed above, tended to encourage a spiritual elite with special knowledge on a higher level, and the masses who are perceived to be ignorant and incapable of perceiving the Divine. In contrast, the Catholic revelation is openly declared to all:

It is an error to suppose that man can find out the Infinite only by severe austerities and laborious cogitations. The passage from the Finite to the Infinite is only a step. Every man, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, can easily apprehend the Infinite.<sup>131</sup>

In his view, the errors of the neo-Hindus abound because of these two problems of an improper understanding of the role of reason and an open-ended reliance on certain elite, commanding personalities. Upadhyay sums up his feelings about the Protestant, Theosophic and neo-Hindu views of revelation when he says, in this case referring to the neo-Hindu journal *Epiphany*, that they have strayed into error because they are “not in communion with the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church, the Divinely-appointed custodian of the entire deposit of faith.”<sup>132</sup>

<sup>130</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #10 (Nov., 1896): 15; Lipner, ed., 14.

<sup>131</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #2 (Feb., 1898): 24.

<sup>132</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 11.

### 3. Role and Limits of Human Reason

#### a) The positive role of human reason

Upadhyay defines reason as “a power by which man is enabled to know the self-sufficient Reality which never goes out of itself for the purposes of its being and living.”<sup>133</sup> Clearly Upadhyay’s understanding of reason is ultimately directed toward the universal acknowledgment of a personal Primitive Theism. Earlier in this chapter we examined the sources of Upadhyay’s doctrine of Primitive Theism. The human conscience or innate moral law and the decree of God combine to provide the basis for the universality of Primitive Theism. This innate eternal law which he refers to as the “interior motive principle” reflects, even unknowingly, the decree of God that there is a supernatural end to human existence. However, the decree of God can only be discerned through the honest exercise of human reason:

Therefore he participates [in] the Eternal Law by way of an interior motive principle as well as of reason. This is the exclusive prerogative of a rational creature. Not only is he subject to the Eternal Law, but he knows by his reason what the Eternal Law is, and is free to regulate his actions in conformity or deformity with it. Man apprehends the Eternal Law impressed on his nature and calls it the natural law. The sum total of the natural law is that good is to be done and evil to be avoided. On this precept of the natural law hang all other precepts.<sup>134</sup>

Upadhyay remains decidedly optimistic about the potential of reason. Despite the interference of “inordinate passions,” Upadhyay maintains his optimism since, in his view, “original sin did not impair the faculties of man in their intrinsic nature.”<sup>135</sup> Thus, reason provides the basis for faith and divine knowledge: “the light of reason and conscience enlightens every man coming into this world and reveals the unmistakable truth that he is the image of an Infinite Prototype Who is perfect reason

---

<sup>133</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2 New Series (23 June, 1900): 7.

<sup>134</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894): 13; Lipner, ed., 246.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; Lipner, ed., 245.

and holiness.”<sup>136</sup> He affirms that through reason one can prove “with certainty the existence of God and his personality” in utter contradiction, for example, to the Vedāntic or Theosophic notion of the impersonal nature of God.<sup>137</sup>

In addition to his belief in the particular ability of reason to substantiate universal, Primitive Theism, Upadhyay relies on reason as a final arbiter in his disputes with opponents who do not accept the authority of the Catholic revelation. In one early and revealing disputation with both *viśiṣṭādvaitic* and *advaitic* Vedāntism, Upadhyay contrasts their teachings with the dictates of human reason. For example, he argues that “pure reason teaches that there is one eternal immutable Being who is the First Cause of all things visible and invisible, and who has brought them into existence by his almighty power.” Therefore, “the Hindu theory that this creation is the transmutation of the eternal being is opposed to reason.” However, before the *advaitins* have the opportunity to rest secure in their teaching that the visible world is merely an illusion, Upadhyay goes on to say that reason also teaches that “the absolute Being can at no time and in no way be limited by non-being.” This is contrasted with *Advaita* which, from his vantage point, taught that “very finite being is a mixture of the one absolute Being with non-being.”<sup>138</sup> He seeks to challenge Vedāntic errors on the basis of natural reason, not revealed revelation.

---

<sup>136</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1894): 4.

<sup>137</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #9 (Sept., 1897): 14; Lipner, ed., 123. Contrast this denunciation of the Vedānta with his declaration only four months later: “We can boldly and safely affirm that this Vedāntic conception of the nature of the Supreme Being marks the terminus of the flight of human reason into the eternal regions. The Catholic belief is exactly the same. God is the eternal being; He is purely positive, for the particle ‘not’ cannot be predicated of Him.” See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898): 11; Lipner, ed., 20. Eventually he will describe Vedānta as “the loftiest height attainable by human reason.” See, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #10 New Series (18 Aug., 1900): 7. This will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

<sup>138</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #10 (Aug., 1894): 14-16; Lipner, ed., 112. As we shall develop in due course, Upadhyay will later view *advaitic Vedāntism* as consistent with reason and useful as a foundation for Christian revelation.

In a dispute with the *Ārya Samāj*, Upadhyay specifically disallows the Bible from the debate because he wants to also eliminate the Vedas and move the discussion onto the plane of reason alone:

The Vedas may, for the present, be left to themselves, for the poor Vedas are at the mercy of conflicting interpreters and do no better than the poor Bible which is a victim to all kinds of absurd and grotesque interpretations. We are concerned now and here with *reason and reason alone* and not with authority.<sup>139</sup>

In a similar vein, Upadhyay consistently argued with Mrs. Besant on the ground of reason, since she, like Dayananda, rejected the final authority of the Christian Scriptures. A typical example of this is Upadhyay's series of articles entitled "The Primitive Parabrahma and Mrs. Besant's God." One of the sub-titles of the May 1896 conclusion to the series is, "The Theosophic God is not the God of Reason." The entire thrust of the article is to, in his own words, "put this Theosophic God to the test of reason."<sup>140</sup> Likewise, when Upadhyay argues with his editorially created opponent *Philalethes*, he insists that he is arguing "not with the voice of revelation, but the voice of reason."<sup>141</sup> Thus, Upadhyay finds reason a useful and reliable basis for advancing his arguments, especially with those who deny Catholic authority.

#### **b) The limitations of human reason**

Thomism is optimistic about human reason. Indeed, universal skepticism is considered self-contradictory since "it amounts to saying that it is true that there is no truth."<sup>142</sup> However, even Aquinas admitted that there are certain truths within divine revelation (articles of faith) which cannot be apprehended or proven through the

<sup>139</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #12 (Dec., 1894): 3; Lipner, ed., 262, emphasis mine.

<sup>140</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #5 (May, 1896): 9.

<sup>141</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #3 (March, 1898): 41; Lipner, ed., 71.

<sup>142</sup> P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa*, 45, fn. 31.

exercise of human reason. Likewise, despite his own optimism, Upadhyay puts definite limits on its capacity. Reason is the foundation, the springboard to supernatural knowledge, but if left to itself falls woefully short of the goal:

Finite reason, be it angelic or human, is naturally incapable of knowing the Infinite and Absolute as he is, of seeing the divine Essence *per se*. St. Thomas, the angelic doctor of the Catholic Church says: “the perfect happiness of man consists in the vision of the divine Essence. Now to see God by essence is above the nature, not only of man, but of every other creature, for the natural knowledge of every creature whatever is according to the mode of a created substance. But every knowledge that is according to the mode of a created substance, falls short of the vision of the divine Essence, which infinitely exceeds every created essence. Hence neither man nor any other creature can gain final happiness by the exercise of his own natural powers.”<sup>143</sup>

In only the second issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay asks the rhetorical questions, “Can man attain the beatific vision by the exercise of his natural powers? Can a tortoise, with all its struggles and efforts fly like a bird?”<sup>144</sup> The clear point is that there are definite limits to the reaches of human reason. That this perspective holds true throughout his writings is evidenced by a late exposition of the Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith which occurs in *Sophia Weekly*. Upadhyay points out that the “things unseen” refers to “those spiritual truths which reason cannot discover. They are made known through revelation. When they are revealed they are apprehended by reason but the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of their being true remain mysteries.”<sup>145</sup>

In a defense of divine mystery, Upadhyay makes a potent statement regarding the limitations of human reason. In his article, “Why should there be Mysteries in Religion?” he writes:

<sup>143</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896): 12; Lipner, ed., 61.

<sup>144</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 2; Lipner, ed., 238.

<sup>145</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #9, New Series (11 Aug., 1900): 5; Lipner, ed., 87. The distinction between the ability of reason to apprehend truth and the purpose of revelation to provide the ‘how’ and ‘why’ is a frequent distinction in Upadhyay’s writings.

The further the light, the dimmer it is. Therefore that religion which lifts up the veil enshrouding the highest invisible plane where dwells the Absolute in light inaccessible that we may have a foreglimpse of it, must contain mysteries, obscure truths, dimly illuminated facts. To grasp them *reason fails* and faith must be resorted to. Here, not the vividness or brightness of the truth but the authority of God speaking to man objectively, visibly and tangibly, can be the only motive of belief. Those who have made their understanding the measure of truth will never see God for he *transcends human reason*.<sup>146</sup>

The key to understanding Upadhyay's use of reason is to remember the two features noted earlier. First, faith and reason are both important in their respective spheres. Faith builds upon the foundation of reason and reason retains great privilege as long as it does not claim more than its sphere. Upadhyay will not allow reason to invade the sphere of special revelation:

If one could reason out the mysteries of the Bible, they would be no more mysteries, and strictly speaking there could have been no possible need for revelation because men could have arrived at those truths by the natural process of reasoning.<sup>147</sup>

In his early writings, Upadhyay is highly critical of Hindu philosophers who place too much confidence in reason "attempting to soar with the wings of reason to the region of mystery."<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #6 (June, 1896): 14; Lipner, ed., 56, emphasis mine. Again, demonstrating that he holds this perspective throughout his writings one finds in *Sophia Weekly* the following statement: "the problem of salvation cannot be solved by reason." See, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6, New Series (21 July, 1900): 9; Lipner, ed., 86. In another similar passage found in *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay says that "Aristotle, Kapila, Gotama, Kanada, Śāṅkara, in fact, great men of all ages and countries, in spite of their lofty flights, have fallen deep into the pit of error, because the light of unaided reason does reach but faintly the regions of the spirit." See, vol. 5, #2 (Feb., 1898): 32.

<sup>147</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #7 (July, 1895): 6. While neither Aquinas, nor Upadhyay will allow reason to invade the proper sphere of faith (e.g. Articles of faith), Aquinas, at least, admits that faith can rightfully invade the sphere of reason: "There is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated," *Summa Theologica* I, 2, 2; A. Pegis, 21.

<sup>148</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 6. Later, Śāṅkara's careful reasoning is viewed as a more reliable guide to the 'region of mystery.'

Second, despite any limitations on reason, one must always recognize the continuity between the two. The *lex naturalis* and *lex Christi* (natural law and law of Christ) share a fundamental continuity one with another. There is no ultimate contradiction. If not for the devastating effects of the Fall, an unimpaired reason would have fully apprehended God, and there would be no distinction between natural and supernatural revelation. Upadhyay, demonstrating obvious influence from Aquinas, is deeply concerned about the trend which seeks to separate the sphere of science and reason from religion and faith. He condemns those who say that “reason and commonsense have no jurisdiction in matters of religion.” He calls this idea “mischievous” and argues, instead, that “reason must either be able to demonstrate a doctrine (as in the case of natural truths), or must have the fullest assurance and proof that the doctrine has for it the authority of God Himself (as in the case of supernatural truths not discoverable by reason).<sup>149</sup>

In both *Sophia Monthly* and *Weekly*, Upadhyay creates editorial personae, similar to Sen’s Rām Das, with whom he debates various points.<sup>150</sup> In one such instance he responds to “a worshipper of reason” who objects to Christianity by saying,

I cannot understand how educated men can believe in the so-called mysteries of religion. A truth to be standable must be cognised by reason. A spiritual fact which can be described only x, y, z, is simply a nonsense so far as our intellect is concerned. We cannot help laughing at missionaries who ask us to believe in the mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, etc. Of what use is it believing in truths which affect neither our reason nor will?

---

<sup>149</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #5 New Series (14 July, 1900); Lipner, ed., 29.

<sup>150</sup> Keshub Chandra Sen uses the same pen name as the founder of the Brāhmo Samāj, Ram Mohan Roy, Rām Das, being the equivalent of Rām Doss, reflecting only a spelling variation. Both mean ‘servant of Rāma.’ See, chapter one, page 41-42.

Upadhyay responds and in the process reveals an important understanding of the relationship between natural and supernatural revelation, reason and faith:

If mysteries can be presented as no more than x, y, z, then mysteries deserve to be thrashed out of this earth. But true mysteries *can be apprehended by reason*. They have two aspects - the one illuminated and the other unilluminated. Through its illuminated side it can be shown that the dark side is not a contradiction.<sup>151</sup>

It is Upadhyay's *theologia ectypa* which enables him to recognize an aspect of the relationship between reason and revelation which is sometimes overlooked. The lesser light of reason and natural theology (*lumen naturae*) and the brighter light of revelation and revealed theology (*lumen gratiae*) mutually benefit one another. The light of reason points to revelation and the light of revealed theology reflects back and sheds further light on reason, both ultimately pointing to the *lumen gloriae*. As early as the first year of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay had made this observation:

The supernatural end of man is the basis of the Catholic religion. The end of man being supernatural, it necessarily follows that the religion of man is supernatural... Therefore the doctrines of the Catholic Church are above reason. Though beyond the province of reason they illuminate it with a heavenly light.<sup>152</sup>

Revelation is pictured here as illuminating reason in order to give an internal witness that the unilluminated aspects of divine revelation are not in any ultimate conflict with the dictates of reason and human experience. This represents a departure from the Protestant idea that a "full philosophical natural theology, working by reason alone, separated from revelation, leads away from the God of the Bible and of

---

<sup>151</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #16 New Series (29 Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 90. Though Upadhyay never develops it, Aquinas has the light of revelation moving in two directions. First, like Upadhyay, it illuminates reason enough to recognize that even a mystery is not contrary to the dictates of reason. Secondly, Aquinas sees even the words plainly revealed by Scripture as also signifying further eternal mysteries which will, at least in this life, always lie beyond us. See, for example, *Summa Theologica* I, 1, 10.

<sup>152</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 3; Lipner, ed., 239.

Christian faith.”<sup>153</sup> Upadhyay embraces the continuity and would reject Pascal’s charge that “the God of the philosophers is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Despite this avowed continuity, there are times in Upadhyay’s writings where he openly admits that the two can, from a human perspective, seem irreconcilable because faith cannot fully satisfy the demands of reason. When this happens, reason must acknowledge its own limitations and submit to revelation:

There is always a kind of struggle between reason and revelation. Faith consists in the submission of reason to divine authority, and there can be no such thing as submission without some sort of internal struggle. Faith illuminates, but not wholly, and therefore, does not fully meet the demands of the intellect which can only be satisfied by the vision of the entire essence of the being who is the ultimate cause of all beings. Here our intellect must submit to faith with hope that in heaven submission will be changed into concurrence, partial light into a blaze of glory.<sup>154</sup>

Thus, while reason is important, revelation is final. Perhaps the whole relationship is best seen in his famous disputation with Philalethes, a pseudonym for another editorially created opponent whom he seeks to convince of the truth of Christianity. Throughout the entire series of articles, Upadhyay (who uses the pseudonym Catholicus, a well-instructed Catholic layman) argues on the basis of reason, but makes his own position clear in the closing two lines of the dialogue in the May 1898 issue:

**Philalethes:** This is evident. Whoever considers things in the light of reason is obliged to confess it is evident.

**Catholicus:** Yes, evident in the light of reason; yet still more evident in the clearness of Christian Revelation, compared to which the light of reason is but as moonlight.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> J. Barr, 138. Barr goes on to argue that the close relationship might be re-established by recognizing features in, say, Homer, which are closer to the God of the Bible than later, more speculative, philosophical understandings of God.

<sup>154</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 13, 14; Lipner, ed., 67.

Thus, while Upadhyay welcomes and draws deeply from the well of reason, he remains convinced that the ultimate arbiter of truth must be found in the revealed theology as summed up in the *corpus theologiae* of the Catholic Church.

### c) Philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae*

The preceding overview of Upadhyay's understanding of the role of reason, both its limitations and its possibilities (*usus rationis*), is essential if one is to fully appreciate his understanding of philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae*.<sup>156</sup> In the first few years of his writing, Upadhyay relied primarily on human reason as the best way to establish Primitive Theism. Gradually, he came to see that Christianity would have a surer foundation if it was built on the philosophy of Śaṅkara's *advaitism* which he considered, in due course, as "the loftiest height attainable by human reason."<sup>157</sup> However, even in the *Sophia Monthly*, we see Upadhyay beginning to address the usefulness of philosophy as a foundation for the Christian message. In an article published in July 1897 entitled, "Hindu Philosophy and Christianity" he asks

---

<sup>155</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #5 (May, 1898): 73; Lipner, ed., 76. Another interesting statement of Upadhyay occurs in response to a letter written to a Bengali journal known as the *Epiphany* by the Santragachi Debating Club raising questions about revelation and the limits of natural reason. It was not uncommon for Upadhyay to respond to issues raised in other journals. In August 1897, he publishes the full letter in the *Sophia* and uses it as a spring board to discuss the Catholic view of Primitive Theism. In the September issue of *Sophia* he expresses dismay at the *Epiphany* response concerning the relationship between human reason and the knowability of God. The *Epiphany* stated that "reason certainly cannot prove either God's existence or His personality." Upadhyay responds by asserting the Catholic position that "if anyone assert that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty from created things by the natural light of human reason, let him be anathema." Upadhyay expresses confidence in the testimony of reason, but says that the natural work of reason may be inhibited by "an 'ill-disposed will': If the will is not unruly, reason walks on the path to truth without much disturbance; if, on the other hand, it gets the mastery, it may not only obstruct the operations of reason but may reject the truths already proved. It is for this reason spiritual truths are morally and not mathematically certain." The difference between a moral and a mathematic certainty is the freedom of the will in the latter to reject, but, he concludes, "moral certitude is not different from mathematical certitude because it is *less* certain. It is called moral because its *acceptance*, and not its *proof*, depends upon the disposition of the will."

<sup>156</sup> Aquinas' use of this medieval formula "philosophy the handmaid of theology" can be found in *Summa Theologica* I, 1, 5 where he says of theology, "it does not depend upon other sciences as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens." See, A. Pegis, 10.

<sup>157</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #10 New Series (18 Aug., 1900): 7.

the question, "Can philosophy help in any way a revealed religion which is fixed and all-inclusive?" The answer is a confident one:

Philosophy can serve it, not by adding to or subtracting from it any doctrine, but by making explicit what is contained in it implicitly to satisfy the demands of the developed intellect of man; by showing its unity in diversity and the necessary connection between its different parts to beat back the onslaughts of the restless human mind threatening to destroy the integrity of faith; by demonstrating that it is co-natural and not anti-natural, though it transcends nature; by illumining the darkest and most perplexing problems of human life with the supra-rational light of mysteries; and by proving its fitness to appease the deepest cravings of mankind.<sup>158</sup>

Upadhyay goes on to ask if any philosophy has served Christianity in this way. He concludes that "the philosophy of Aristotle has done the same service to Christianity as the genial warmth of the sun and the nourishing moisture of water do to a plant." Admitting the influence of Greek philosophy, he asks if Hindu philosophy can, likewise, be of any use to Christianity. His answer reveals both his indebtedness to Thomistic thought as well as his growing enthusiasm about the possibilities of building Christianity on the foundation of *advaitism*:

The philosophy of Aristotle was considered by many in olden times to be inimical to faith. The reason was that it was at first used as a weapon by rationalists in their warfare against Christian dogmas. Many were the attempts made to exclude Aristotle from Catholic monasteries and universities, but in vain. At last the sovereign intellect of St. Thomas Aquinas, who fully knew the art of making the yoke of faith light and easy to human reason, adopted the Aristotelian system boldly, of course minus its errors, and made it a rational basis for the mysterious edifice of the Christian religion to stand upon, with its beauty and harmony of structure dauntlessly exposed to the gaze of friends and foes alike. Christianity has again, after a long period come in contact again with a philosophy which, though it may contain more errors, still unquestionably soars higher than her western sister.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897):7, 8; Lipner, ed., 17.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 8; Lipner, ed., 18; *The Blade*, 67.

Upadhyay, drawing a parallel with the Scholastic struggle with Aristotelian thought, asks “shall we, Catholics of India, now wage a destructive warfare with Hindu philosophy because the neo-Hindus have made it their weapon against Christianity?” He goes on to argue that Christians need “to win over Hindu philosophy” and to make “Hindu philosophy hew wood and draw water” for the Church.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, by 1900 he boldly declares:

If the Vedānta philosophy can explain the Christian religion in a better way by showing its co-ordination of parts more explicitly than the Graeco-Scholastic system, it is certainly desirable that Christianity should be re-stated in the term of the Vedānta. Philosophic explanations of dogmas do not affect salvation.<sup>161</sup>

Chapter five will explore in detail his attempt to make Śaṅkara’s *advaitism* the handmaiden of Christianity. However, by 1900, many thought that Upadhyay was doing more to promote Hindu philosophy than he was Christianity. In a letter to the editor which appeared in *Sophia Weekly*, a Brāhmo asked “Aren’t you doing the work of the *Brāhmo Samāj* in trying to harmonise Christianity with Hindu philosophy?”<sup>162</sup> In response, Upadhyay reaffirms his commitment to a “fixed religion,” in contrast to the Brāhmos whom he characterizes as “eclectics” and “framers of a new religion.” Nevertheless, Upadhyay does contrast a “fixed” revelation with the evolutionary nature of religion “inasmuch as the truths contained in it implicitly are made explicit to the growing intellect of man.” Philosophy, for Upadhyay, can never add to revelation, but it can demonstrate that revelation is not

---

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 35.

<sup>162</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900): 8. This question, it seems, is not actually raised by a Brāhmo as a letter to the editor, but is almost certainly a question raised by Upadhyay himself to which he provides the answer. However, it is likely that such a question may have been posed to him repeatedly by his Brāhmo friends.

contrary to reason, only above it. This is why, like reason, philosophy is a vital tool for Upadhyay but will always remain an *ancilla* to the Church's fixed revelation.

#### **D. Conclusion**

In conclusion, Upadhyay's theologizing concerning natural theology arises in a specific context, normally borne out of disputes with various other groups. Nevertheless, certain key themes concerning universal theism, revelation, the relationship between nature and grace, and the role and limits of human reason are clearly discernible in Upadhyay's writings enabling the outlines of his natural theology to be constructed. In the next chapter, Upadhyay's theological exploration of how Indian Christianity might find a philosophical home in Śaṅkara's *advaitism* will be examined.

## Chapter Five

### Building on the Foundation of Śaṅkara's *Advaitism*

#### A. Introduction

##### 1. Structure of the Chapter

This chapter will explore how Brahmabandhav Upadhyay sought to restate his understanding of the Christian faith in terms of the Vedānta, especially Śaṅkara's *Advaita*. Upadhyay's early theologizing, as was evident in much of chapter four, relies primarily upon classical and Scholastic categories. Indeed, his use of Hindu philosophical categories is decidedly selective and, in general, his assessment of Vedāntic Hinduism (though not India) is typically negative, reflecting the influence of the 19th century Anglicist tradition. However, after 1898, he increasingly seeks to find fruitful avenues for theological exploration in the traditional Hindu categories of thought.

Because his mature theology is articulated primarily through the traditional Hindu categories which he embraces, and seeks to find common ground between neo-Thomism and Vedāntism, this chapter will be structured according to traditional Vedāntic categories, reflecting the analysis of Śaṅkara in chapter three. However, much of the detailed analysis does utilize traditional Christian categories reflecting the dual burden of Upadhyay to be faithful to both the Catholic and the Hindu traditions. The chapter will examine the three central themes used to develop Śaṅkara's *advaitic* Vedāntism. First, there will be an analysis of the nature of God as Absolute (*asaṅga*) and Unrelated (*nirguṇa*),<sup>1</sup> which Upadhyay reconciles with the

---

<sup>1</sup> These are Upadhyay's translation of these two closely related terms. *Asaṅga* and *nirguṇa* literally mean 'unrelated' and 'without qualities' respectively, but the former can be used, by implication, to mean Absolute.

Christian proclamation of a Personal and Trinitarian God. Second, there will be an examination of the relationship of the Absolute to the phenomenal world, a traditional Hindu philosophic concern which seeks to explore the mysterious relationship of the One and the Many or the Absolute and the multifarious phenomenal world. In this regard, the chapter will demonstrate how Upadhyay built a bridge between Scholastic and *advaitic* thought through a reconciliation of Śaṅkara's *māyā* with Aquinas' contingent being. Indeed, the whole relationship between the finite and the infinite is explored and restated in the language of neo-Thomism. Finally, the way of release, or *mokṣa*, as explored by Upadhyay, will be examined. It is in this third area that Upadhyay seems to demonstrate a reluctance to incorporate the doctrines of transmigration and *karma* into Christianity. However, he did seek to reconcile the *advaitic* identification of the universal soul or self with the individual *ātman* (*tat tvam asi*), though with notably less originality than in the first two themes. Thus, it will become evident that while Upadhyay becomes convinced of the sufficiency of *Advaita* Vedāntism as an avenue of theological expression in understanding the nature of the Absolute and the relationship of the Absolute to the world, he appears less convinced of its sufficiency in the area of *mokṣa*. The significance of this will be evaluated in more detail in chapter seven.

## **2. Setting the Historical Context for Upadhyay's Theological Shift**

It is difficult to establish a precise chronological point when Upadhyay's positive re-assessment of Vedāntism takes place, though the difference between his writings prior to 1896 and those after 1898 are clearly dramatic. In the January 1896 re-statement of the purpose of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay declares that one of his key themes will be "to baptize the truths of Hindu philosophy and build them up as

stepping stones to the Catholic faith.”<sup>2</sup> However, his general opposition to *advaitism* continues unabated until July 1897 when he writes that it is pointless for Christians in India to continue to “wage a destructive warfare with Hindu philosophy.” Instead, he calls for fresh attempts to be made “to win over Hindu philosophy to the service of Christianity as Greek philosophy was won over in the middle ages.”<sup>3</sup> He begins regularly to compare how Aquinas adopted Aristotelian philosophy, making it “a rational basis for the mysterious edifice of the Christian religion to stand upon” with the need for a similar work to be done with Hindu philosophy, particularly Śāṅkara’s *Advaita*. Indeed, he argues that the Hindu race has been endowed with “metaphysical genius” and that the indigenous philosophical categories are more compatible with Catholicism than the philosophical categories of ancient Greece. However, Upadhyay is not entirely convinced that he is the one to undertake such a work:

We have no definite ideas as regards the *modus operandi* of making Hindu philosophy the handmaid of Christianity. The task is difficult and beset with many dangers. But we have a conviction, and it is growing day by day, that the Catholic Church will find it hard to conquer India unless she makes Hindu philosophy hew wood and draw water for her.<sup>4</sup>

However, it is only through a gradual process that he actually undertakes the task himself, successively treating each of the three themes which this chapter will explore. He begins with a positive re-assessment of the *advaitic* view of God in

---

<sup>2</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #1 (Jan., 1896):5; Lipner, ed., 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 8; Lipner, ed., 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 9; Lipner, ed., 18. In *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #11, 12 (Nov. - Dec., 1898): 186, Upadhyay quotes favorably the following statement from the editor of “The Church Progress:” The Catholic Brahmins should do for the philosophies of *Ārya Varta* just what the Fathers and Scholastic theologians did for the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and just what the Catholic thinkers of the West are now doing for science and philosophy that has developed among the modern Occidental sectaries - they must make the *synthesis* between the systems that have sprung up in the darkness of half-light of separatism with the Eternal Truths which God teaches the world through His Holy Universal Church.” *Ārya Varta* is an ancient name for North India, designating the region between the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains.

January 1898 with his article entitled, “*An Exposition of Catholic Belief Compared with Vedānta*,” though various aspects of the *advaitic* doctrine are not addressed until as late as 1900. His positive re-assessment of the second major *advaitic* theme does not begin until February 1899 with the first in a series of articles entitled, “*The True Doctrine of Māyā*,” and continues through 1901. Finally, as noted earlier, he never fully reconciles himself to several key themes related to the third theme of *mokṣa*. However, his theological work on this third theme does not even begin to emerge until August 1900 with his attempt to reconcile the salvific goal in *advaitism* with that of Catholicism, identifying both with the phrase ‘*tat tvam asi*.’ With the rapid banning of the two immediate successors of *Sophia Monthly*, i.e., the *Sophia Weekly* and *The Twentieth Century* which ended in 1901, there was scarcely time for this third theme to be fully developed.

Upadhyay’s theological shift from a negative to a positive assessment of Śaṅkara’s *advaitism* occurs during a period in excess of five years. He declares the need for the theological re-evaluation as early as January 1896 and yet the mature development of it continues until 1900 and beyond. However, for the purposes of this research, the shift may best be placed in January 1898, as this is his first published attempt to compare sympathetically Catholic and Vedāntic doctrines. His development of each of the three central themes of Vedāntism will now be explored.

### **B. The Nature of God as Absolute and Unrelated (*Asaṅga / Nirguṇa*)**

The most distinguishing feature of *Advaita* is, as examined in chapter three, its radical non-dualistic ontology interpreted in such a way as to render only Brahman as truly Real. Thus, the world is illusory when considered from an ultimate standpoint and the Self is non-different from Brahman. The positive reason for this

doctrine is founded in Śaṅkara's unwavering commitment to the absolute independence of God. God is Absolute, self-existent and unrelated to the world. Any texts which seemed to contradict this point were interpreted symbolically or relegated to a lower level reflecting the activity of *Īśvara*, the primary manifestation of *saguṇa* Brahman. Indeed, his commitment to the free and absolute independence of God is the driving force behind all of Śaṅkara's theology. Brahman is absolute and undifferentiated: One without a second (*ekam evādvitīyam*). He seeks to prove this from all the sources of authority, or *pramāṇas*: *śruti*, *yukti*, *anubhava*, the Vedas, from reason and even from "mystical experience or intuition."<sup>5</sup>

Upadhyay affirms that the *Advaita* doctrine of God's absolute independence fits squarely with Catholic theology. He does this through a careful analysis and interpretation of key *advaitic* concepts, including *asaṅga* and the well-known *nirguṇa/saguṇa* distinction which will now be explored.

### 1. *Asaṅga* in Upadhyay's Writings

On 9 April 1896, Upadhyay delivered an important lecture at the Town Hall in Trichinopoly entitled "The Infinite and the Finite." The lecture is significant because, though it reflects his earlier more classical use of reason as his primary authority (there are no references to any of the six *āstika darśanas*<sup>6</sup>), it nevertheless

<sup>5</sup> P. Johanns, *To Christ Through the Vedānta* (Bangalore: UTC, 1996): 7. This article first appeared in *Light of the East*, November, 1922. Traditionally, India has recognized three *pramāṇas* or authoritative norms: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *śabda* (scriptures) and *anumāna* (reason). Upadhyay never developed an integrated Christian response to the three traditional *pramāṇas*, though he addresses each of the three individually in various portions of his writings. The first Indian Christian theologian to develop a comprehensive interpretation of the traditional *pramāṇas* from a Christian perspective was A. J. Appasamy. He added a fourth *pramāṇa*; namely, the church. See, T. Dayanandan Francis, ed., *The Christian Bhakti of A. J. Appasamy*, (Madras: CLS, 1992): 43-93.

<sup>6</sup> In the opening words of the lecture, Upadhyay states as follows: "I will dwell upon the subject simply from the stand-point of reason. I will not quote any dogma or doctrine, or any authority; nor shall I quote any scriptures, the Vedas or the Purāṇas, the Bible or the Koran. I will appeal to you in the name of reason only which is the common heritage of us all." See, B. Upadhyay, *The Infinite and the Finite*, 3rd edition, (Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918): 3.

reveals clues that even Upadhyay's early theism was not in any fundamental conflict with the *Advaita* position that God is absolute and unrelated (*asaṅga*). In the lecture, Upadhyay defines the Infinite Being as "that of which the particle 'not' cannot be predicated." He demonstrates how nothing in creation can be declared perfect because everything is limited in some way. In contrast, he declares:

Let us soar high above the region of negation and alight upon that eternal abode where the Infinite Being reigns, where lives He who is beyond all negation. Here reigns the immutable 'Is.' 'Is not' and 'cannot' can never approach there. Take all the perfections together, all the *guṇas*; combine them into one being, and take away the negation, you have there an idea of the Infinite Being.<sup>7</sup>

The Upanishadic designation '*asaṅga*' in reference to Brahman is one of Upadhyay's favorite designations of God who dwells above the "region of negation." As early as 1896, he writes that "the Supreme Being is absolute, unlimited, self-sufficient, all-inclusive, and *asaṅga* (not in need of any companionship)."<sup>8</sup> In these early writings, he clearly roots the doctrine of *asaṅga* in human reason, while later on he begins to increasingly cite Vedāntic authority for this teaching. In *Sophia Weekly*, for example, Upadhyay chastizes Mr. Mozoomdar of the *Brāhmo Samāj* for believing in "a God who does not transcend the universe." Upadhyay writes, "God is to him no God if he

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 4. Upadhyay goes on to answer the familiar charge that the particle 'not' is applied to God when we make statements such as, "The Infinite God cannot forget Himself." Upadhyay says that such a statement is equivalent to saying "God is not not knowledge." The two negatives make an affirmative. He concludes by saying that "all the *nots* of the sophists affirm the absolute positiveness of God in regard to His nature." See, *Infinite and the Finite*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896); Lipner, ed., 59. Upadhyay defines *asaṅga* in his writings using a wide range of English equivalents: "not in need of any companionship," (*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 5; "unrelated," (*Sophia Weekly*, Sept. 1900); "not united to," (*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 13), and "absolute," (*Sophia Weekly*, June, 1900). The 1894 definition is in the context of discussing Śaṅkara's definition of *ātman*, not a discussion of the nature of Brahman, though theologically these two are identified in Śaṅkara. It is pre-supposed in Upadhyay's writings that Brahman is Being, reflecting the Upanishadic declaration: "non-existent, verily does one become, if he knows Brahman as non-being." See, *Tai. Up.* II.6.1; S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978): 547.

is not related to the finite.” He goes on to exhort the Brāhmo leader that “had he studied the Vedāntic philosophy he could have realized that the supreme Being is perfectly *asaṅga* (absolute).”<sup>9</sup> Several months later, he rebukes German transcendentalists who, in his view, regard the Infinite as “a nonsense or a hobgoblin, if divorced from the finite.” Upadhyay calls them to examine the “essence of Vedāntic teaching...[which] teaches Brahman to be *asaṅga* (without any need of company) to whom the creation of the finite is but an act proceeding out of munificence, luxury, sport (*līlā*) and not out of any necessity of His nature.”<sup>10</sup>

It is difficult to know for certain how convinced Upadhyay was in his conviction that the absolute, unrelated nature of the Supreme Being may be discerned purely through reason, not revelation. As late as June 1900, he seems to indicate that reason can apprehend the unrelated nature of God when he declares that “Theism is based upon the primitive truth that God is absolute (*asaṅga*), that He is not necessarily related to any creature, that He is the only Being, full and real by Himself.”<sup>11</sup> He goes on to define reason as

a power by which man is enabled to know the self-sufficient Reality which never goes out of itself for the purposes of its being and living. He who does not acknowledge a God who lives in the world as well as outside it, he who enters into the minutest relations of the cosmos and is at the same time *asaṅga*, not in need of any companionship with His creatures, has either a very perverted or an extremely unorganized reason.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, in a remarkable passage written only three months later in *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay seems to retract his earlier optimism concerning the ability of

<sup>9</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #11, New Series (25 Aug., 1900):5; Lipner, ed., 141.

<sup>10</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #23, New Series (1 Dec., 1900): 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (June, 1900); Lipner, ed., 28.

<sup>12</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2, New Series (23 June, 1900): 7.

reason to apprehend that God is *asaṅga*. He quotes the often debated passage in the *Īśa Upaniṣad* but with an unexpected translation of *vidyā*: “He who worships “*avidyā*” (ignorance) goes into the dark region, and he who worships “*vidyā*” (reason) goes into the darkest region.” Upadhyay does not define the distinction between *vidyā* and *avidyā* as ignorance and knowledge, but ignorance and *reason*. Upadhyay says,

The worship of “*avidyā*” consists in depending upon works for salvation; and the worship of “*vidyā*” consists in acknowledging *Hiraṇyagarbha*<sup>13</sup> - God as necessarily related to the universe. This “*vidyā*” does not soar higher than the plane of relations to recognize the supreme Being as “*asaṅga*” (unrelated).<sup>14</sup>

Upadhyay clearly implies that reason alone is insufficient to soar high enough to comprehend the Supreme Being as *asaṅga*, whereas a few months earlier he had stated that only a “perverted” or “unorganized” reason would be unable to ascertain this insight. Upadhyay, as we have demonstrated, always placed some limits on reason, yet here one can detect some movement away from his standard optimism regarding what can be ascertained *via* reason. Nevertheless, more characteristic of his later writings is not so much a retreat from his position regarding reason as a change in emphasis. One begins to find less emphasis on the extent of the arm of reason (*anumāna*) and more on one of Hinduism’s other great *pramāṇas*, Scripture (*śabda*), especially as interpreted by Śaṅkara. Apparently as Upadhyay’s theology developed, he began to see that the light of natural theology which emphasized God

---

<sup>13</sup> *Hiraṇyagarbha* is, like *Īśvara*, an aspect of *saguṇa* Brahman. *Īśvara* is frequently identified with creation, whereas *Hiraṇyagarbha* is associated with *saguṇa Brahman*’s wisdom, power and love manifested in the world. In another place, Upadhyay defines *Hiraṇyagarbha* as “begotten of wisdom.” See, *Sophia Monthly* vol. 3, #2, (Feb., 1896): 3. Here, Upadhyay correctly identifies *Hiraṇyagarbha* as God who is “necessarily related to the universe.” For more on this, see page 231f in this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900):5; Lipner, ed., 144.

as Creator actually obscured one's ability to see God as *asaṅga* (unrelated). Writing in *The Twentieth Century* under his *nom de plume*, Narahari Dās, Upadhyay comments that humanity is deceived into apprehending God as "only a related being. His absolute nature which transcends His creatorhood is not discerned by many theists. To them he cannot be without creating." In other words, creation's powerful testimony to God's existence may establish the fact of God as Creator so firmly in one's mind that it is difficult to apprehend a Supreme Being who "would remain as it is, perfect, unaffected and untouched, whether there be one or two, or millions of cosmic cycles, or none at all."<sup>15</sup> Increasingly, Upadhyay relies upon the authority of his own indigenous scriptures. Just a few months before the end of his life, writing in Bengali in his journal *Svarāj*, Upadhyay repeats his familiar affirmation of God as *asaṅga*, but characteristically for this later period, wraps it in allusions and citations from Hindu scriptures:

God, the Absolute is *asaṅga*. "*Asaṅga Yam Purusah;*" *nirguṇa*, unrelated, absolutely independent of anything that is not He. He is "*ātma-rata, ātmakrīḍā, ātmānanda,*" the fulness and perfection of *Jñāna* in which there is no opposition of Subject and Object.<sup>16</sup>

The open appeal to reason has been replaced by an open appeal to Hindu Scriptural authority.

In emphasizing God as *asaṅga*, Upadhyay encounters immense perplexities which have consistently challenged eastern philosophical and theological thought. If God is absolutely independent and unrelated, what is God's relation to creation in

---

<sup>15</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan, 1901): 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Sastriya Katha*, #5; *The Blade*, 155. This is an English translation found in *The Blade*. This late passage is also significant because it demonstrates that just as in his earlier writings Upadhyay emphasized natural reason as a stepping stone to supernatural faith, so now he sees the material objects of Hindu worship as natural stepping stones to the realization of God as *asaṅga*.

general and humanity in particular? What is the relationship between the intellectualistic, non-relational concept of the Absolute and the warm, personal relationship with God which lies at the heart of religion, whether popular *bhakti* Hinduism or Catholic Christianity? This problem has been clearly stated by Bradley in his *Appearance and Reality* when he wrote,

If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole... a God which is all in all is not the God of religion. God is but an aspect, and that must mean an appearance of the Absolute.<sup>17</sup>

The Vedānta has traditionally resolved this dilemma in one of two ways. The first way is, as explored in chapter three, the answer of Śaṅkara (*Advaita* Vedāntism) who affirms that there is no reality outside of the Absolute. The world is merely an appearance and *māyā* is reinterpreted to mean illusion. The other answer has been that of Rāmānuja (*Viśiṣṭādvaita* Vedāntism) who, rather than deny the reality of the world, placed the multifaceted world within the body of Brahman. Thus, both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja were able to preserve the doctrine of a monistically understood Brahman who is *asaṅga*, and yet provide an explanation for the multifaceted world. Śaṅkara denied the reality of the world, whereas Rāmānuja placed the entire world inside of Brahman. The dilemma for Upadhyay is to find a bridge to either of these positions which can be considered compatible with a Thomistic conception of God. The relationship of God to the world will be examined in more detail later in the chapter, but before that issue may be

---

<sup>17</sup> S. Mookerjee, "God and the Absolute in the Philosophy of Radhakrishnan" *Religion and Society*, vol. 7, #2 (Sept., 1960): 21. Mookerjee is quoting, Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 395.

appropriately addressed Upadhyay must first face the challenge which both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja pose regarding God's aseity.

Upadhyay articulates the problem in the first year of *Sophia Monthly* when he affirms that God is infinite knowledge, but that raises the difficult question as to what is the object of his knowledge and how is his knowledge satisfied:

To say that the object of his knowledge is his creation [and] that his knowledge is fully satisfied by the perception of things outside himself, is to make him a limited, a conditioned, a related being. The objective unity of his knowledge must be infinite, because his knowledge is infinite. The infinite object must be his own Self, for nothing besides him is infinite...The very words 'subject' and 'object' imply relationship and there can be no relationship without distinction.<sup>18</sup>

This problem is resolved in Śaṅkara by employing the *nirguṇa/saguṇa* (*Brahman/Īśvara*) distinction, but denying the personal nature of God. Rāmānuja disallows the distinctions of *nirguṇa/saguṇa* and *Brahman/Īśvara*, and instead posits a Brahman "which as a personality comprehends within itself all plurality."<sup>19</sup> However, by submerging the world into Brahman, Rāmānuja at best risks eroding the doctrine of *asaṅga* by seeming to associate impurity with Brahman and making creation a necessary correlative to the infinite and, at worst, opens the door to pantheism. Upadhyay is occasionally attracted by certain ideas in Rāmānuja,<sup>20</sup> but his commitment to God as *asaṅga* and his aversion to anything which might open the door to pantheism ultimately led him to focus his energy on reconciling Thomism with Śaṅkara's *advaitism*, not Rāmānuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaitism*.

<sup>18</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #7 (July, 1894): 1, 2; Lipner, ed., 109.

<sup>19</sup> F. K. Lazarus, *Rāmānuja and Bowne* (Bombay: Chetane, Ltd., 1962): 19, 20.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Upadhyay's comment that "God is the universal being, therefore all particular beings are contained in Him," *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #5 (May, 1896): 9.

## 2. *Nirguṇa/sagūṇa* in Upadhyay's Writings

Upadhyay does not explicitly address the *nirguṇa/sagūṇa* distinction until

1900. In the second issue of *Sophia Weekly*, he accepts the *nirguṇa/sagūṇa* distinction in Śaṅkara's *advaitism*:

Brahmā, the Supreme Being *per se*, is *nirguṇam*, that is, He possesses no external attributes, no necessary correlation with any other being other than His Infinite Self - He is *sat* - existing by himself; he is *cit* - self-knowledge, knowing himself without any external intervention; He is *ānandam* - supremely happy in His self-colloquy. But looked at from the standpoint of relation, He is *sagūṇam*, He is *Īśvara*, creator of heaven and earth, possessing attributes relating Him to created nature.<sup>21</sup>

By accepting the *nirguṇa/sagūṇa* distinction, Upadhyay risks affirming that the highest nature of God is impersonal. He resolves the potential problem in two ways. First, he makes a distinction between what is necessary (*paramārthika*) and what is contingent (*vyavahārika*) to the Infinite Being. Second, he emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the unchanging essence of God and the free action of his attributes. In a July issue of *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay argues that the term *nirguṇa* has been misunderstood if it is interpreted as saying that God "is an impersonal, abstract, unconscious Being." Rather, "*nirguṇa* means that the attributes which relate the Infinite to the finite are not *necessary* to his being."<sup>22</sup> This distinction between what is necessary to the Infinite and what is contingent to the Infinite is an important and frequently traveled bridge which Upadhyay uses in his attempt to reconcile *Advaita* with Thomism. He goes on to give the example of God as creator. Creation is not an intrinsic attribute of the divine Nature, i.e. it is not *necessary* to His nature to create. Thus, to say that God is not *necessarily* related to

<sup>21</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2, New Series (23 June, 1900): 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (July, 1900); Lipner, ed., 138, emphasis mine.

creation, does not deny that He is the Creator or that creation is related to him contingently.

Upadhyay praises the early Hindu philosophers who sought to understand God by *Brahmajijñāsā* (desire to know God as He is in Himself), the Sanskrit equivalent of the Christian concept of aseity. However, he contends that much of India has “lost the aspiration to know the unrelated God (*asaṅga*).” Instead “they have drifted virtually to the belief that God is not self-sufficient, that actual, finite existence is a necessary correlative to the infinite.”<sup>23</sup>

In the 3 November issue of *Sophia Weekly*, he points out that a *guṇa* is an attribute which acts as “a sort of fetter, such that one having an attribute is subject to the forces of pain and pleasure etc., due to the action of the attribute.” This is why it is appropriate for Christians to refer to God as *nir-guṇa*, i.e. without attributes, because despite the multifarious manifestations in the world “caused by Itself through its *śakti*, *māyā* etc. Brahman remains perfectly unaffected in the process.”<sup>24</sup> In short, Upadhyay simply equates *nirguṇa* with the affirmation that God does not undergo modification and is not necessarily related to anything, which is a doctrine consistent with both Thomism as well as the Upanishads.<sup>25</sup> As shall be developed in due course, a similar interpretation will be applied to Upadhyay’s understanding of Śaṅkara’s *māyā*.

<sup>23</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 171. For more on this, see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 4-6 in article entitled, “Whence Arose Advaitavad in India?”

<sup>24</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #19, New Series (3 Nov., 1900): 6.

<sup>25</sup> *BĀU* IV.4:25 says “this is the great unborn Self who is undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, Brahman.” See, Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 281.

### 3. God as 'Personal' Reconciled with *Advaitism*

With these two hermenutics noted above, Upadhyay is able to embrace Śaṅkara's *advaitism* as a starting point for Christian theology while still affirming that God is personal. Upadhyay is convinced that his position protects his theology on one side from *advaitavada* (pantheism) and Theosophy both of which emphasize the impersonal nature of God and yet, on the other side, emphasizes the personal nature of God in a way which does not conflict with God as *asaṅga*.

In tracing the development of Upadhyay's writings, one must recall that in his earlier writings he is not concerned with reconciling Catholic theology with Vedāntism, so the strength of his arguments are directed against *advaitavada* (pantheism) and Theosophy. As examined in chapter four, he is generally optimistic that the personality of God may be demonstrated by reason. He writes, "it is reason which proves with certainty the existence of God *and his personality*, though the will may or may not accept the proof."<sup>26</sup> However, where appropriate, he is quite willing to accept evidence from the Hindu Scriptures. For example, in a lecture delivered to the Āryan Social Union entitled "Eternal Law," Upadhyay seeks to demonstrate from reason that God is a personal Being. In the lecture, he attacked the Theosophists for teaching things which were "in direct conflict with the ancient Vedas, which are permeated with the belief in the Personal Nature of God." This personal God was contrasted with the "cold, impersonal being which the Vedāntists and the Theosophists want to impose on [India]."<sup>27</sup> However, in time, Upadhyay would

---

<sup>26</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #9 (Sept., 1897): 14; Lipner, ed., 123, emphasis mine.

<sup>27</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #6 (June, 1896): 16. A summary of the lecture was published in *The Catholic Examiner* which was, in turn, re-printed in this issue of *Sophia Monthly*.

make peace with Vedāntism, even while maintaining his opposition to *advaitavada* (pantheism) and Theosophy.

Citing the Vedas as an example of the personal nature of God risks the obvious charge that the *ṚgVeda* also teaches pantheism. One letter to the editor which appeared in *Sophia Weekly* leveled this very charge saying that the position of Hindu Reformers who affirmed Vedic monotheism was “ludicrous” since the Vedas were filled with a whole pantheon of gods such as the Thunder-god, the Dawn-god, the Sun-god, etc. Upadhyay’s responds as follows:

Orthodox Hindus, who belong to the school of Sāyaṇācārya, hold that the Vedas inculcate the worship of subordinate deities only and that the Upanishads teach the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Being. In spite of this current opinion, we are inclined to think that the Vedas teach Theism, not Polytheism. The Vedic Rishis did not chant hymns in praise of the Thunder-god, the Usha-god, and the Sun-god, but the God of Thunder and of the Dawn and of the Sun.<sup>28</sup>

Upadhyay is convinced that the Vedic sages who witnessed the various natural phenomena such as the dawn or a thunderbolt “immediately realized the Free Agency causing them to come into being.” He allows that their Theism was “natural and vigorous,” but he nevertheless affirms that “the glorious break of day at once led them to the vision of a Personal Being whom they called the Dawn-God, because He manifested Himself in the rosy streaks of the dawn.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, Upadhyay affirms his long-held belief in Primitive Theism, believing that pantheism is a later corruption of the Hindu genius, and he is therefore able to use the Vedas in support of his belief in a personal God.

---

<sup>28</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #1, New Series (16 June, 1900): 7,8. Interestingly, this is the position of Dayananda and the *Ārya Samāj*, a group often opposed by Upadhyay.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

However, as Upadhyay moved closer to Vedāntism, he had to exercise more care in articulating how the Christian position is compatible with the *advaitic* view of an impersonal Absolute who is unknowable. By the end of 1897, Upadhyay had begun this more difficult task. On 6 November 1897, Upadhyay delivered a lecture at the Framji Cowasji Hall in Bombay in which he called himself a Christian Vedāntist who believes in only one Infinite Being (against polytheism, and *Sāṃkhya*). He criticizes the teaching of Theosophy which asserts an impersonal being:

Another teaching of Theosophy is that the Supreme Being is a cold, impersonal being, without knowledge, without love. Here, too, Theosophy is in conflict with the dictum of the Vedas *and the Upanishads*.<sup>30</sup>

Rather than his normal appeal to reason, Upadhyay appeals to the Hindu Scriptures, including the Upanishads. The God of the Upanishads is, for Upadhyay, “no cold, intellectual abstraction, but a Personal Being, who knows all, who watches over us with a Father’s eye - a Being who is the plenitude of being; consciousness, pure and luminous; and Bliss Supreme: *sat, cit, ānanda*.”<sup>31</sup> Theosophy accepted that the Supreme Being was *sat*, but rejected any notion that the Supreme Being could be either *cit* or *ānanda*:

Knowledge and love, argues the Theosophist, involve relationship, and relationship involves limitation, a destruction of the Absolute nature of God. Hence the supreme being cannot be either *cit* or *ānanda*.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 3, emphasis mine. As with many of his public lectures, a summary is published in *Sophia Monthly*. Upadhyay is moving beyond the *RgVeda* and including the Upanishads as a basis for authority.

<sup>31</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 1,2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

While *Advaita* accepted the *saccidānanda* doctrine, the Theosophic point that relationship involves limitation is consistent with *advaitic* teaching and remains a challenge to Upadhyay. His response demonstrates the direction he will go in resolving this difficulty:

External relationship indeed implies limitation; but not so internal relationship. The Infinite, Self-sufficient Being is related within Himself. He is not necessitated to enter into relationship with any objective unit external to Himself. The Subjective Self of God sees and contemplates the Objective Self of God and in this single eternal act are his knowledge and love fully satisfied.<sup>33</sup>

It is in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which Upadhyay identifies with *saccidānanda*, that Upadhyay finds the solution to this dilemma. Then he couples his understanding of the Trinity as *sat, cit, ānanda* with the Thomistic “necessary - contingent” distinction. The result is a Brahman who is related within, but still unrelated without by necessity, and an articulation of the doctrine of God which Upadhyay understands as fully satisfying both *advaitism* and Thomism.

#### **4. God as *Saccidānanda*: A Re-Statement of Trinitarianism**

In later Vedāntism, it is not uncommon to find Brahman described as *sat* (being or reality), *cit* (intelligence or consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss). The *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda opens with the words: “I take refuge in the Self, the Indivisible, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*saccidānanda*) Absolute...for the attainment of my cherished desire.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, *sat, cit* and *ānanda*, often compounded as the term *saccidānanda*, is widely regarded as the most complete description of Brahman in all of Hindu sacred literature.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> P. May, “The Trinity and *Saccidānanda*,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 7, #3 (July-Sept., 1958): 92.

<sup>35</sup> *Saccidānanda* is a religious formula similar to an *ādeśa*, i.e. a compact presentation of truth, often contained in a single word or phrase, which summarizes the essence of a teaching. The formula

As noted in chapter two, the first Indian theologian to identify *saccidānanda* with the Christian Trinity was Upadhyay's mentor, Keshab Chandra Sen. Sen used the picture of a triangle with Brahmā of the Vedas at the apex. Brahmā descends down as the Son, and then moving along the base of the triangle represents his permeation of the world. Finally, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he returns to the apex carrying degenerated humanity with him: the Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God; Truth, Intelligence and Joy.<sup>36</sup> However this is only a first step, a bare sketch in terms of any comprehensive identification of the two great doctrines of *saccidānanda* and Trinity. It is Upadhyay who provided the first detailed analysis of how the two doctrines relate one to another.

In the February 1895 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay writes an article entitled, "Why did not Keshub Chandra Sen Accept Christ?" In the article, he states that Sen did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity as formulated by the Athanasian creed. Upadhyay quotes from Sen's famous lecture on "That Marvelous Mystery - the Trinity," given in 1882 when he said that "the true Trinity is not three persons but three functions."<sup>37</sup> Sen denied eternal distinctions in the Godhead, claiming that to accept such amounted to polytheism. Clearly Upadhyay believed that a more adequate re-statement of the Trinity was needed which utilized the Upanishadic categories, but was faithful to the historic Christian position regarding the Trinity.

---

*saccidānanda* does not appear in the earliest Upanishads, though the three fold description of Brahman may be found in *Vajrasūcikā* verse 9. The summarizing phrase was used extensively by later Vedāntists to summarize the essence of Upanishadic teaching regarding the Absolute as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

<sup>36</sup> P. May, 94.

<sup>37</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895): 14.

The various components which Upadhyay uses to construct this doctrine will now be examined.

**a) Internal knowledge/relationship**

If God is *cit*, intelligence, as the Upanishads claim, reasons Upadhyay, then He must necessarily know Himself. To this end “He must form to Himself an inward word or image through which this self-knowledge is effected.” However, the difference between the inner images we form and that of the Supreme Being is that our images are “accidental and transitory.” For God, nothing can be accidental or transitory. Therefore,

His eternal self-comprehension or word is to be conceived as identical with the divine nature and still as distinct from the Supreme Being in as far as he by comprehending Himself generates His word. God, knowing Himself by producing or generating His own image and word, is called Father; and God as known by Himself by this inward generation of the word is called the Word or the Son.<sup>38</sup>

This inner relation must be carefully distinguished from any necessary relationship external to himself. Upadhyay writes, “The Supreme Being is absolute; He is beyond all *necessary* relationship with any object external to Himself.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, God has an eternal, necessary relationship within himself; but all relationships outside of himself are not necessary, but contingent (*vya\vahārika*).<sup>40</sup>

This argument by Upadhyay is clearly an application of Thomism to the Indian context. As in India, Greek philosophers debated whether there is knowledge in God

---

<sup>38</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #4 (April, 1895): 11. This is a summary of the position of “the Editor of *Sophia*” (Upadhyay) as found in an article by A. Heglin, S. J. entitled “One God and Three Persons.” Similar statements may be found in Upadhyay’s own writings, but this gives some insight into the early support, encouragement and, indeed, written defense, which he received in the early years from the Jesuit community in India.

<sup>39</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897):9.

and if so, what is the relationship of this knowledge to God's Being. In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas asks the question "Is there Knowledge (*Scientia*) in God?"<sup>41</sup> The philosophical difficulty lies in the fact that knowledge implies a duality of the knowing subject and the known object. Plotinus, for example, placed God higher than pure thinking and "infers that Aristotle in saying that the First Being knows itself, makes it a duality, so that it no longer is the First Being."<sup>42</sup> Thus, the Platonic tradition separated Being from Knowledge. St. Thomas reaffirmed the Aristotelian position by asserting that "subsisting in oneself is self-knowledge."<sup>43</sup>

Aquinas did not seem to accept that the duality of subject and object is essential to knowledge and, indeed, would not regard it as such precisely because he viewed it as absent in God. This created a challenge for Aquinas, who accepts the self-comprehension of God, and yet denies any necessary subject and object duality within God, thus causing the dilemma that "to comprehend suggests the idea that one thing *includes* and *possesses* another."<sup>44</sup> Put more simply, can God's intellect be viewed as a reality apart from God? Upadhyay, in contrast, sees the self-knowledge of God as the bridge for the doctrine of the Trinity. Upadhyay, like Aquinas, reconciles the potential conflict between the knowing Subject and known Object through the internal relationship between the Knowing Father and the Known Son in the Trinity.

---

<sup>41</sup> *Summa Theologica* I.14.1; P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa*, 134.

<sup>42</sup> L. Elders, S. V. D., *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden or New York: E. J. Brill, 1990): 222, 223.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 223. See, *Summa Theologica* I. 14, 2 ad. 1. Avicenna and Averroes both argued similarly, positing the relationship between immateriality and knowledge. Duns Scotus, in contrast, denied the validity of this argument and the philosophical connection between immateriality and knowledge.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

Nowhere does Upadhyay believe that the doctrine of the Trinity can be known through reason or any kind of inference based on external observations. The doctrine of the Trinity is a truth “which man can never find out but [is] revealed by God himself or through his infallible messengers.”<sup>45</sup> Upadhyay believes that this revelation extends beyond the Bible because fragments of divine revelation are present in the indigenous scriptures of India.

For example, Upadhyay finds early indigenous evidence for his belief in the internal relationship of the Godhead in the 121st hymn<sup>46</sup> (*sūkta*) of the 10th book (*maṇḍala*) of the *R̥gVeda* entitled “*Ka*”, the Sanskrit word for “who.” The hymn is named such because each verse ends with the question: “who is the *deva* (god) whom we should worship with oblation?”<sup>47</sup> The hymn intimates that it is perhaps *Hiraṇyagarbha* who should be so adored because the hymn declares him to be “begotten before all” and the one who “became the sole lord of creatures.” Upadhyay analyzes the name *Hiraṇyagarbha* and rejects the traditional translation of “begotten of gold” opting instead for “begotten of wisdom.”<sup>48</sup> For Upadhyay, this hymn “glorifies the first-begotten, begotten of eternal wisdom.”<sup>49</sup> The hymn goes on to declare that “He is the giver of his own self.”<sup>50</sup> Rather than viewing *Hiraṇyagarbha* as “an emanation of the supreme Being” and the “first product of the illusory self-

---

<sup>45</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #3 (Mar., 1896): 4; Lipner, ed., 51. In another article Upadhyay writes of “the wonderful fitness of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity [which] illumines the darkness of that abode where dwells the Absolute in light inaccessible, [and] where human reason gets dazzled and blinded.” See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 9.

<sup>46</sup> Upadhyay erroneously cites this as the 120th rather than the 121st.

<sup>47</sup> *R̥gVeda* 10.121.1. Max Müller, in contrast, argues that ‘*Ka*’ is actually the name of the god proposed by the Vedic writer who is to be worshipped with oblation.

<sup>48</sup> Upadhyay cites the commentary Rijvartha as the source for the traditional translation which renders *Hiraṇya* as ‘gold’ and *Hiraṇyagarbha* as “begotten of gold.” This commentator remains untraced.

<sup>49</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 3; Lipner, ed., 152.

<sup>50</sup> *R̥gVeda* 10:121.2-4.

limitation of Brahman,” Upadhyay identifies this as an eternal generation of God’s eternal wisdom, i.e. *cit*, who is the Son, the first and only begotten. Upadhyay draws a parallel between the declaration of *RgVeda* 10:121 and Psalm 2:7: “The Lord said to me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee.” Upadhyay concludes as follows:

Was the *rishi*, the author of the above hymn, given the privilege of having a foreglimpse of the inner life of God having its entire satisfaction in a co-eternal interior generation?

Upadhyay does not want to answer with a dogmatic ‘yes,’ but he does conclude that “in the Vedas are found a very sublime conception of one supreme Being [and] the idea of divine generation somewhat resembling the Christian doctrine of divine Sonship.”<sup>51</sup>

The doctrine of the Trinity in its primary context does *not* signify a reference to the relationship between God and the universe, but a mystery signifying the internal relationships within the Godhead, a point which Upadhyay makes clear: “Trinity is a word which primarily does not refer to the relation of God to the universe, but exhibits the very nature of God as one essence possessed undividedly by Three Persons.”<sup>52</sup> For him, the Trinity signifies God’s self-comprehension by an act of eternal knowledge:

The knowing Self is the Father, the known Self or the Self begotten by His knowledge is the Son; and the Holy Ghost is the spirit of reciprocal love proceeding from the Father and the Son. It is a *necessity*, Christian revelation teaches us, for the subsistence of the Godhead to be related within.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 3,4; Lipner, ed., 152, 153.

<sup>52</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 8.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

### b) Eternal distinctions within the Godhead

The necessity of internal relatedness coupled with the accidental nature of external relatedness satisfies the demands of the Hindu doctrines of *asaṅga* and *nirguṇa* as far as keeping the Supreme Being separate from any impure associations. However, a key teaching of Hinduism regarding *saguṇa Brahman*, who as the Creator is known as the personal *Īśvara*, is that he passes away with each world dissolution. If the Christian God who is personal and Trinitarian is to be truly reconciled with the highest Brahman of *advaitism*, the internal relatedness of the Triune Godhead must be eternal and in no way affected by temporalness or world dissolution. Typical of Upadhyay's theologizing is his use of disputes with his contemporaries to clarify his position. His disputes with Theosophy and western intellectuals will now be examined to clarify his belief in the eternal distinctions or eternal relatedness of the Triune Godhead.

#### (1) Theosophic challenge

Upadhyay's debate with Annie Besant regarding the Trinity essentially parallels the patristic debate between Tertullian and Sabellius. Besant argues for the Latin meaning of *persona*, denoting a mask worn by an actor in playing a role. To her, the 'persons' of the Trinity are no more than ephemeral manifestations of the Supreme Being whose Reality is not to be identified with the mask. Upadhyay, following Tertullian, emphasizes that the word *persona* had, by Tertullian's time, come to indicate the individual character in the play and therefore carries objective significance. This meaning was carried over into Catholic theology. Upadhyay writes,

The term 'person' has a fixed philosophical meaning in Catholic theology. It denotes a rational *individuum*, a being endowed with reason and free will. It is never applied to an inanimate object or to an

animal...the fact is that Mrs. Besant has a very superficial knowledge of Catholic theology: hence she commits such monumental blunders.<sup>54</sup>

Upadhyay has a similar response when Besant compared the Trinity of the Christians to the Hindu *Trimūrti* of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Upadhyay contrasts what he calls the “questionable character” of the Hindu triad with the “All-holy, ever blessed Trinity.” More importantly for Upadhyay, however, is the fact that Hindus consider the *Trimūrti* to be only a *phenomenal* manifestation of Brahman: “At the end of each cycle the *Trimūrti* along with the whole universe disappears, and the eternal one exists alone ...without any relation.”<sup>55</sup> However, according to Christian revelation, God is “related internally in a three-fold way.” Indeed, this internal relatedness is a necessary part of His divine nature: “There are three necessary terms in the Godhead distinct in relation but one in essence. The infinite is eternally, and not phenomenally, triune.”<sup>56</sup>

Contradicting Theosophy, Upadhyay insists that the Christian Trinity is an eternal relationship arising out of “His infinite felicity” from the “colloquy between His subjective self and objective self, [and] of the unspeakable beatitude consisting in the correspondence between the eternal Father and the eternal Son through the Spirit of Love.”<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. See also, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #1 (Jan., 1897): 13 for a summary of a public debate with Besant which makes reference to her modalistic view of the Trinity and interpreting *persona* as mask.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 8; Similar arguments condemning the identification of *Trimūrti* with Trinity may be found in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 11, 12.

<sup>56</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #11, New Series (25 Aug., 1900): 7; Lipner, ed., 142.

<sup>57</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 10. The Triune nature of God does not take way from God’s oneness precisely because, as Aquinas argued, a relational unity (brought about by the internal colloquy) reflects a more profound unity than the Muslim or Jewish radical monotheism because the latter only rise to a mathematical oneness, whereas the Christian conception is a relational oneness. See, *Summa Theologica* I, 11, 4 and fn. 75 in P. Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa*, 112.

## (2) Max Müller challenge

F. Max Müller was one of the most dominant Orientalists of the late nineteenth century. On several occasions Upadhyay criticizes Müller's understanding of both Hindu thought as well as Christian orthodoxy. In the February 1899 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay quotes the following passage from the writings of Max Müller:

The eternal God, as Father, could not at any time exist without a Creative Reason, or Divine Expression, or Divine Word. This Reason, Word, Expression, is the Son, who is therefore eternal, and was with God, in God, *was God*.<sup>58</sup>

Upadhyay objects to Müller's theology because it seems to equate Reason with the Son and fails to emphasize the eternal distinction between the Father and the Son:

These words [Müller's] ...do not declare whether the Son is a person distinct from the Father as such and still numerically one with him in nature...To say that God had reason from all eternity, is a truism; who will deny it? To call reason the Son of God, if it is not a different personality, is against the usage of language; nobody calls his reason his son.<sup>59</sup>

Upadhyay concludes his remarks about Müller by re-affirming his own position using the language of Athanasius when he says that "Christ was one with the Father in nature or essence, but distinct in person as the Son."<sup>60</sup>

### c) God as *sat, cit and ānanda*

By December 1897, Upadhyay symbolically stands on the threshold of a whole new period of theological formulation as he begins to establish bridges of contact between Thomistic and *advaitic* theology. He credits the Vedāntic philosophers with soaring so high as to "peep into the Essence of God [and] to

---

<sup>58</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 219, 220; Lipner, ed., 181.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 222; Lipner, ed., 183..

contemplate His interior life.”<sup>61</sup> What they realized is that God could not go outside of Himself to satisfy His infinite knowledge and bliss. If He did, He would not be absolute (*asaṅga*) and unrelated (*nirguṇa*). However, rather than recognize the *internal* relatedness of the Godhead, the philosophers either denied the reality of anything external to God, or declared that it was a mystery too great for the “undeveloped intellects of the common people...who must be satisfied with stocks and stones.”<sup>62</sup> For Upadhyay, this is the source of idolatry which stands in stark contrast to the sublime heights which the Vedāntic philosophers scaled.

Upadhyay’s understanding of Vedāntism is profoundly influenced by his reading and study of the influential 14th century neo-Vedāntic teaching manual, *Pañcadaśī* by Vidyaranya.<sup>63</sup> The *Pañcadaśī* contains fifteen chapters divided into three sections known as quintads. Broadly speaking, “the three quintads have for their theme the three aspects of Brahman, *sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss).”<sup>64</sup> Characteristic of Upadhyay’s own theological approach, the

---

<sup>61</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 2. Upadhyay moved back to Calcutta in January 1898 and began immediately the first stage of his reassessment of Vedāntism, beginning with the nature of God.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* This also sheds light on why Upadhyay was unwilling to move closer to Rāmānuja’s position which, for his point of view, gives too much credence to the crude, exoteric worship of village Hinduism. A ‘stock’ is a 19th century term for a block of wood.

<sup>63</sup> Upadhyay even attempted his own translation and verse by verse exposition of the *Pañcadaśī*, a portion of which was published in 1902. It is not known for certain how much of the *Pañcadaśī* he completed, as only the first fourteen verses (with commentary) are found in the archives of the Goethal’s library in Calcutta. However, it stops in the middle of a sentence in his exposition of chapter one, verse 14. However, even in the small selection which is available, Upadhyay clearly sets out his understanding in his opening exposition that the three divisions of the *Pañcadaśī* correspond to the three aspects of Being: *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. See, B. Upadhyay, translator, *Pañcadaśī*, 1902, publisher unknown, Goethal library archives, Calcutta.

<sup>64</sup> T. M. P. Mahadevan, tr., *Pañcadaśī*, (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967): ix. This is an editorial comment by Mahadevan who goes on to emphasize that though the three quintads carry these three themes, all three sections carry the essential teachings of Vedāntism reflecting the common repetitious nature of this kind of teaching manual.

*Pañcadaśī* builds Vedāntic revelation on the foundation of human reason, including the insight of Brahman as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. Chapter One of the *Pañcadaśī* states:

In this way, it is established by reasoning that the individual Self is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Similar is the supreme Brahman. The identity of the two is taught in the Upanishads.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore, the *Pañcadaśī* teaches that it is revealed by Scripture and does not reflect the lower, illusory *Īśvara*, but gives an accurate understanding of the true nature of Brahman: “As the knowledge of *sat-cit-ānanda* has been acquired in the scriptural method, it, though an indirect knowledge, is not an illusory one.”<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, the *Pañcadaśī* repeatedly declares that “the nature of Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss.”<sup>67</sup> Upadhyay uses the theology of the *Pañcadaśī* to reinforce his own teaching regarding the three-fold nature of God as *sat-cit-ānanda*.

In *Sophia Weekly*, for example, Upadhyay writes as follows:

*Pañcadaśī* teaches that the objects we perceive possess being (*asti*), intelligibility (*bhāti*) and goodness (*prīti*), Chap. 13 v. 73. These three attributes correspond with the Being (*sat*), Intelligence (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānanda*) of Brahman, the Cause of all things.<sup>68</sup>

Adopting the *Pañcadaśī*'s three-fold framework of God as *sat-cit-ānanda*, Upadhyay uses it as the basis for his Trinitarian theology. His application of this theology to each of the three persons of the Trinity will now be explored.

### (1) God the Father as *Sat*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 5; *Pañcadaśī* 1:10. There are several passages in the *Pañcadaśī* which teach that Brahman's supreme nature is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. For example 1:46 refers to “the one indivisible Brahman whose nature is existence, consciousness and bliss.” Chapter 3, verse 28 refers to existence, consciousness and infinity as “indications used for Brahman.” See also, 6:196; 7:66; 11:61. In the *Pañcadaśī*, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* is the fundamental nature of Brahman, as well as everything in the universe (*Pañcadaśī*, 13:75, 78). The true knowledge of Brahman causes the outward “names and forms” of the objects of our sense perception to “slowly come to be disregarded.” (13:80).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 383; *Pañcadaśī* 9:19.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, *Pañcadaśī* 11:61, 13:63, 14:7 and 15:20.

<sup>68</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #18, New Series (27 Oct., 1900): 6, 7. The text Upadhyay quotes from the *Pañcadaśī* is, in Mahadevan's translation, 13:78, not 13:73.

In *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay launched a five week series to demonstrate the philosophical underpinnings of his thought. Upadhyay argues that Descartes' famous *Cogito ergo sum* is "beset with innumerable dangers" because it makes "human thought the measure of existence." Instead, Upadhyay argues for *Ens est ergo cogito* (Being is, therefore I think).<sup>69</sup> If Being is not posited first, then one risks falling into what Upadhyay called the abyss of "nothingness" and "emptiness," an almost certain reference to Buddhism. For Upadhyay, "Being is the ultimate foundation of all certitude, the foundation of thinking." Only God can be truly called *sat*, i.e. existence by itself which is eternal, immutable and infinite. All other 'being' has only a borrowed or contingent existence, enduring in time, and is both mutable and limited. To deny that true Being is self-existent "is to affirm that being and non-being are identical. If there be no *sat*, 'is' will be transformed into 'not.'"<sup>70</sup>

For Upadhyay, being (*sat*) implies not only relatedness, as explored earlier, but it also implies act. Two questions arise: What does an Infinite, self-existent, eternal Being act upon? How does it act? First, any form of dualism or polytheism is self-destructive, argues Upadhyay, because "there can be only one self-existence, there is no room for a separate, co-eternal recipient of its influence" which is external to the self-existent Being. Thus, as before, the action must be necessarily inward, i.e. within its own self-existent Being, without ruling out the possibility of action with and upon contingently related finite beings. Second, the only way a self-existent being can act upon itself is through knowledge and intelligence; its act is self-knowledge: "The result of its self-act is an eternal distinction between its knowing

---

<sup>69</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2, New Series (23 June, 1900): 8; Lipner, ed., 131.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

self and known self without any division in the substance.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, the presence of *sat* necessarily involves a self-related *cit*.<sup>72</sup>

## (2) God the Son as *Cit*

We have already demonstrated that, for Upadhyay, the object of God’s knowledge is God. The consciousness (*cit*) of God must, of necessity, be distinguishable from the Subject (*sat*) because, he reasons, “a being cannot stand in *relation* to its *identical* self.” Yet, as has also been demonstrated, God cannot go outside of Himself for any *necessary* relations. Upadhyay probably derived this insight from Aquinas who makes the distinction between “operations that remain in the operator and those which pass into an external effect.” Thus, Upadhyay argues, there must be a “relation of reciprocity” without any division in the divine substance. This, according to revelation, is precisely what the Trinity provides: “God begets in thought his infinite Self-Image and reposes on it with infinite delight while the begotten Self acknowledges responsively his eternal thought-generation.” Without compromising the unity of the absolute there is, nevertheless, a “variety of cognition and re-cognition, the subject and the object corresponding with each other in knowledge.”<sup>73</sup>

Upadhyay argues that the radical meaning of *cit* is ‘increasing,’ ‘growing,’ or ‘becoming more,’<sup>74</sup> and is usually identified in technical discussions as ‘intelligence.’ Upadhyay applies this to the internal colloquy between the Father and the Son in the following passage:

By knowledge the knowing self or subject is duplicated in the known

<sup>71</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900): 7.

<sup>72</sup> L. Elders, 225.

<sup>73</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 6, 7; Lipner, ed., 189.

<sup>74</sup> J. Lipner calls this “a dubious if not erroneous etymology.” Apparently, Upadhyay is reducing *cit* to the Sanskrit radical, *ci*. See, J. Lipner, *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, 297, fn. 39.

or the objective self...One 'I' becomes more than one, grows into two 'I's' by virtue of intelligence. Again, knowledge makes its object more than what it actually is. I see a tree, only one. But I can conceive of an indefinite number of imitation trees modeled after the one object of my cognition...Wonderful is *cit*. Subjected to its power, an object is multiplied, without losing its actual unity.<sup>75</sup>

The perennial question, discussed earlier, concerning the relationship between the knowledge of God and His Being is raised in a letter to the editor which appears in the 25 August issue of *Sophia Weekly*. A student asked, "How can the Supreme Being be *cit* (intelligence)? Intelligence implies duality and there can be no duality in the Pure Absolute." Upadhyay responds by affirming that knowledge does imply a relationship between subject and object but, he declares, "it is irrational to deprive the Supreme Being of intelligence because human reason cannot find any adequate object of knowledge for the Infinite Subject."<sup>76</sup> Indeed, this is a mystery which can only be resolved in the mystery of the Trinity.

Upadhyay has now established the ontological basis for the Second Person of the Trinity in a way consistent with *advaitic* thought. He now seeks to further establish it on epistemological as well as religious grounds through an application of *logos* theology to the *advaitic* context and a hymn of Christian worship to the Son of God using the language of Vedānta.

#### (a) *Logos* theology as applied to *Advaita*

Upadhyay's short-lived publication of *The Harmony* appeared from August to December 1890 prior to his baptism in 1891. However, even at this early stage, Upadhyay is exploring *logos* theology as a possible avenue to harmonize the best of Hinduism with Christianity, while giving Christ the pre-eminent place. In his

<sup>75</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (March, 1899): 238; Lipner, ed., 128.

<sup>76</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #11, New Series (25 Aug., 1900): 8.

opening statement giving the objects of the new journal, Upadhyay states one of his key goals as follows:

To preach Christ as the Eternal Son of God, as the *Logos* in all prophets and saints before and after His incarnation and as the incarnate perfect righteousness by whose obedience man is made righteous.<sup>77</sup>

The Christocentric nature of this statement and its emphasis on Christ as “the *Logos* in all prophets and saints” demonstrates the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen on Upadhyay’s early theology. In fact, several years later in *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay acknowledges his indebtedness to Sen when he quotes Sen as teaching “that the *Logos* was the creative fiat of God and that the manifestation of the *Logos* reached its perfection in taking the form of the Son in Christ Jesus.”<sup>78</sup> The major departure for Upadhyay is in his emphasis that Christ is the *eternal* Son of God, something which Sen did not teach, demonstrating Upadhyay’s unwillingness to separate the *Logos* from its eternal and historical union with the Son of God, incarnate in time in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>79</sup> Upadhyay went far beyond Sen in his development of *Logos* theology. His aim was to restate his understanding of the *Logos* in the terms of *Advaita*, while still being faithful to orthodox Catholic theology. This is accomplished through two major avenues: First, through the Vedāntic concept of

---

<sup>77</sup> No issues of *Harmony* are extant, however this statement (as quoted by *The Blade*) almost certainly occurs in the inaugural issue in August of 1890, since just prior to the statement of purpose Upadhyay states that “The *Harmony* will, for the present, be published for five months from August to December, 1890.” See, B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 28. Unfortunately, *The Blade* later quotes from the same issue and cites it, incorrectly as August, 1889. Lipner corrects *The Blade*’s inconsistency in his citation of the same quote in *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895): 14, 15.

<sup>79</sup> Indeed, in both the Feb., 1895 and Feb., 1899 issue Upadhyay chastizes Keshab Sen and Max Müller respectively for not identifying the *Logos* with eternal distinctions within the Godhead.

*īkṣaṇa*; second, through a restatement of the famous five sheaths or divisions of human nature in Vedānta.

Upadhyay lays the foundation for using the concept of *īkṣaṇa* by setting forth the distinction between *Parabrahman* and *Śabdabrahman*. For Upadhyay, *Parabrahman* is identified with the Father and the object of His knowledge, *cit* is reproduced as *Śabdabrahman* which Upadhyay identifies with *Logos*: “He reproduces his self as *Śabdabrahman* (*Logos*) by *īkṣaṇa* (beholding). The knowing God is mirrored as the known God in the ocean of *cit*.”<sup>80</sup> Here Upadhyay is reflecting classic Vedāntic teaching as found in Bādarāyaṇa’s *Brahmā Sūtra*. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja demonstrate in their commentaries that the production of the world by Brahman is dependent on thought (*īkṣaṇa*). Vedānta seeks to differentiate its position from the *Sāṃkhya* view that the universe is originated by the mechanical and impersonal interaction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*. Upadhyay applies this theological language to the distinctions within the Godhead and the eternal procession of the Son as the *īkṣaṇa* of *Parabrahman*. Upadhyay later refers to this relationship between *Parabrahman* and *Śabdabrahman* (*Logos*) as the “mystery of the timeless Word-colloquy... the eternal, intellectual act of divine generation.”<sup>81</sup>

The second avenue Upadhyay uses to connect *Logos* theology with *Advaita*, is the Vedāntic teaching concerning the five sheaths of human nature as found in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. According to the Upanishad, human nature is composed of five sheaths or divisions known as *koṣa*. It is through these five sheaths that Brahman is manifested in the individual as *jīvātman*. The five sheaths are: matter or food (*anna*),

<sup>80</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (Mar., 1899): 238; Lipner, ed., 128.

<sup>81</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 7; Lipner, ed., 189.

life (*prāṇa*), consciousness (*manas*), intelligence (*vijñāna*) and bliss (*ānanda*).<sup>82</sup>

Each of the five sheaths are presided over by a personality (*ahampratyayin*) who “is but a reflected spark of the supreme Reason (*kūṭastha-caitanya*) who abides in every man as the prime source of light and life.”<sup>83</sup>

Upadhyay reasons that Jesus Christ, as the Incarnate One, is also composed of five sheaths, but “is presided over by the Person of the *Logos* himself.” In contrast, humanity is clothed in the five sheaths, but is presided over and illuminated by reason. Indeed, he argues, divine Reason “resides in a special manner in the temple of humanity.” However, in the God-man “the five sheaths are acted upon directly by the *Logos*-God.” Thus, the incarnation accomplished a true uniting of humanity with divinity in the person of the *Logos*, Jesus Christ. This uniquely sets the God-man, Jesus Christ, apart from the rest of humanity. Furthermore, the mystery of the visible incarnation is a reflection of the invisible procession and colloquy of the Son as the eternal *cit* whom God “beget in thought.”<sup>84</sup>

In both of Upadhyay’s bridges which he constructs from Christian theology to *advaitism*, he takes a Vedāntic explanation for the creation of the individual and projects it onto the larger cosmic relationship within the Godhead. However, one must remember that it is axiomatic in Hindu thought that there is a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm.<sup>85</sup> Thus, even the structure of

---

<sup>82</sup> *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II.1.1, See, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 542. In his accompanying commentary Radhakrishnan compares the five sheath theology in the *Taittirīya* with a variation of the same theology in the *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka*.

<sup>83</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 7; Lipner, ed., 189.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> For example, even in the above illustration of the five sheaths, this was represented by placing the sacrificial fire in the form of a hawk or other bird which has five parts: head, two wings, trunk and a tail. The bird symbolizes microcosmically, the larger reality of the five sheaths which, in turn, Upadhyay argues, reflects on the ultimate macrocosm. Theologically, these identities are known as cosmical homologies.

Upadhyay's argument, moving from the microcosm to the macrocosm reflects classic Vedāntic reasoning. From Upadhyay's point of view, it was not only classic *Advaita* reasoning, but classic Thomistic reasoning which, following Aristotle, found in finite nature that which signified the Infinite. This theology is perhaps best reflected in Upadhyay's Sanskrit hymn which he composed to the Incarnate *Logos*.

**(b) Hymn to the Incarnate Logos**

Upadhyay is well known for his publication of four Sanskrit hymns, two of which are of particular interest in this research and will be examined in detail.<sup>86</sup> The Sanskrit collection known as the *Indian Christiad* published in 1995, comments that the hymns of Upadhyay represent his most unique contribution. G. Gispert Sauch comments that "few people realize the wealth and beauty" of Upadhyay's hymnology. His most important hymn, *Vande Saccidānandam*, will be examined later in the chapter. This hymn, while of lesser importance, is nevertheless a beautiful expression of Christian Sanskrit hymnology.

The hymn is offered by Upadhyay "in praise of the Incarnate *Logos*," so it is normally referred to by the title "Incarnate *Logos*." The hymn is divided into six stanzas, each adoring six stages in the existence and life of Jesus Christ:

1. Praise to the *Logos* pre-existing in the Godhead
2. Praise to the *Logos* as the Incarnate One
3. Praise for the hidden life of the *Logos*
4. Praise for the public life of the *Logos*
5. Praise for the meaning of the death of the *Logos*
6. Praise for the glorious life of the *Logos* and His victory over death<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> The four hymns of Upadhyay are as follows: *Hymn to the Word Incarnate*, *Canticle to the Trinity*, the *Lord's Prayer* set to Sanskrit verse and *Hail Mary* set to Sanskrit verse. Since the latter two are translations of a traditional text, they will not be included in this research.

<sup>87</sup> These six stages have been adapted with some alteration from G. Gispert-Sauch, S. J., "The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay," *Religion and Society*, vol. 19, #4, (Dec., 1972): 74. While Gispert-Sauch offers a translation of the *Hymn to the Incarnate Logos*, he does not provide any commentary or analysis, only a few brief words concerning the overall structure. The main focus of his article is a detailed analysis of the *Canticle to the Trinity*.

The hymn is difficult to translate since “the most obvious characteristic of the text is its alliteration and play [on] words.”<sup>88</sup> The hymn follows certain fixed rhythms characteristic of Sanskrit verse and there is also a rhyme between the first and second verse of each stanza. Another distinctive aspect of the hymn is that it contains no proper finite verb, but makes continual use of vocatives giving the hymn a moving, worshipful tone. The following is Upadhyay’s own translation of the hymn:

- (1) The transcendent Image of Brahman blossomed and mirrored in the full to overflowing (*upachita*), eternal knowledge (*chirachit*): Victory be to God, the God-man.
- (2) Child of the golden (pure) Virgin, director of the universe, absolute, yet charming with relations: Victory be to God, the God-man.
- (3) Ornament of the assembly of the learned, destroyer of fear, chastiser of the spirit of wickedness: Victory be to God, the God-man.
- (4) Dispeller of spiritual and physical infirmities, ministering unto others, one whose actions and doings are sanctifying: Victory be to God, the God-man.
- (5) One who has offered up his agony, whose life is sacrifice, destroyer of the poison of sin: Victory be to God, the God-man.
- (6) Tender, beloved, charmer of the heart, (soothing) pigment of eyes, crusher of fierce death: Victory be to God, the God-man.<sup>89</sup>

The hymn is clearly Christocentric, reflecting historic Christian faith in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. Yet, Upadhyay’s faith is proclaimed in such a way that it seems fully within the stream of Indian religious language, thought and history.

The first verse reflects the two main aspects of his theology of *cit* discussed above. First, Upadhyay celebrates the mystery that the Son is related internally by necessity, while remaining externally unrelated when he refers to Christ as the

<sup>88</sup> Gispert-Sauch, S. J., “Sanskrit Hymns,” 74.

<sup>89</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 8; Lipner, ed., 191. The Sanskrit transliteration of this hymn may be found in Appendix 1.

“image of Brahman” who is “mirrored,” i.e. a reflection of Brahman, distinct as an object of knowledge, but one in essence. Second, by calling the *Logos*, “eternal knowledge,” he emphasizes the eternal distinction which makes the Trinity eternal and necessary, and not temporal and phenomenal as with the Hindu Triad.

The second verse reflects the mystery of the incarnation. Through the incarnation, God becomes “related” to humanity as the “child of the pure Virgin,” yet as the unrelated *asaṅga* remains as ruler of the universe. The end of verse two contains a clear paradox which is not as obvious in the English translation. Christ is worshipped as *asaṅga*, i.e. without relations, yet he is called “charming with relations.” This demonstrates the paradox of the *nirguṇa-saṅga* distinction as well as the necessary and contingent aspect of Christ’s relatedness to humanity.<sup>90</sup> Christ is pictured as a *karmayogin*, a detached (unrelated) Being, yet fully active (related) in the world. As incarnate into the frailty of human flesh through Mary, he is composed of the five sheaths in solidarity with the whole human race. Yet, as fully God, he directs the universe through the thought procession which flows from *sat* and is reflected in *cit*. Indeed, the effective use of contrast is an important feature of the entire hymn.

The third verse is significant for its use of a classic Indian metaphor, calling Christ an “ornament” or, alternatively, “a radiant gem” in the assembly of the learned.

The fourth verse is interesting for its reference to Christ as the “dispeller of spiritual and physical infirmities.” The force of the Sanskrit word “*vitāḍana*,”

---

<sup>90</sup> For a clearer sense in English of the paradox see the alternative translation provided by Gispert-Sauch: “with your qualities enchanting, yet beyond qualities” in “*Sanskrit Hymns*,” 77.

translated by Upadhyay as “dispeller,” might better carry its force in English by Gispert-Sauch’s translation “destroyer.” The central role of *Viṣṇu*’s many *avatārs* is to descend in order to destroy evil and suffering. This verse correlates the two traditions without diminishing the unique stature of Christ.

The fifth verse reflects the Vedic tradition of self-sacrifice. It would be unlikely for an Indian to sing the verse without calling to mind the self-sacrifice of *Prajāpati*, set within a context of Vedic oblation.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Christ is adored as the sacrificial atonement, yet in a way which is seen to be consistent with the revelation within the Hindu sacred traditions.

The sixth and final verse presents yet another contrast between Christ as the gentle and tender “charmer of the heart,” yet the powerful “crusher of fierce death.” It is a rendering of the victory of Christ set within the familiar metaphors of Indian life and sacred stories.

Thus, this hymn reflects much of the theological reflection of Upadhyay on Christ as the *Logos* of God, incarnate in the world as Jesus Christ, yet re-stated in the familiar language and thought forms of India.

### (3) God the Holy Spirit as *Ānanda*

The third and final radical making up the collective *mahāvākya*, *saccidānanda*, is the term *ānanda*, translated as bliss or joy. The term *ānanda* as joy or bliss sounds strange to the western ear until it is recognized that it seals the internal joy of the triune Godhead apart from any external relationships, or, to use Upadhyay’s phrase, it celebrates “the beatitude of triple colloquy.” All other sources

---

<sup>91</sup> The original Puruṣa Man who creates through dismemberment in R̥gVeda 10.90.1-16 is later identified in the *Brahmanas* as *Prajāpati*. See, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 2.2.4.1-8a; *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 6.1-9.

of joy outside the Godhead must stand in only a contingent relationship to His eternal joy, lest the doctrine erode the doctrine of God as *asaṅga*. Upadhyay's development of *ānanda* emphasizes three main areas. First, he seeks to demonstrate how *ānanda* confirms the unrelated nature of the Absolute. Second, he seeks to make it clear that *ānanda* is a person, a third, eternal distinction within the Godhead. Third, *ānanda* protects the doctrine of God from slipping into a rationalistic abstraction, but clarifies that the Christian God is one, who out of joy, does enter into direct, personal relations with humanity.

To begin with, Upadhyay defines bliss (*ānanda*) as "the complacent repose of a being upon its own self or its like."<sup>92</sup> He makes an important distinction between the Upanishadic use of *ānanda* as a description of the Absolute, as opposed to *vijñāna*. He argues that *vijñāna* "cognises self through not-self" which implies that the Supreme Being knows himself through relations outside of His own eternal existence. The term *ānanda*, in contrast, implies that the infinite is "self-sufficient, self satisfied and not dependent upon relations which are not co-terminous with his substance."<sup>93</sup> For Upadhyay, any being which is "obliged to form alliance with something other than its own self cannot be *essentially* happy."<sup>94</sup>

Second, the three aspects of the Trinity are not qualities, but eternal, personal distinctions within the One Absolute Godhead. Indeed, one of the great mysteries of

---

<sup>92</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900); Lipner, ed., 137.

<sup>93</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 145. Upadhyay's identification of *ānanda* and reason is based on his study of the *Pañcadaśī* which affirms that "inanimateness manifests his being, sentiency his intelligence, and rationality his bliss." In 27 October issue of *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay cites *Pañcadaśī* 5:20-21 as the basis for this connection. See, New Series (vol. 1, #18): 7. In *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 5 Upadhyay translates *ānanda* as "unalloyed joy" to reinforce that His joy is not related by necessity to any contingent being to make His joy complete.

<sup>94</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 119; Lipner, ed., 27.

Hinduism is the relationship between the 'One and the many.' Upadhyay seeks to demonstrate that this *ānanda* is distinct, yet One. The three eternal distinctions within the Godhead are not inconsistent with the unity of God. Upadhyay says: "Sattva, rajas and tamas cannot be confounded though they are one in *prakṛti*; sat, cit and *ānandam* cannot be made to give up their distinctions though they are one in *Brahman*."<sup>95</sup> *Ānanda* is distinct, yet it manifests "the infinitude of the Eternal Essence."<sup>96</sup>

Finally, Upadhyay is convinced that the Upanishadic summary of the essence of Brahman as *saccidānanda* separates God from the mere abstraction of the rationalists. While Upadhyay repeatedly affirms his self-sufficiency and independence, this does not mean that God is unknowable or unapproachable. In a review of a collection of sonnets entitled *Naivedya*, published by his good friend Tagore, Upadhyay writes:

The keynote of the Sonnets is the direct, personal relation with the Infinite. There are some who argue that as the Infinite is not easily approachable, the finite should be worshipped tentatively as the Infinite by the less spiritually advanced. Is the Infinite really unapproachable? If it had been so, Reason would be an anomaly. The perception of the Infinite is the dawn of Reason.<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, as examined earlier, Upadhyay views creation itself as "an overflow of bliss" (*ānanda*). Vedānta teaches that "to know that the supreme being is bliss (*ānanda*) and that the creation of the world (*loka*) is an outflow of that bliss, is the culmination of divine science (*vidyā*)."<sup>98</sup> While it is not essential to His nature, the multiplicity of personal relationships nevertheless occurs as an overflow or abundance. Upadhyay

<sup>95</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #6 (June, 1901); Lipner, ed., 42.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 101; Boyd, *Indian Christian Theology*, 71.

<sup>98</sup> As quoted in *Sophia Weekly*, vol 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900): 6; Lipner, ed., 221

comments, saying, “it is not a product of necessity, but of superabundance. But this overflow, this superabundance is a mystery which reason encounters at the very outset of religious enquiry.”<sup>99</sup> God has endowed each person with a spiritual part, or sheath (*ānandamaya koṣa*) which “enables him to become a passive recipient of Divine grace and joy.”<sup>100</sup>

Upadhyay’s development of God as *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* is one of the most significant of his theological contributions. It is a step toward a theological summary which, for Upadhyay, can bring together and harmonize a wide variety of theological strands, including Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja as well as St. Thomas himself. He considers the Vedāntic conception of the Supreme Being to mark “the terminus of the flight of human reason into the eternal regions.”<sup>101</sup> Its sublimity is the ultimate point where the great theological systems with which Upadhyay wrestles come together:

Brahman considered in himself is Being, Knowledge and Beatitude; but considered as *Īśvara* (Creator) he is Power, Wisdom and Love; and considered as the object of contemplation, he is Beauty, Truth and Goodness...This is the teaching of the great St. Thomas. In it are harmonized the different schools of Vedāntic philosophy. It is one with Śaṅkara in regard to the philosophy of the absolute being and its contingent relation to the finite; it agrees with Rāmānuja in enforcing the immortality of individual souls but avoids his error of making the infinite necessarily correlated to the finite...<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #8, New Series (4 Aug., 1900); Lipner, ed., 223. A similar statement is found in Upadhyay’s personal translation of a portion of the first chapter of the *Pañcadaśī*. He comments on verses 8 and 9 of the first chapter saying, “This eternal *Samvid* is bliss transcendent...it is its own object of supreme love. Its love of self is independent of its love of dependent objects; and its love for objects other than self proceed from super-abundance of its love of the self-object. It is not in need of being correlated with the finite for the purpose of maintaining its bliss. It is a pure self-act.” See, *Pañcadaśī*, translation with commentary by B. Upadhyay, 1:8, page 14; Goethal’s library archives, St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta.

<sup>100</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (31 Jan., 1901): 10.

<sup>101</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898); Lipner, ed., 20.

<sup>102</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 228; Lipner, ed., 217.

Ultimately, it is a mystery which can only be grasped *via* revelation. It is beyond human comprehension to understand how “God begets in thought his infinite Self-image and reposes on it with infinite delight,” never losing “blissful communication and colloquy within the bosom of God-head” without creating “any division in the divine Substance.”<sup>103</sup>

**d) Trinitarian hymn to *saccidānanda***

Upadhyay’s *Canticle to the Trinity*, published in the pages of *Sophia Monthly* in October 1898, is widely regarded as a magnificent “gem of Christian hymnology.” It has also been cited as one of the most original contributions of Upadhyay to Indian Christian theology, combining as it does ideas from the Christian Scriptures with Greek and Hindu sources resulting in a unique work. Gispert-Sauch calls it the “best example of a deep adaptation of the Christian faith to the cultural patterns of Indian religious thought.”<sup>104</sup> The hymn consists of a refrain and four stanzas. The first stanza develops the theme of the refrain which is an adoration to the Trinity. The last three stanzas are dedicated to each of the three persons of the Trinity. As with the *Hymn to the Incarnate Logos*, it is difficult to translate because of the use of metre, rhyme and alliteration, though this hymn follows a freer, less traditional, Sanskrit model than the *Hymn to the Incarnate Logos*. The following is the English translation by Upadhyay which originally appeared in *Sophia Monthly*:

**Refrain:**

(1) I adore:

The *Sat* (Being), *Cit* (Intelligence) and *Ānanda* (Bliss):

(2) The highest goal, which is despised by worldlings, which is desired by *yogis* (devotees).

<sup>103</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan, 1901); Lipner, ed., 189.

<sup>104</sup> G. Gispert-Sauch, S. J., “The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay,” 60. This hymn is also alluded to in “*The Trinity and Saccidānanda*” by Peter May, *IJT*, vol. 7, #3, (July-Sept., 1958): 92-98. The Sanskrit transliteration of this hymn may be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this dissertation.

**Stanza One:**

- (3) The supreme, ancient, higher than the highest,  
full, indivisible, transcendent and immanent.
- (4) One having triple interior relationship, holy, unrelated, self-conscious, hard  
to realise.

**Stanza Two:**

- (5) The Father, Begetter, the highest Lord, unbegotten, the rootless principle of  
the tree of existence.
- (6) The cause of the universe, one who creates intelligently, the preserver of  
the world.

**Stanza Three:**

- (7) The increate, infinite *Logos* or Word, supremely great.
- (8) The Image of the Father, one whose form is intelligence, the giver of the  
highest freedom.

**Stanza Four:**

- (9) One who proceeds from the union of *Sat* and *Cit*, the blessed Spirit  
(breath), intense bliss.
- (10) The sanctifier, one whose movements are swift, one who speaks of the  
Word, the life-giver.<sup>105</sup>

Classical Sanskrit verse normally employs a variation of rhythm based on a pre-determined length of syllables, depending on the pattern being followed.

Upadhyay employs a less frequently used scheme similar to the *mātrāchandas* in Indian literature in which the structure of the verse is determined by the number of *morae* rather than by the number of syllables. Using this scheme, long syllables count for two, short syllables for one. In addition, Upadhyay uses rhyme, both within the lines and at the end of all lines with 20 *morae*.<sup>106</sup> Each stanza of this hymn contains two short lines (13 *morae* each) followed by one long line.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #10 (Oct., 1898): 1-3; Lipner, ed., 126, 127. I am indebted to Father Gispert-Sauch, S. J. in my analysis of this hymn. His publication entitled, "The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay" as well as his willingness to meet with me personally in Delhi in the winter of 1997 to discuss Upadhyay's writings has helped me considerably.

<sup>106</sup> G. Gispert-Sauch, "Sanskrit Hymns," 65.

<sup>107</sup> The only exception being the opening refrain which contains only one line of 13 *morae* and one of 20 *morae*.

However, the focus of this research is on the theological implications and instructive use of language employed by Upadhyay in this hymn.

### (1) Refrain

Upadhyay's purpose is clearly to celebrate the Triune Godhead using language which evokes an Indian, rather than a Greek or Latin, atmosphere. Indeed, the opening word of the hymn "*vande*" (I bow to or I adore) would almost certainly evoke associations with the Indian nationalistic anthem, *vande mātaram*. The word *vande* is the only verb in the entire hymn, the remainder of the hymn standing as the object of the verb "I adore." The rest of the refrain is the primary object of the adoration of the entire hymn, *saccidānandam*, the *Advaita* equivalent to the Christian word Trinity.

Neither word "*saccidānandam*" or "Trinity" appears in the primary documents of *Advaita* and Christianity respectively (Classical Upanishads or New Testament). However, both serve as a *mahāvākya* (great utterance) or *ādeśa* (religious formula) summarizing the essence of *advaitic* or Christian teaching regarding the nature of God.

This summarizing utterance does not reflect qualities in the Absolute or composition of substance, but serves to "define... his very essence by an indirect signification (*lakṣaṇārtha*)" such that each term "completes the other" and "gives an aspect of the One Reality that remains without any internal division or composition."<sup>108</sup> Thus, the opening refrain is directed to the worship of God, as He is in Himself, pure, undifferentiated *nirguṇa*. The later stanzas explore, in part, how God has freely related Himself to His creation.

---

<sup>108</sup> G. Gispert-Sauch, "Sanskrit Hymns," 67.

The second line of the refrain tells us that He is “the highest goal.” The literal meaning of *carama pada* is “the last step.” The language calls to mind one of the most well-known stories in Hindu literature; namely, the *avatār* of *Viṣṇu* as a dwarf and the story of his three steps or *padas*. In the myth, *Viṣṇu* takes the form of a Brahmin dwarf during a time when all the world was controlled by demons. *Viṣṇu* approaches *Bali*, the lord of demons, and asks if he might give the dwarf the space he could cover in three strides. *Bali* grants the request only to watch as *Viṣṇu* assumes his cosmic form and in three strides steps over the earth, the sky and the heaven, thus regaining the universe for the gods.<sup>109</sup> The expression “*paramam padam*” also appears in the *Kātha Upaniṣad* which says, “He who has the understanding for the driver of the chariot and controls the rein of his mind, he reaches the *end of the journey*, that supreme abode of the all-pervading.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, the verse celebrates that the Trinity or *saccidānanda* is the “last step” or the “end of the journey” in one’s understanding of the Godhead.

The second part of the last line of the refrain declares that this “last step” is paradoxically both despised and desired, i.e. the great Unity of the Godhead who nevertheless divides humanity because this truth is “despised by worldlings” (*bhogis*) who would rather follow sensuality and turn away from the “last step,” whereas “those who are for self-renunciation and self-control (*yogis*) accept it and yearn for it.” Upadhyay ingeniously brings out the division which the New Testament affirms

<sup>109</sup> W. O’Flaherty, ed., *Hindu Myths*, (London: Penguin Books, 1975): 175-179.

<sup>110</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 624. Gispert-Sauch comments that Upadhyay ingeniously employs both philosophical language as well as mythological imagery in his hymn. The philosophical language give the hymn ‘*lakṣaṇa* power,’ i.e. the power to imply meanings that are higher than the word designates, as well as ‘*vyañjana* power,’ i.e. the power to touch religious attitudes and evoke resonances of popular meaning in the hearts of the devoted which may not be explicitly implied. See, Gispert-Sauch, “Sanskrit Hymns,” 69.

is characteristic of the human response to God, yet he employs indigenous philosophical and mythological language to communicate the idea.<sup>111</sup>

## (2) First stanza to the Triune Godhead

The first stanza develops the refrain and praises the Triune God in a way which is consistent with the Upanishadic tradition. Upadhyay applies adjectives and titles which are frequently applied to Brahman in the Upanishads, but are here being referenced to the Christian Triune God. The alliteration of the description adds to the beauty as God is adored as *parama*, *purāṇa* and *Parātpara*. The first term means “supreme,” the second “Ancient of Days” and the third literally means “beyond the beyond” or transcendent. All of these terms are found in the Upanishads as well as in the popular Hindu literature.<sup>112</sup> This first line of the stanza celebrates the Triune transcendence. The second line underscores the Christian and *advaitic* opposition to Buddhist *śūnytā* (emptiness), by stressing the fullness of the Triune God. The fullness of Brahman is a theme which re-occurs in the *Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka*, especially 5.1.1:

That is full, this is full. From fullness, fullness proceeds. If we take away the fullness of fullness, even fullness then remains.<sup>113</sup>

The fullness which Upadhyay celebrates is one which is both transcendent and immanent, a theme vital to orthodox Christianity.

<sup>111</sup> Gispert-Sauch, “Sanskrit Hymns,” 69.

<sup>112</sup> For *parama* see, *BĀU* 4.1.2-7, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 246-252; for *purāṇa* see *Śvet. U.* 3:21, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., 730. See also, *BĀU* 4.4.8, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., 274. This passage refers to the “ancient narrow path” which Rumi attributes to Jesus, the *Logos*, “For the true believers I become a bridge across the river.” It is the Upanishadic equivalent of John 14:6. See also, *Gītā* 2:20. For *Parātpara*, see *Munḍ. U.* 3.2.8 where Radhakrishnan translates “*parāt-param puruṣam*” the same as Upadhyay, “higher than the high,” 691. See also, *Gītā* 8:20.

<sup>113</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 289.

The last line of the stanza explores the mystery of God's Oneness; a oneness which has "triple interior relationship." Here we clearly see one of Upadhyay's favorite themes; namely, that God is one and unrelated (*asaṅga*), yet related internally within the Godhead in the mystery of tri-unity (*trisaṅga*). Gispert-Sauch appropriately quotes Abhishiktananda who said that the "sat of God is in reality *sam-sat*," i.e. a Being-with communion or internal relationships. Yet, "in all his inner relatedness, God remains pure, *śuddha*, the inner relations in no way compromising the inner purity of the divine essence, which remains one only without a second, free from any essential duality."<sup>114</sup> Thus, in the mystery of the Trinity, God is both *trisaṅga* and *asaṅga*; triple-related within, yet unrelated (of necessity) to the world.

Upadhyay then balances the unrelated nature of God with the declaration that He is conscious, using the powerful Eastern word *buddha* (awakened or enlightened), asserting God's claim as the ultimately enlightened one and the source of all enlightenment reflecting the words of John's gospel, "He is the light which enlightens every man in the world."<sup>115</sup> The paradox and mystery of the Trinity has now been declared: triple-related, yet unrelated; unrelated to the world, yet the source of the world's enlightenment. The mystery cannot be penetrated apart from revelation. Thus, Upadhyay ends by declaring this truth "hard to realize." Even the enlightenment of God is never completely separate from the mystery of the unfathomable, ineffable nature of the Triune Godhead.

---

<sup>114</sup> G. Gispert-Sauch, S. J. "Sanskrit Hymns," 70.

<sup>115</sup> John 1:9.

### (3) Second stanza to the Father

The second stanza is dedicated to the adoration of the Father. It opens with the Sanskrit word for father, *pitṛ*. Upadhyay then uses the word key 'Savitṛ.' which is central to one of the most familiar and important mantras of the Vedas. Gispert-Sauch comments that "Savitṛ is the designation of God...that is taught to the young Brahmin at the *upanayana* or initiation ceremony: the famous *gāyatrī mantra* which is revered as specially auspicious: *tat savitur vareṇyam / bhargo devasya dhīmahi / dhiyo ya no pracodayāt*: 'May we meditate upon that splendour of the God Savitṛ and may he inspire our thoughts.'"<sup>116</sup> The word Savitṛ refers to a solar deity (or, as Upadhyay would prefer it, the God of the Sun) in the *ṚgVeda*. Thus, the word evokes images of the Father as the creative source of life, and the power and energy which gives life to the whole earth.

The Father is also called *paramēśam*, the Supreme or Highest Lord, a title for *Śiva*. The mystery is again pressed as Upadhyay now calls the Begetter (Savitṛ) the Unbegotten. He who has brought all of creation into existence is Himself uncaused, recalling not only the language of early Christian creeds, but the language of the Upanishads which assert that Brahman is "not-engendered."<sup>117</sup> The idea of the Unbegotten Begetter is reinforced by the next expression which Gispert-Sauch has translated, "Unsown seed of the tree of existence."<sup>118</sup> The Father is the seed (*bījam*)

<sup>116</sup> G. Gispert-Sauch, S. J. "Sanskrit Hymns," 71. See *ṚgVeda* 3:62.10, *BĀU* 6.3.6, *Mait U.* 6.7 and *Chānd. U.* 5.2.7.

<sup>117</sup> *BĀU* 4.4.20-25, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 278-281. Brahman is referred to repeatedly as "the great Unborn (*aja*) self." See also, *Gītā* 2:20. *Aja* also stands for the *Sāṃkhya* principle of *prakṛti* which they considered to be a principle without beginning, i.e. "unborn."

<sup>118</sup> Gispert-Sauch, "Sanskrit Hymns," 76.

who is Himself without seed (*abījam*). The tree metaphor is quite popular in Indian figurative religious language.<sup>119</sup>

In the last line of the second stanza, the Father is celebrated as the great Cause (*kāraṇam*) of the whole universe. Here we meet Thomas' Intelligent, Personal, First Cause, a declaration which separates Upadhyay from the *Sāṃkhya* philosophers who reject a personal or intelligent cause of the universe. Creation in *Advaita*, as understood by Upadhyay, is an "intelligent (*īkṣaṇa*), personal act, not an impersonal evolution."<sup>120</sup> The last description of the Father in this stanza is the word *Govinda*, which Upadhyay translates into English as "preserver of the world," an expression which resonates with western theological formulations. However, the literal meaning of the expression is "finder of cows" as Upadhyay boldly draws from the popular, mythological literature one of the most recognizable titles of Krishna. Here Upadhyay emphasizes the providential, shepherding care of the Father who is out finding the straying cows all over the universe, evoking Biblical imagery, yet doing so with the language of the *ṚgVeda* and the *Gītā*.<sup>121</sup>

#### (4) Third stanza to the Son

The third stanza is devoted to the praise of the Son. The opening words declare the Son to be "*anāhata śabda*" which means "non-struck sound." It is a technical distinction in Indian philosophy which refers to the "transcendental cosmic

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, *Gītā* 15:3.

<sup>120</sup> Gispert-Sauch, "Sanskrit Hymns," 71.

<sup>121</sup> Gispert-Sauch points out that there is an ancient *ṚgVedic* myth of Indra symbolically "finding the cows." The primary Biblical imagery alluded to here may be found in Luke 15:3-6 and Psalm 23. The controversial choice of Upadhyay using *Govinda* as a description of the Father is why, according to Gispert-Sauch, Father Antoine changed the word to *viśveśam* (which makes *parameśam* redundant and does away with the rhyme) when it was used for public worship. See, Gispert-Sauch, 72, fn. 19. It is also significant, in light of Upadhyay's later development of the theology of Krishna, that he did not apply *Govinda* to the Son, but to the Father.

Sound that is said to fill the universe.”<sup>122</sup> It is a sound which is said to be eternal and had no originating strike which produced the sound. This powerfully reflects Christ as the sounding Word which has eternally gone forth from the Father, the “infinite *Logos*” as the next phrase affirms. Calling the Son “infinite” (*ananta*) ingeniously draws upon both *Advaita*’s emphasis that the Supreme Being is infinite, as well as (when used adjectively) being one of the names to describe the gigantic mythological snake, *Śeṣa*, who is the mount of Lord *Viṣṇu*. The last word of this line describes the Son as “supremely great,” reminiscent of the *Śvetāśvatara* which regularly speaks of the *mahān puruṣa*.<sup>123</sup>

The last line of this stanza to the Son begins with an affirmation that the Son is consubstantial with the Father through the phrase *pitṛ-svarūpa*, translated by Upadhyay as “Image of the Father.” The word ‘*svarūpa*’ denotes essence or inner form, reflecting the truth that the Son and the Father share the same essence. Also, in North India, the word is widely used to refer to the *image* of a god.<sup>124</sup> The next phrase (*cinmaya-rūpa*) reinforces the concept of the Son as *cit* and is translated “one whose form is intelligence” or, as Gispert-Sauch renders it, “whose essence is made of Consciousness.”<sup>125</sup> The last phrase of the stanza to the Son is the phrase *sumukunda*, with mythological overtones associated with *Viṣṇu*. *Mukunda* is a name for *Viṣṇu*, but the *su* prefix makes it adjectival, distancing itself from a direct identification with *Viṣṇu* and instead emphasizing the etymology from the root “*muc*”

<sup>122</sup> Gispert-Sauch, “Sanskrit Hymns,” 72. The Yoga Darśana identifies this eternal sound with the sacred syllable OM̐ (pronounced AUM).

<sup>123</sup> *Śvet. Up.* 3:8, 12, 19; S. Radhakrishnan, tr., 727-730. Radhakrishnan translates the phrase as “Supreme Person” in verse 8 and 19 and as “Great Lord,” in verse 12.

<sup>124</sup> For example, child actors who play the role of gods are known as *svarūps*, or images of the gods they represent. Likewise, the Vallabha sect calls the image of Krishna, *svarūpa*.

<sup>125</sup> Gispert-Sauch, “Sanskrit Hymns,” 73.

from which comes words such as *mukti*, or liberation. Thus, Upadhyay translates it “giver of the highest freedom,”<sup>126</sup> reflecting the redemptive, liberating work of Christ which is so central to the Christian message as well as a celebration of Him who liberates from the bonds of *samsāra*.

### (5) Fourth stanza to the Holy Spirit

The fourth and final stanza begins by bridging traditional Latin filioque theology with the famous doctrine of *saccidānanda*. The Holy Spirit is pictured as “proceeding from the union of *Sat* and *Cit*.” This is followed by a concept as deeply imbedded in the Vedāntic tradition as the filioque is in the Latin. The Holy Spirit is *ānandaghana*, i.e. a “solid mass of bliss,” or as Upadhyay translates it, “intense bliss.”<sup>127</sup> The expression seeks to convey the purity of the Supreme bliss, unmixed with anything unclean. Thus, it appropriately carries the idea of holiness which proceeds from the Father and the Son as their pure and good (*śubha*) breath or spirit (*śvasita*).

The second part of the final stanza celebrates the work of the Holy Spirit. He is called the *pavana*, a term which the Sanskrit tradition connects, appropriately, with both fire and wind, “the two great purifying agencies in nature,”<sup>128</sup> and consonant with the Biblical description of the Holy Spirit as “fire” and “wind.” As the “wind” of God His “movements are swift,” recalling both the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* and

<sup>126</sup> Gispert-Sauch also points out that this phrase, like *Govinda*, was omitted in the printed musical version and replaced with the more obvious Christian title, *Jisu-Krishtam*. Gispert-Sauch seems to stretch the etymology of *sumukunda* too far to render it “good Savior,” though it does conform to his overall structure by having each stanza conclude with a single summarizing affirmation: Stanza one: the Mystery, Stanza two: our Shepherd; Stanza three: good Savior and Stanza four: our Life-Giver.

<sup>127</sup> Gispert-Sauch, “Sanskrit Hymns,” 73. The word ‘ghana’ also means ‘cloud,’ referring to the solid mass of monsoon clouds which bring nourishing rain to India.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

John's gospel.<sup>129</sup> In the final line of the stanza, the work of the Holy Spirit continues to be extolled as the one who "Speaks of the Word," i.e. bears witness to Christ and the Prophets and the "Life-giver," reflecting the task of regeneration, yet still faintly echoing the language of the *Gītā*.<sup>130</sup>

In conclusion, it should be kept in mind that this is first and foremost a Christian hymn, seeking to worship and adore the Triune Godhead. However, it is Christian worship grown from the seeds of the Indian tradition and planted in the indigenous soil of India. It is for this reason that Gispert-Sauch is able to say that in this hymn one finds "the most successful example of true adaptation or incarnation of faith in India."<sup>131</sup>

### C. The Relationship of the Absolute to the Phenomenal World (*māyā/ Saṅga Brahman*)

#### 1. Introduction

The relationship of the Absolute to the world is one of the key problems addressed in the Hindu *darśanas*. In the 1896 Trichinopoly lecture entitled "The Infinite and the Finite" noted earlier, Upadhyay seeks to apply reason to the various Hindu positions. He begins by defining the Infinite Being as "that of which the particle 'not' cannot be predicated."<sup>132</sup> Since the Infinite Being by definition is a transcendent being, differing from us not just in degree, but in nature, the issue of the relationship of the Infinite to finite creation arises. In the lecture, Upadhyay points out four basic answers Hindus have given to the question about the relationship between the One and the Many. The first, is the position that the One becomes

<sup>129</sup> Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3:19, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., 729, and John 3:18.

<sup>130</sup> *Gītā* 7:9.

<sup>131</sup> Gispert-Sauch, "Sanskrit Hymns," 74.

<sup>132</sup> B. Upadhyay, "Infinite and the Finite," 3rd ed. (Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918): 3. This is available in the archives of the Goethal's library, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta.

*divided* into the many. This position is as ancient as the early Vedic dismemberment themes which are cited as the origin of creation.<sup>133</sup> More recently, Upadhyay may be referring to the *Sāṃkhya* notion of the innumerable souls which have come from the One *Puruṣa*. The second Hindu answer has suggested that the finite results from an *emanation* from the Infinite, a possible reference to *Vaiśeṣika* which affirms the reality of particulars (*viśeṣa*) and other distinct forms of being (*bhāva*) which have separate existence, but originated in the Absolute. Upadhyay could also have in mind the neo-Platonism of a thinker such as Plotinus who held that “all things proceed through emanation from the One in serial order: each nature produces necessarily that which follows upon it.”<sup>134</sup> The third idea suggests that the infinite *evolves* into the finite through modification, a possible reference to Rāmānuja’s *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.<sup>135</sup> The fourth and final way of explaining the relationship between God and the world is to argue that the world is merely an *illusory projection*. In a clear reference to Śaṅkara’s *Advaita*, Upadhyay speaks of the Infinite in a dream, projecting the world as a shadow with no separate, independent existence.

It is the first and fourth positions which are of the greatest concern to Upadhyay. While never wavering from his negative assessment of *Sāṃkhya* cosmology, Upadhyay gradually comes to reconcile, through re-statement, this fourth position of *Advaita*. Indeed, his understanding and interpretation of *māyā*, especially his attitude toward the *Advaita* conception of the world, undergoes significant change

---

<sup>133</sup> *ṚgVeda* 10:90; W. O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda* (London, New York: Penguin Books, 1981): 29-31. See also, *BĀU* 1.4:1-4; S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads*, 163-165.

<sup>134</sup> L. Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 277.

<sup>135</sup> In an article published in *Sophia Monthly* (vol. 1, #10, Oct., 1894): 12. Upadhyay rejects the possibility of the transmutation of Brahman because if Brahman is wholly transmuted into the universe then Brahman ceases to exist; if partially transmuted, then Brahman has parts and is divisible. Neither position affirms that Brahman is the efficient cause of the universe.

over the course of his theological writing period. Thus, this portion of the chapter will begin by examining Upadhyay's conception of *māyā* and his critique of *Advaita* from 1894 through 1899. However, beginning in February 1899, Upadhyay begins a reinterpretation of Śaṅkara's *advaitism*, seeking a broad harmonization with Thomistic theology. The second part of this section will, therefore, examine the development of Upadhyay's views from February 1899 and continuing until 1903.

## 2. Upadhyay's Writings Regarding the Relationship of the Absolute to the World prior to 1899

In the July 1894 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay summarizes his understanding of the *advaitic* teaching regarding the relationship of the Absolute to the world. In an article entitled "What Does Hinduism Teach?," Upadhyay writes that "Hinduism teaches that there is one undivided Essence, [and] that this Essence *apparently* becomes many, [and] that the state of Its being many is this creation."<sup>136</sup> Upadhyay, throughout his earlier writings, understands the *advaitic* position as teaching an inexplicable mixture of Being (*sat*) with non-Being (*asat*). He writes, "Whatsoever we see in this world is an alloy of being with non-being."<sup>137</sup> For Upadhyay, this clearly compromises the unrelated Nature of the Supreme Being as *asaṅga*. As *asaṅga*, the Absolute is "incapable of having any predicate," for this would imply limitation through an unwarranted mixture of being with non-being. Yet, in his view, the *Advaita* position teaches that

This Eternal Being is alloyed from time to time with the eternal non-being, and this alloy causes apparent, not real, multiplicity in unity. And, again when non-being is abstracted, in due time, from Being, creation with all its variety ceases to exist, the Absolute

<sup>136</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #7 (July, 1894): 10. The emphasis on 'apparently' is his and clearly indicates that he has *advaitism* in mind though the article speaks only of "Hinduism." Of the six *darśanas* Upadhyay almost exclusively interacts with ideas prevalent in *advaitism* and *Sāṃkhya* without significant references to *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, or *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

Being reigns supreme in Its undivided unity, though non-being is eternally co-existent with It, as Its lower half, Its shadow.<sup>138</sup>

Upadhyay goes on to describe how the union of the Absolute Being with non-Being results in *Īśvara*, the Personal, Creator God of *advaitism* who exists as a product of *māyā* and from whom proceeds all of creation. Hindu polytheism is but a reflection of the multifarious manifestations of *Īśvara*. The Hindu must “migrate into different scales of life according to the fruits of his deeds, till he attains to the knowledge that he is himself the Absolute Being conditioned by non-being.”<sup>139</sup> Upadhyay objects to this teaching because it predicates limitation in God, it violates his immutability and, in the case of *Sāṃkhya*, posits the eternality of matter (*prakṛti*).

**a) Limitation and mutability in the *Advaita* position**

In the August 1894 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay argues that the *Advaita* position is against the dictates of human reason. He writes that

pure reason teaches that there is one eternal, immutable Being who is the First Cause of all things visible and invisible, and who has brought them into existence by his almighty power. The Hindu theory that this creation is the transmutation of the eternal Being is opposed to reason. There can be no change in the First Cause. The First Cause must be necessarily immutable, otherwise it cannot be the First Cause.<sup>140</sup>

Upadhyay’s reasoning is that modification cannot occur without the aid of another being or principle distinct from itself. For if a being contained within itself the sufficient cause of its modification “it would have already been in that state to reach which it possesses either [as] an external aptitude or an intrinsic capacity.”<sup>141</sup> Thus, for Upadhyay, a consistently held doctrine of *asaṅga* “breaks the backbone of the

---

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay’s view of *Advaita* is apparently influenced by ideas within *Sāṃkhya*. He does not mention the two eternal principles of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #8 (Aug., 1894); Lipner, ed., 111.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

*Advaita* theory that this universe with all its variety is the outcome of the multiplication of an eternal Unity.”<sup>142</sup>

The obvious rebuttal to this criticism is that Upadhyay does not respond to a key teaching in both *Sāṃkhya* and *Advaita* which, from their point of view, mutes his charge. Both *Sāṃkhya* and *Advaita* agree that the Absolute does not undergo any change or modification. The *Sāṃkhya* philosophers argue that *puruṣa* is indestructible and not subject to change. The world is manifested only when the proximity of *puruṣa* to *prakṛti* causes the latter to lose its equilibrium, undergo change, and manifest the phenomenal world. However, the bond between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* only apparently exists, having no objective existence. *Sāṃkhya* vehemently denies that *puruṣa* is the material cause of the universe. Likewise, *Advaita* insists that *nirguṇa* Brahman cannot undergo any modification; the world is the result of only *apparent* modifications in Brahman.<sup>143</sup> *Advaita* Vedānta teaches the doctrine of *vivarta*, i.e. the seeming and not real multiplicity of the Eternal One. In short, since the world has no ultimate, objective basis, no impurity is imputed to the Absolute. Śaṅkara, unlike *Sāṃkhya*, did accept that Brahman was both the efficient and material cause of the universe, but taught that the Absolute is related to the material universe only as *saguṇa* Brahman and the multifaceted distinctions which we call creation are only *apparent* distinctions just as the foam and waves appear to be different from sea itself.

---

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>143</sup> I recognize that *Sāṃkhya*'s *puruṣa* cannot be fully identified with *Advaita*'s Brahman, since the former do not embrace an Absolute, only the individual *ātman*s. Nevertheless, while the terms are not theologically equivalent, they are cosmologically equivalent since they serve a similar role and function in their respective systems.

In the November 1894 issue, however, Upadhyay responds to the *Sāṃkhya* and *Advaita* point that modification of the Absolute is only *apparent*, not actual. Upadhyay, in a clear reference to *Advaita*, speaks of “the non-dualistic systems” which teach “that the apparent multiplicity of beings is only an imaginary transmutation of the unchangeable and indivisible essence.” Upadhyay quotes from the *Light of the East*,<sup>144</sup> a monthly Hindu Review, which stated the *Advaita* position as follows:

Vedānta holds that Brahman is the *Upādāna Kāraṇa*, substantial cause, of the universe, while the latter [the world] is an illusory transformation of it, just as the dream-world is the illusory transformation of the mind. In the transformation of this nature, Brahman does not forfeit its own nature just as the mind does not forfeit its own nature while producing a dream.<sup>145</sup>

Upadhyay responds by focusing on the word ‘nature’ in the *advaitic* position and applying the Thomistic distinction between “existence and essence” which is a distinction present in creation but not in God. In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas seeks to refute opponents who teach that God’s existence is not the same as His essence. Aquinas argues as follows:

Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence, or by some exterior agent, as heat is caused in water by fire. Therefore, if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, this existence must be caused either by some exterior agent or by its essential principles...for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused. Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another. But this cannot be true of God; because we call God the first efficient cause. Therefore it is impossible that in God His existence should differ from His essence.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>144</sup> This is not to be confused with the 1922-1946 publication of a journal by the same name by D. Dandoy and P. Johanns quoted earlier in the chapter.

<sup>145</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1 #11 (Nov., 1894): 3, 4; Lipner, ed., 113.

<sup>146</sup> A. Pegis, ed., *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 30. *Esse* may be translated as either being or existence. For Aquinas, even God is not self-caused, but un-caused, as against Spinoza’s definition of God as “cause of itself” (*causa sui*).

Following Aquinas, Upadhyay argues that in the Supreme Being “essence and existence” must of necessity be identical; whereas in any changing creature the two cannot be equated since “a creature is not now exactly the same as it was before or will be after.” Thus, to explain the creation as a mere insubstantial dream in the Absolute violates the metaphysical simplicity of Brahman since it uses a metaphor of the finite and erroneously applies it to the infinite who “has no modes of existence as a creature has.” By subjecting Brahman to a dream, *Advaita* “gratuitously makes the Eternal One liable to change, and thus causes him to forfeit his pure and simple actuality, and, therefore, his nature.”<sup>147</sup> Because *advaitins* subject the uncaused Absolute to the law of causation by giving Brahman modes of existence, they have fallen into what he calls in a subsequent article, “the monstrous delusion which makes you imagine that the Eternal, Absolute, Perfect Being is deluded by *māyā* (illusion) into the belief that He is subject to time, relation and imperfection.”<sup>148</sup> For Upadhyay, it is “absurd that an ever happy being becomes of his own accord miserable.” Indeed, drawing upon the magician metaphor, Upadhyay points out that a magician who “multilocates himself” can at any moment withdraw himself from the temporary illusion. Yet, the single, unified Brahman who has multiplied himself in the world through innumerable multilocated selves (*ātman*) “must pass through thousands of births and deaths before they can be restored to unity.”<sup>149</sup> This final charge by Upadhyay seems to be justified because of the central teaching of the Upanishads in general, and *Advaita* specifically, that the human *ātman* is of the same

---

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 4; Lipner, ed., 114.

<sup>148</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 3. See also, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #9 (Sept., 1897): 1.

<sup>149</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #10 (Oct., 1894): 13.

essence as Brahman, and yet *Advaita* freely admits that the *ātman* is fettered by the bondage of delusion.<sup>150</sup>

### b) Eternality of matter in *Sāṃkhya*

Upadhyay's second major objection to Hindu views of the Absolute's relationship to the world applies to *Sāṃkhya*, but not *advaitism*, since the former is dualistic, affirming the eternity of matter (*prakṛti*) as distinct from spirit (*puruṣa*), whereas the latter denies any objective existence to anything apart from Brahman.<sup>151</sup> Upadhyay's views regarding the eternity of matter have already been explored in chapter four. Furthermore, the focus of this chapter is to explore Upadhyay's re-statement of *Advaita*. Nevertheless, as a summary, Upadhyay rejects the notion that an omnipotent God has no creative power. He writes, "to say that He [God] is a mere architect, a moulder, who produces new objects by combining together material elements co-existent with Him" is to reduce God to a mere "Potter God." "God can only fashion huge balls, as planets and stars, and a potter can similarly form balls of clay, however small; the difference between the power of God and that of the potter lies in degree only," not in nature.<sup>152</sup> Upadhyay, as we have explored earlier, is

---

<sup>150</sup> The *Sāṃkhya* view, which is largely beyond the scope of this research, fares no better under Upadhyay's analysis since they posit an innumerable number of individual *ātman*s which thereby divides the divine essence without substantially distancing themselves from the *advaitic* problem which imputes delusion to the Absolute *via* the bond of *saṃsāra* on the *ātman*. Furthermore, Upadhyay would object even more strenuously to Rāmānuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaita* position since, unlike *Advaita* and *Sāṃkhya*, there is no attempt to retreat into the argument that the world only has apparent reality. The entire world, with all of its limitations and attachments is, for Rāmānuja, contained within the body of Brahman. See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #5 (May, 1895): 10, 11 where Upadhyay clearly states that the doctrine of *tat tvam asi* leads inevitably to the conclusion that the Infinite is subject to delusion. For more on this, see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 10f., and *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #1 (Jan., 1896): 6, 7.

<sup>151</sup> For a classic summary of Upadhyay's opposition to the eternity of matter, see Upadhyay's 1893 pamphlet, *A Short Treatise on the Existence of God* reprinted in J. Lipner, ed., 94-103. Upadhyay offers a succession of logical proofs to establish that there must be a being who is immutable itself, but causes mutations in others.

<sup>152</sup> B. Upadhyay, "On Creation," 3rd ed. (Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918): 14. This is an appendix attached to the end of the published lecture "The Infinite and the Finite" and is located in Goethal's library archives, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta.

willing to go beyond what Aristotle and Aquinas taught, insisting that reason testifies that nature cannot be eternal since both the “eternity of matter as well as the spontaneous and independent origin of the universe [are] contrary to sound reason.”<sup>153</sup>

### 3. Upadhyay’s Writings Regarding the Relationship of the Absolute to the World from 1899 to 1903

#### a) Upadhyay’s understanding of *māyā*

In February 1899, Upadhyay begins a systematic re-statement of *māyā* which seeks to reconcile *advaitic* doctrine with Thomistic thought. However, though February 1899 marks the beginning of the formal development of his theology along these lines, there are a few places in his earlier writings which provide antecedents to his later theology and demonstrate that the full flowering of his theology was not in any fundamental conflict with many of his earlier perspectives.

For example, in October 1898, Upadhyay pointed out that even the neo-Hindu journals founded to promote *advaitism* were not of a single voice in explaining the problem of how Brahman becomes subject to delusion. The *Brahmavādin* “announces to the world that the Perfect Being has become imperfect for some unknown and unknowable reason.” In short, it is a mystery which finite minds cannot penetrate. On the other hand, the *Light of the East* “condemns the theory of Brahman’s imperfection as unreasonable.”<sup>154</sup> Upadhyay clearly sees that the whole matter deserves deeper scrutiny. The hermeneutic which he eventually uses to reconcile *advaitism* with Thomism is actually stated by him as early as November 1894, though it remains an undeveloped idea until February 1899. In the November

<sup>153</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #3 (Mar., 1898): 43; Lipner, ed., 72. For more on Upadhyay’s views concerning *Sāṃkhya* see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #7 (July, 1895); 14f.

<sup>154</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #10 (Oct., 1898): 160.

1894 article, without actually using the word *māyā*, he nevertheless points out that the *advaitins* should not view the world as “unreal,” but “contingent,” a clear reference to the Thomistic conception of the world. He cites with disdain that the *Light of the East* writings affirm the unreality of the universe based on the following syllogism: “All effects are unreal; the universe, taken in its totality, is an effect; therefore, the universe is unreal.” Upadhyay argues that the premise for the syllogism fails to recognize that “an effect is not unreal but contingent. It exists as really as its cause, though the reason of its existence is not in itself.” This is a crucial distinction for Upadhyay which rests upon his long-held affirmation that God’s existence is necessary, whereas the universe is contingent. Thus, “contingency is not opposed to *real* existence but *necessary* existence. The universe is not unreal but contingent.”<sup>155</sup> However, this line of thinking remains dormant until after his theological turning point in January 1898 when he moved back to Calcutta and began the first stage of his re-evaluation of Śāṅkara’s conception of the Absolute. Upadhyay increasingly seeks not to baptize Śāṅkaran thought, redirecting it towards Christian ends, but merely to rightly understand Śāṅkara which is in itself seen as consistent with Thomistic thought.

While his re-evaluation of the first Vedantin theme begins in January 1898, he does not begin to discuss the relationship of the Absolute to the world until his groundbreaking article entitled “The True Doctrine of *Māyā*.” published in February 1899. This marks the beginning of a series of articles published by Upadhyay in order to focus on the second major theme of Vedantism. Upadhyay, once again,

---

<sup>155</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #11 (Nov., 1894): 5; Lipner, ed., 203.

reminds his readers of the necessity of reconciling Aquinas with Hindu philosophy:

“One who is a careful student of the doctrines both of the Angel of the Schools [Aquinas]...and of the great philosophies of India, cannot help being struck by the innumerable points of contact and resemblance.” He proceeds to emphasize that Catholicism, as its name implies, is a universal religion “in which all the religious truths found elsewhere in scattered, fragmentary and distorted form are united into one perfect sphere of universal truth.”<sup>156</sup> Upadhyay then goes on to state both negative and positive aspects of major Hindu philosophies as examples of how none can compare with the bright light of Catholicism, yet all contain important fragments of truth:

The universe is not, as the school of Rāmānuja (qualified monism) supposes, a part of God, neither is it a mere transient existence, as the school of Śaṅkara (monism) imagines, neither is it self-existent as other *darśanas* (philosophies) held. But Rāmānuja was right in asserting it to have no independent being of its own; and Kapila was right in asserting it to be made up of matter and form (*prakṛti* and *puruṣa*).<sup>157</sup>

However, it quickly becomes clear that Upadhyay’s aim is not to demonstrate continuity with either *Viśiṣṭādvaita* or *Sāṃkhya*, but to reconcile Thomism with the *advaitic* doctrine of creation in general, particularly Śaṅkara’s view of *māyā*, in a way similar to how he had reconciled the *advaitic* view of the Absolute with Thomism since January 1898. Upadhyay begins with a reinterpretation of Śaṅkara’s view of *līlā*. Śaṅkara taught that Brahman created the world (*via* *Īśvara*) out of “mere play” (*līlā*). He uses the metaphor of a King who, though all of his bodily needs are met, enjoys hunting game for sport or play. Some have interpreted

---

<sup>156</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 226; Lipner, ed., 213.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 214.

Śaṅkara's doctrine of *līlā* as indicating that the universe has no purpose. However, Upadhyay asserts that because Śaṅkara taught that Brahman was all knowing, intelligent and pure knowledge, i.e. *cit*, then "that which proceeds from him must have some reason." Thus *līlā* is Śaṅkara's way of emphasizing the freedom of God, i.e. he has no intrinsic *need* to create for that would contradict his self-sufficiency. Creation is thus the result of "choice, not necessity." Furthermore, the universe cannot be a mere illusion, i.e. "mere non-being *appearing* to be being - for Brahman is 'free from sin' (*V.S. Bh.* 1.1.20 and *Chāndogya U.* 8.7.1) or rather Goodness itself, just as he is knowledge itself, and illusion, which is error, cannot proceed from knowledge."<sup>158</sup>

With this statement, Upadhyay openly challenges the common assumption that Śaṅkara's *māyā* affirms that the universe is an illusion. Chapter three analyzed how Śaṅkara used three classes of metaphors to illustrate his teaching regarding *māyā*: subjective delusion, objective illusion, and non-difference from Brahman. The most well known metaphor of the subjective delusion type is the snake-rope analogy. One of the key analogies of the objective illusion metaphors examined earlier was the reflection of the sun on the surface of the water. Finally, the waves on the ocean best represents that class of metaphors reflecting the "non-difference" of the world from Brahman. Chapter three argued that the underlying theme in all three classes of *māyā* metaphors is not, as is commonly thought, to teach that the world is an illusion, but rather to express that unity and multiplicity cannot be *equally* real. Many interpreters of Hinduism both in India and in the West have used only the rope-

---

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

snake or magician metaphor as a definition of *māyā*, rather than examining the entire range of metaphors through the Indian principle of *Arundhatī*. This hermeneutical principle is drawn from the experience of someone pointing to a star.<sup>159</sup> The idea behind the concept is that if you are seeking to show a pupil a distant and obscure star and he/she cannot locate it, a good teacher will begin to point out brighter stars at locations around the obscure star in order to help the student focus in on the general area and eventually to locate the correct star. Likewise, to interpret Śaṅkara's understanding of *māyā* with only one class of metaphors, using, for example the rope-snake metaphor, one will miss Śaṅkara's actual teaching, since none of the metaphors by itself represents the doctrine, but are merely pointers in the vicinity of a doctrine which transcends them all.

Upadhyay recognizes that the post-Śaṅkara period over-emphasized the first class of metaphors which presented the world as nothing more than a subjective delusion. 19th century thought reinforced these ideas as western thinkers like Kant, and others were either denying the reality of the world or emphasizing it as only an impersonal emanation. Upadhyay responds by stating that an over-emphasis on such metaphors as the 'rope-snake' pushes Śaṅkara dangerously close to Buddhism, a position which Śaṅkara would not have accepted. Instead, Upadhyay argues that Śaṅkara's *māyā* is closer to "what St. Thomas calls '*creatio passiva*' - passive creation. *Creatio passiva* is a category of being which includes all that is not Brahman. Upadhyay then identifies this with *māyā* by examining the original meaning of the word stripped of its many theological accretions. Upadhyay first

---

<sup>159</sup> G. A. Jacob, *Handful of Popular Maxims* (Bombay: Tukārām Jāvājī, 1907): 5, 6. *Arundhatī* is the name of a particularly dim star in the Great Bear (Big Dipper) constellation.

identifies the word *māyā* with ‘abundance.’<sup>160</sup> Taken as ‘abundance,’ *māyā* reflects the idea that creation is “the overflow of the divine being...resulting from the desire of Brahman to manifest and impart his own perfections.”<sup>161</sup> An alternative definition of *māyā* is from the “root ‘*mā*,’ meaning ‘to form, make, create, build, effect, manifest one’s self.’”<sup>162</sup> However, in either case, this “abundance” or “effect” should not be interpreted as any sort of emanation of the Divine essence because that would attribute “accidents” and “modification” to God’s essential nature. Aquinas makes this point in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* when he states that “these relations which refer to His effects cannot possibly be in God. For they cannot be in Him as accidents in a subject, since no accident is in Him.”<sup>163</sup> In short, there is a fundamental difference between the essence of God and the creation which comes from Him. The former is Being itself, the latter has only a communicated being. Aquinas continues,

It is impossible for the relations whereby God is referred to creatures to be realities outside Him. Since then it has been proved (Ch. XII) that they are not really in Him, and yet are predicated of Him (Ch. XI) ... Thus, it is not prejudicial to God’s simplicity if many relations are predicated of Him, although they do not signify His essence, because they are consequent upon our way of understanding.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>160</sup> Upadhyay is actually giving the meaning of the suffix “-*maya*,” not the feminine noun, “*māyā*.” However, this meaning is given in the *Vedānta Sūtra* 1.1.13-14.

<sup>161</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 227; Lipner, ed., 213.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 228; Lipner, ed., 214, 215. A third idea is that *māyā* comes from the root “*man*” meaning ‘to think.’ If this third definition is accepted, Upadhyay argues that creation is the “effect” of the divine thought, a theme also consistent with Thomism.

<sup>163</sup> T. Aquinas, *The Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 2, (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1923 edition): 15. This edition was translated by the English Dominican Fathers. Aquinas’ full argument for this occurs in the first book when he states as follows: “Existence itself cannot participate in something that is not of its essence; although that which exists can participate in something else. Because nothing is more formal or more simple than existence. Hence existence itself can participate in nothing. Now the divine substance is existence itself. Therefore He has nothing that is not of His substance. Therefore no accident can be in Him.” See, Book 1, Chapter 23.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. See also, J. Bobik, tr., *Aquinas on Being and Essence*; Notre Dame University Press, 1965: 238-258.

The original meaning of *māyā*, argues Upadhyay, is “precisely what the Thomists mean by creation.”<sup>165</sup> The Vedāntists and the Thomists agree when they declare that all that is not Brahman/God is *māyā*. For Upadhyay, the doctrine of *māyā* intends to teach three things.

First, *māyā* points to the mysterious contingency of created being. When the word ‘illusion’ is used it must be understood to mean that Brahman alone is Being itself, i.e. “He alone is identical with his own being while creatures have no right of being but have a merely participated and dependent existence.”<sup>166</sup> Reflecting Śaṅkara’s perspective on *māyā*, Upadhyay continues by asking, “Who can explain how the phenomenal multiplicity results from the immutable Unity, how being is communicated to the finite, how creatures come to possess being at all?” In other words, the mystery of *māyā* is that the abundance or overflow of His nature communicates being, but it is not continuous with Himself in a way that would relate Himself to the universe or make it a necessary predicate of His being, as the references from Aquinas noted above made clear. Rather, God preserves His self-sufficiency by allowing being to emerge, but giving it a communicated and dependent being, not essential being. This is stated clearly in the March 1899 issue of *Sophia Monthly*:

The Infinite is encircled by the Infinite. He is the centre, he is the circumference, he is all in all. There can be nothing which is not pre-eminently contained in him. His desire to manifest himself in creation is not subject to any surrounding influence, for there is nothing that surrounds him. This desire is not essential or necessary to his nature. It freely proceeds from his *Cit*. It is in him, but he is not subject to it. It is *Māyā*.<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 215.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (Mar., 1899): 239; Lipner, ed., 129.

The result is the mystery of the finite who possess being, but not being which is identical with his existence/essence. *Māyā* is illusory precisely because of the mystery of contingent being, not because we are in any kind of delusion or that creation is “unreal.”<sup>168</sup> Thus, the distinction between what is necessary (*paramārthika*) and what is contingent (*vyaḥārika*) once again is the key hermeneutic for Upadhyay’s reconciliation of *advaitism* and Thomism.

Second, the illusory aspect of *māyā* refers only to our mistakenly attributing independent existence to the universe, not a denial of its reality. *Advaita* and Thomism affirm that creatures have “a mere transient existence.” The New Testament declaration that we are but “a vapour” or “mist” is essentially what Śāṅkara means when he teaches that the existence of creatures is but a “dream.” Śāṅkara has been wrongly accused, according to Upadhyay, of teaching that creation exists “only in human imagination and not actually.” In fact, the dream metaphor, like that of the “vapour” and “mist” in Christianity are simply metaphors for what is fleeting and phenomenal.

The beginning of Upadhyay’s reinterpretation of *māyā* coincides with increasing anxiety about his views by the Catholic authorities. Thus, the launching of his new understanding of *māyā* and his positive relationship with Vedānta occurs in the last published issue of *Sophia Monthly*.<sup>169</sup> However, in the first issue of

---

<sup>168</sup> Following Śāṅkara, Upadhyay insists that the categories of ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ do not apply to *māyā*. As late as 1903, Upadhyay reaffirms this position when he writes the following in the *Tablet*: “*Vedānta*, the great Hindu philosophy of Theism, teaches that the relation of God to the world is an unreal super-imposition...the need for creation does not belong to the internal economy of His Being, for then, He would be dependent on effects for His existence...The above conclusion of the *Vedānta* is in exact keeping with Catholic philosophy.” See, *The Blade*, 207, 208.

<sup>169</sup> The February-March issue were published as a combined issue, so quotes from either months may appropriately be called the last issue. Anxiety stemmed initially from Upadhyay’s plan to found the Kastalik Maṭha on the banks of the Narmada in June of 1898 (announced in *Sophia monthly* in Jan., 1899) However, Mgr. Zaleski opposes the idea immediately and on 16 August Rome concurred with

*Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay defends his interpretation of Śāṅkara's "dream" metaphor by citing the well known 14th century Vedāntic instruction manual, *Pañcadaśī*.

The *Pañcadaśī* enters into a fictional dispute with the Buddhists in order to clarify misunderstandings regarding the Vedāntic, i.e. *Advaita* Vedānta position. The Buddhists accuse the Vedāntins of teaching that "names and forms are illusively produced by *māyā* in non-existence."<sup>170</sup> In short, they are saying that the world is *mere* illusion, i.e. non-existent. The Vedāntins respond by saying that "an illusion without a substratum, is never seen,"<sup>171</sup> therefore *māyā* must exist in Brahman:

As the power to burn exists in fire, so the power of *māyā*, which has no existence independent of Brahman and which is inferred by its effect, exists in Brahman.<sup>172</sup>

Existing in Brahman is not to identify it with *sat*, but nor can it be non-*sat* (non existence). The *Pañcadaśī* teaches that "*Māyā* is neither *śūnyam*, non existence nor *sat*, existence."<sup>173</sup> Upadhyay argues that if *māyā* is identified with *sat* it is thereby made "a necessary attribute of the Infinite Being, thereby destroying the Absoluteness (*asaṅga*) of God who is perfectly free." On the other hand, if *māyā* is identified with *asat* or non-being, the world loses all basis for its existence and it is a flat denial of "the fecund [nature of *māyā*] in producing the universe, [as] non-being cannot be said

Zaleski's opposition. In October 1898, Father Hegglin records in his diary the anxiety of the officials concerning the plan. Father Hegglin also openly opposes Upadhyay's reinterpretation of *māyā*. Thus, Upadhyay's theological development is a factor in the eventual banning of *Sophia Weekly* on 20 Sept. 1900.

<sup>170</sup> Swami Swahananda, tr., *Pañcadaśī of Sri Vidyaranya Swāmi* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967): 45; *Pañcadaśī* 2.34.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, *Pañcadaśī* 2:35.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay alludes to this passage in the *Pañcadaśī*, but cites it as II.42, rather than II.47.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 52, 53; *Pañcadaśī* 2:49. It is unlikely that the original distinction between *sat* and *asat* carried such metaphysical significance as "being" and "non-being" or "existence" and "non-existence." It probably was closer to "manifested" and "non-manifested." This point gives added strength to Upadhyay's argument who rejects defining *māyā* as "unreal" or "illusion."

to possess fecundity.”<sup>174</sup> Though the effect of *māyā*, i.e. the world, is clearly identified with contingent being, Upadhyay is unwilling to refer to *māyā* itself as contingent being since that “would be to predicate a non-necessary element in the Divine Nature, which is absurd.”<sup>175</sup> Instead, *māyā* exists in Brahman and prior to creation the world existed in Brahman as an everlasting potentiality. Upadhyay quotes the Vedas which teach “in the beginning there was darkness which was neither *sat* nor *asat*” (*R̥gVeda* 10:129.1). Later Vedāntins equated the Vedic darkness as ‘*māyā*’ referring to the “creative power of God” or, as Upadhyay puts it in another place, the “mysterious divine operation.” It is regarded as “darkness” because “the intellect cannot fathom the inscrutable mystery of the Divine fiat of creation.”<sup>176</sup> God is all light, he argues, but “the nexus which joins the Creator and creation, the how and why of the Absolute entering into relationship with the finite, is enshrouded in impenetrable mystery.”<sup>177</sup>

Third, *māyā* signifies the power of God to give birth to communicated multiplicity and to sustain finite, dependent beings everlastingly. *Advaita* and Thomism affirm that creatures have “a mere transient existence.” *Māyā* is the fruit of divine power (*śakti*) which gives birth to multiplicity. The operation of *māyā* is not essential to the being of God. However, reflecting the Vedic meaning of *māyā*,

---

<sup>174</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #1, New Series (16 June, 1900): 7.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* Thus, when *The Blade* notes that Upadhyay identifies *māyā* and contingent Being what it means, more precisely, is that the *effects* of *māyā* are identified with contingent being, as opposed to illusion. The distinction between *māyā* and the *effects* of *māyā* and its relationship with contingent being probably does not reflect new thinking on Upadhyay’s part, but is a more precise statement of his position. In 1903, Upadhyay states in *The Tablet* the following: “*Māyā* is less than Being but more than nothing. It is not Being, for then it would coalesce with the Divine Substance. It cannot be absolutely false like a barren woman’s son for it is the occasion of effects.” See, *The Blade*, 208 and Appendix I, iv.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

Upadhyay refers to it as “a mysterious divine operation which is able to cause that which should cease to exist, to exist forever, i.e. an everlasting contingency.”<sup>178</sup> He goes on to ask,

Should not individual souls disappear from the sphere of being in time? They should and actually they do tend, every moment, to dwindle into nothingness. It is the divine *māyā* that keeps them up and if it chooses can preserve them everlastingly. There is no contradiction in the doctrine that finite creatures can bear the pressure of everlasting duration...not by their own virtue...but by the virtue of that divine power, the inexplicable *māyā*.<sup>179</sup>

Vedānta failed to see the eternal duration of individual souls (as perhaps *Sāṃkhya* did) because Śāṅkara was “satisfied with only the ontological view of things.” But Catholic philosophy completes and builds upon Śāṅkara by teaching that “individual souls have been blessed by God to live forever.” The infinite power which enables them to continue as everlastingly contingent is *māyā*.

So Vedānta, like Thomism, strikes the balance between affirming the reality of creation, but carefully emphasizing that it has only a “borrowed existence.”

#### **b) Applying the *Arundhatī* hermeneutic to the metaphors**

As stated earlier, an undue emphasis on a certain class of metaphors has ignored the *Arundhatī* principle in Indian interpretation. One writer, identifying himself only as “a Vedāntist,”<sup>180</sup> insists that the Vedāntic position is that “the world is a mere projection of our mind...[having] no extra-mental existence.” The writer quotes four metaphors in rapid succession: the sandy waste mistaken for a watery expanse; the stunted tree for a man, a rope for a snake and a mother-o’-pearl for silver.<sup>181</sup> A close examination of these four metaphors will reveal that all of them

---

<sup>178</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 228; Lipner, ed., 215.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> This is quite likely a fictionalized disputant created by Upadhyay.

<sup>181</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #9, New Series (11 Aug., 1900): 7; Lipner, ed., 224.

fall into the single category of “subjective delusion,” i.e. the idea that the empirical world and the individual self are the result of some form of subjective error with no objective reality. Upadhyay responds that Vedānta never affirmed “the unreliability of the senses,” but, rather Śāṅkara was opposed to “their extravagant use” whereby we “wickedly attribute to them (mind and matter) independent un-derived existence.”<sup>182</sup> Balanced with other Śāṅkaran metaphors, the true view of the Absolute’s relationship to the world emerges.

In the 4 August issue of *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay printed the summary of a lecture given by his uncle, K. C. Banerji, on Vedāntism. The lecture carefully distinguishes between Śāṅkara stating that the world was “illusory,” but not “false.” While the lecturer did not employ Upadhyay’s “essential-contingent” language, he (more characteristic of India’s handling of metaphysics) used two complimentary, but opposing metaphors of rope-snake (subjective delusion) and waves on the ocean (non-difference from Brahman). The former metaphor emphasizes that the world has no independent existence; the latter emphasizes that the world is an overflow, or a “superabundance” from the Divine Nature, instilling the world with real being, albeit communicated and contingent.<sup>183</sup>

These three insights regarding *māyā* enable Upadhyay to affirm that the *advaitic* conception of the world is entirely consistent with Thomism. It is not a matter of re-interpreting Śāṅkara as much as it is a proper understanding of Śāṅkara which is required.

---

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 225.

<sup>183</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #8, New Series (4 Aug., 1900): 8. This is a classic example of an application of the *Arundhatī* hermeneutic explored earlier in the chapter.

#### 4. Upadhyay's Reconciliation of Thomism with *Saguṇa* Brahman / *Īśvara* of *Advaitism*

Upadhyay follows the same basic hermeneutic when reconciling Śaṅkara's two levels of Brahman with Thomism. As explored in chapter three, the *Vedānta Sūtra*, explicating the Upanishads, distinguishes between two levels of Brahman; the unrelated *asaṅga* known as *nirguṇa* Brahman and the Brahman related to the world and *māyā*, known as *saguṇa* Brahman who, as a personal creator, is known as *Īśvara*. Upadhyay insists that it is equally unfair to Śaṅkara to interpret his statements regarding *Īśvara* to mean that *Īśvara* is unreal in the same way as it was inaccurate to assert that *māyā* denotes unreality, i.e. no objective reality. For Upadhyay, *nirguṇa* refers to God's necessary character; His self-sufficiency which did not need to create. *Īśvara* reflects God's choice to enter into a relationship with the finite through creation. *Īśvara*, Upadhyay argues, "is a term applied in the Vedānta to the supreme being (Brahman) as related to creatures."<sup>184</sup> It is illusory only in the sense that people view God only as one related to creation. This, as discussed in chapter four, is what ultimately gave Upadhyay pause concerning the limits of human reason. Reason identifies God as creator, but cannot rise to the level of God as unrelated and self-sufficient without a creation and thus, revelation as it is contained in *Advaita*, and confirmed in Catholic revelation, makes this important and necessary distinction. "Men in general, not being illuminated by the light of true revelation, think of God as *Īśvara* only; they cannot rise to the true conception of the absolute Godhead." Further, those who worship a God who is obliged to go out of Himself and create are "worshipping a creation, not of knowledge and illumination, but of their own

---

<sup>184</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #3, New Series (30 June, 1900); Lipner, ed., 221.

ignorant fancy. This is the real, traditional exposition of *Īśvara* being the product of illusion.”<sup>185</sup>

#### D. Salvation (*Mokṣa*)

##### 1. Introduction

The third and final theme to be explored is Upadhyay’s development of *advaitic* thought concerning *mokṣa* or the liberation of the *ātman* from the ocean of transmigratory existence. As noted in the Introduction to this chapter, Upadhyay’s theological reconciliation of Śāṅkara’s development of *mokṣa* began considerably later than his work on the previous two themes, and is less extensive than the others. It is not entirely clear whether his neglect of some of the *mokṣa* themes is because he is unwilling to follow Śāṅkara fully into soteriology or if the banning of his theological writings by the ecclesiastical authorities coupled with the pressing demands of his nationalistic involvement simply did not permit adequate time for his thought to mature. Nevertheless, this theme will be explored through an examination of the three components of Śāṅkara’s theology of *mokṣa*. First, an analysis of Upadhyay’s writings concerning the *advaitic* insight which breaks the power of *karma* and the bond of ignorance; namely, the identification of *ātman* with Brahman; the realization that the essence of the self is the same as ‘being’ itself or the essence of the universe. Second, an examination of Upadhyay’s writings concerning the transmigration of souls, the *samsāric* cycle of existence whereby everything comes into being, flourishes, passes away and comes into being again. Third, Upadhyay’s

---

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* The Vedantic position, as explicated by *Advaita* is, for Upadhyay, completely harmonious with the Thomistic position. In contrast, the *Sāṃkhya* philosophers faced the same mystery and attempted to “to do away with the idea of a Creator.” For Upadhyay’s denunciation of the *Sāṃkhya* position see, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #8, New Series (4 Aug., 1900); Lipner, ed., 222-224.

attitude toward the Hindu view of *karma*, including an analysis of the role of vicarious suffering in *advaitic* thought, will be explored.

## 2. Identification of *Ātman* and Brahman

In Chapter three, Śaṅkara's theology of *mokṣa* was explored. It was demonstrated that Śaṅkara preserves the independence of Brahman from *māyā* by insisting that it is through **our** ignorance that *māyā* is able to deceptively manifest itself. *Mokṣa* describes the liberation received when one breaks through the veil of ignorance and realizes the true relationship of the soul to Absolute Brahman. Salvation for Śaṅkara, therefore, is to be liberated from ignorance. The bond of *avidyā* (ignorance) is broken once we realize that our soul (*ātman*) is Brahman.

In Upadhyay's early writings, he explicitly rejects both the *advaitic* position which describes salvation in terms of a liberation from ignorance as well as the Vedāntic theology which is summarized by the phrase, "*tat tvam asi.*" In an 1894 edition of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay declares that he does not consider Vedāntic philosophy "to be the right philosophy." He then goes on to describe the entire Vedāntic system as "fatal to the eternal interests of man" because, among other things, salvation is equated with "self-consciousness:"

the non-dualistic systems, which teach that there can be no two beings, that the apparent multiplicity of beings is only imaginary transmutation of the unchangeable and indivisible essence, that salvation consists in the supreme self-consciousness unconditioned by the non-ego, that man passes through a series of births and deaths till he attain to that supreme knowledge, are fatal to the eternal interests of man.<sup>186</sup>

Upadhyay challenges his contemporary proponents of *advaitism* to a battle whereby the two can "fight [it] out with the weapons of philosophy and reason." In another

---

<sup>186</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #11 (Nov., 1894): 3; Lipner, ed., 113.

article in the same issue, Upadhyay is critical of the Theosophic use of *advaitic* theology to further their own agenda. For example, Theosophy insisted that the identity of God with man (*tat tvam asi*) provides a foundation for universal brotherhood. In contrast, Upadhyay declares that this *advaitic* doctrine destroys all relationship and therefore undermines “the very foundation of brotherhood.” He concludes the article with a bitter attack against both the *advaitic* doctrine and the Theosophic use of it:

The old Lucifer has ruined himself and many of his brethren by attempting to be equal with God, and the modern Lucifer - “Lucifer” is the name of one of the principal journals of Theosophy - will ruin, perhaps, many more, by preaching the identity of God and man. It is the gravest possible treason to make oneself *equal* to God, but it is a graver than the gravest sin to make oneself *identical* with Him. Beware.<sup>187</sup>

Throughout 1895, Upadhyay’s opposition to the *advaitic* identity of *ātman* with Brahman continues to grow. He sarcastically sums up the position of the *Brahmavādin*, an *advaitic* journal which had been recently started in Madras, as follows: “I am, then, according to our contemporary, the very God of the universe under the bondage of delusion.” He then challenges the proponents of *advaitism* to answer three questions. First, if the Supreme Being is under the delusion of *māyā*, is there a God in the universe that is conscious that He is God? Second, if salvation consists in the realization that we are God, Upadhyay reasons, certainly during the course of time many must have attained salvation and their individualities became merged into the one supreme God-consciousness. “If this God-consciousness is now subject to obscurity, then, were not their struggles for attaining the state of

---

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

salvation mere vanities and mockeries?" Finally, Upadhyay wants the *advaitins* to explain when the Supreme Being became subject to delusion since, by definition, Brahman is free from the debilitating effects of *karma*.<sup>188</sup>

Upadhyay seems to draw upon some of the same criticisms of *Advaita* as the thirteenth century South Indian theologian Madhva. Like Madhva, Upadhyay rejects the doctrine of non-difference (*abheda*) between the self and the absolute. He argues that there must be a fundamental distinction between the two or Brahman will be subject to modification and delusion. Furthermore, in another article, he points out that the absolute identity of the subject and object destroys all consciousness.<sup>189</sup> Upadhyay does concede that the *advaitins* teach that the multiplicity of Brahman is only *apparent*, not real, but, for him, this does not change the larger conflict with Christianity which affirms that "man's essence is distinct from the Divine Essence."<sup>190</sup> Christian history does affirm the beatific union with God, but in Upadhyay's view, this is quite different from any kind of "pantheistic absorption with God."<sup>191</sup> By 1896, Upadhyay decides to make his opposition to this doctrine of *advaitism* central to *Sophia's* purpose. In a major restatement of *Sophia's* purpose in January 1896, Upadhyay challenges a wide range of *advaitic* doctrines, including the doctrines of *karma* and transmigration. The opening article entitled "Our New Programme" lists eleven points, each demonstrating Upadhyay's commitment to Catholic theology and a general hostility to Hindu theology. Point four of the eleven

---

<sup>188</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 10.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2; Lipner, ed., 207.

<sup>190</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #7 (July, 1895): 11.

<sup>191</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #9 (Sept., 1895): 2.

states Upadhyay's commitment to use *Sophia* "to combat and demolish the theory that God and man are of one essence."<sup>192</sup>

Over the next two years, Upadhyay frequently ridicules the *advaitins* for teaching that "my essence is identical with God's essence,"<sup>193</sup> or that "I am that One Infinite Being."<sup>194</sup> The *advaitins*, reasons Upadhyay, think that by merely thinking right all of their sins will be washed away and even the most horrible evils of murder, fornication and theft "will appear to your transfigured vision to be but the irresponsible sports of a deluded god."<sup>195</sup> In combating *advaitic* monism, Upadhyay quotes from both Indian and Catholic sources. For example, he cites recent lectures given by Justice Ranade at Wilson College in Bombay. Ranade argued that there are three "distinct postulates of existence" which he identifies as ego (humanity), non-ego (nature) and the infinite (God). These lectures demonstrate, writes Upadhyay, that "Theism and neo-Hindu monism are opposed to each other as light is to darkness." Indeed, "Theism teaches that man's relation to God is not transitory but everlasting, that in the adjustment of that relation, and not in its elimination, consists his final bliss."<sup>196</sup> Upadhyay also reminds his readers of the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the *advaitic* identity of *ātman* with Brahman. In May 1897, Upadhyay points out that the Vatican Council "formally anathematized all forms of pantheism" when it declared that "if anyone shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things is one and the same; let him be anathema."<sup>197</sup> In the

---

<sup>192</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #1 (Jan., 1896): 4; Lipner, ed.,

<sup>193</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #9 (Sept., 1896): 11; Lipner, ed., 62.

<sup>194</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #10 (Oct., 1896): 4.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>196</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #11 (Nov., 1896): 12.

<sup>197</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #5 (May, 1897): 5. The second anathema is quoted as well: If any one shall say that finite things both corporeal and spiritual, or at least spiritual, have emanated from the

September issue, Upadhyay declares that Thomas Aquinas is the most effective weapon against the “grossest lie that God is not distinct from his creation.”<sup>198</sup>

Upadhyay makes two proposals for using Thomistic philosophy against *advaitism*.

First, he proposes that the strongest writings and lectures of the *advaitins* should be collated and sent to “scholars versed in Thomistic philosophy for refutation.”

Upadhyay would then summarize their refutations, publishing them in a treatise which could then be distributed throughout India. Second, he advocates public

lectures and discourses to be given throughout the country to publicly “stem the tide” and “expose the fallacy” of *advaitic* “lies.” Father George Bartoli, an Italian Jesuit

who was teaching in Mangalore at St. Aloysius College, is cited as an example of one scholar who was already engaging in this.<sup>199</sup> It is not known if Upadhyay ever

followed up on his first proposal, but prior to 1899 he traveled widely giving lectures against *advaitic* and neo-Hindu thought, later publishing the substance of the lectures

in *Sophia*. For example, in the May 1898 issue, Upadhyay published three lectures which he had delivered at the Albert Hall in Calcutta: “The Finale of the Vedānta,”

“The Doctrine of *Karma* and Its Influence on our National Character,” and

“Brāhmoism,” all delivered under the presiding leadership of Upadhyay’s uncle, K.

C. Banerjea. The first lecture raised the perennial tension in Hindu thought when

Hindus attempt to “harmonize unity with multiplicity.” Upadhyay sought to

demonstrate that *advaitism* is contrary to reason because “finite beings cannot be

---

divine substance; or that the divine essence by the manifestation and evolution of itself becomes all things; or, lastly, that God is universal or indefinite being which by determining itself constitutes the universality of things, distinct according to genera, species and individuals; let him be anathema.”

<sup>198</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #9 (Sept., 1897): 12; Lipner, ed., 122.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* These same two proposals had been made earlier; see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #10 (Oct., 1896): 7, 8.

partakers of the divine essence which is infinite and indivisible.”<sup>200</sup> In short, theism simply cannot be reconciled with monism.

This chapter has already examined Upadhyay’s re-statement of the first two Vedāntic themes; the nature of God and the relationship of the Absolute to the world. Upadhyay remains silent concerning any re-statement of the third theme of salvation or *mokṣa* for two years. His last reflections on the doctrine identifying *ātman* with Brahman, occur in August 1898 in *Sophia Monthly* and the theme is not addressed again until the 11 August 1900 issue of *Sophia Weekly*. Upadhyay’s long silence is broken when he answers a letter to the editor which asked the following question, “What is the meaning of the expression *So’ham* (I am He)? Can any rational being be sane and at the same time give utterance to such nonsense that he is the Supreme Being?”<sup>201</sup>

Upadhyay begins his response by re-asserting his long held view: “no sin is blacker than that of identifying a creature with the Creator.” However, Upadhyay does not denounce the Upanishads as uninspired as he had done in April 1897 when he asked, “why do they believe in the infallibility of the Upanishads? Is there even a shred of evidence to prove that these books are divinely revealed?”<sup>202</sup> By 1900, Upadhyay views the Upanishads as a foundation of natural theology which must be taken seriously in the Indian context. Thus, he explains that the Upanishadic saying has been misunderstood:

*So’ham* does not mean “I am He” but He (God) is “I” - an “I” which is not limited by “thou,” which is universal and all-inclusive and pre-eminently contains within itself all particular individuals

<sup>200</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #5 (May, 1898): 76.

<sup>201</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #9 (11 Aug., 1900): 7; Lipner, ed., 140.

<sup>202</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #4 (April, 1897): 12.

designated as I, thou, he, she, it. *Aham* is the supreme Ego, the “I am;” and *ahamkāra* is an individual ego. The latter lives, moves and has its being in the former. It is worse than nonsense to confound *aham* with *ahamkāra*.<sup>203</sup>

Upadhyay re-affirms his denial of any identification of the individual self with the Absolute, but insists that this is not what the Upanishad is teaching. Instead, it is merely an affirmation identifying the Absolute with the great “I am,” the supreme Ego of the universe, not the individual “I.” If the individual “I” was intended, argued Upadhyay, the text would have been “*So’hamkāra*,” not “*So’ham*.” This interpretation is reaffirmed by Upadhyay in the 25 August issue of *Sophia Weekly* where he states that the “I by It-self transcends all individuals and is the supreme Ego whose name is ‘I am that I am,’ (vide *Pancadashi* 6:38). He who does not bear this distinction in mind cannot understand the Vedānta.”<sup>204</sup>

However, there are several places in the *Pañcadaśī* where the individual self is identified with the Absolute. For example, *Pañcadaśī* 1:10 states as follows:

In this way it is established by reasoning that the individual Self is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Similar is the supreme Brahman. The identity of the two is taught in the Upanishads.<sup>205</sup>

However, the *Pañcadaśī* later concedes that any previous statements implying a distinction between “thou” and “that” were mere “steps towards understanding non-

<sup>203</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #9 (11 Aug., 1900): 7; Lipner, ed., 140.

<sup>204</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #11 (25 Aug., 1900): 6; Lipner, ed., 140. Upadhyay is correct in his insistence that Śaṅkara’s position does not render the phrase ‘tat tvam asi’ as a mere tautology. Instead, the phrase expresses syntopicity (having a common locus), which is Brahman. The pure consciousness of the self is identified with Brahman apart from the mind-body system. However, Upadhyay’s reliance upon the ‘necessary-contingent’ distinction, when applied to ‘tat tvam asi,’ is much closer to Rāmānuja’s view that the phrase emphasizes an inseparable union of dependence. It is an identity in difference (bhedābheda). For a full discussion of this see, A. S. Gupta, “The Meanings of ‘That thou art,’” *Philosophy East and West* 12, #1 (April, 1962): 125-134.

<sup>205</sup> Swahananda, Swāmi, tr., *Pañcadaśī* of Śrī Vidyaranya Swāmi (1:10): 123. The Upanishadic text in question is *Bṛhad-āranyaka* 1.4:1, 10.

duality” (VI:222). Instead, “the relation between the two substantives (thou and that) should not be taken as qualification, but of complete identity, of absolute homogeneity.”<sup>206</sup>

In Indian thought there are two kinds of relatedness (*sāmānādhikāraṇya*); a primary relatedness (*mukhya sāmānādhikāraṇya*) and a secondary relatedness (*badha sāmānādhikāraṇya*). It is a primary relation when “two words indicate the same reality or same essence,” as in the Vedāntic metaphor of the air within a clay pot and the air in the vast space surrounding the clay pot. The two are identified and related because they are “non-different.” In contrast, if someone mistakenly identifies a rope for a snake, it is a secondary identity which has no ontological reality since it only means that the rope *appeared* to be a snake, but upon closer examination the relationship was found to be a false one. According to the *Pañcadaśī*, it is a false, secondary identity to relate the individual self (*jīvātman*) or individual ego (*aḥamkāra*) with the Absolute Essence of the universe. This is not the proper understanding of utterances like “I am Brahman” (*BĀU* 1.4:10) and “Thou art That” (*Chāndogya* 6.8:7); rather it is to recognize the non-difference or primary relatedness between the two. When all of the superimpositions of *māyā* have been removed, all that remains is the Supreme consciousness. Seen in this light, Upadhyay’s point may, indeed, accurately reflect Vedāntic teaching, particularly as found in the *Pañcadaśī*.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, VI:222, 208.

<sup>207</sup> Upadhyay’s new position is also supported by R. King in “Brahman and the World, Immanence and Transcendence in *Advaita Vedānta*.” In the article, King states the ‘you’ (*tvam*) needs to be understood in its profound simplicity not as referring to the reincarnating individual self (*jīvātman*), but to *ātman* the universal self. It is in this context and in this context alone that Brahman is said to be identical with ‘you,’ 116. See above, fn. 204.

In later articles, Upadhyay continues to assert that this Upanishadic doctrine of identity has been misunderstood in the West, and even by many Indians. In the 3 November issue of *Sophia Weekly*, he argues that if the passage “that is the Self; thou art that, O Śvetaketu” teaches that the individual soul has its Self in Brahman, then the idea of the snake (for which the rope had been mistaken) is given existence and implies “differentiations” and “manifoldness” in Brahman. Instead, the phrase ‘Thou art That’ shows “that the general fact of Brahman being the Self of all is not limited by any particular state,” including and especially the individual self (*jīvātman*) or individual ego (*ahaṃkāra*).<sup>208</sup> However, these insights negate most of Upadhyay’s own criticism of the doctrine in his writings prior to 1899 which caricatured the *advaitic* position as teaching the identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self of the universe, demonstrating how far, even in this third theme of soteriology, Upadhyay’s thought has evolved.

### 3. Transmigration of Souls

The second theme related to Upadhyay’s development of Śaṅkara’s position concerning *mokṣa* concerns his writings on the transmigration of souls, the *saṃsāric* cycle of existence to which all are bound. From the earliest days of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay denounces the doctrine of transmigration, calling it a great “enemy of mankind” and “fatal to the interests of man.” He declares that “the present moral wreck of India is the result of her belief in the most fantastic and erroneous doctrine of transmigration...We are mortal enemies of the doctrine...that man passes through a series of births and deaths to expiate his sins and to attain perfection.”<sup>209</sup> In the same

<sup>208</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #19, New Series (3 Nov., 1900): 6, 7.

<sup>209</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #6 (June, 1894): 2. Upadhyay intends to make “war against them (false doctrines) and their advocates.” Clearly, the “advocates” he has in mind include not only Hindu thinkers, but Besant and the Theosophical Society.

issue, Upadhyay commits *Sophia* to the task of refuting the arguments of the transmigratonists:

We purpose to carry on the crusade against the doctrine of transmigration till it is driven out of India. We will refute the arguments advanced by the transmigratonists in support of their doctrine item by item.<sup>210</sup>

A survey of Upadhyay's writings concerning transmigration reveals three main objections to the doctrine. Each of the three will be briefly explored.

**a) The doctrine of transmigration is ultimately unjust**

On the surface, the doctrine of transmigration seems to provide an answer to one of the key problems raised by Theodicy; namely, why the innocent suffer if God is both good and omnipotent. The doctrine of transmigration asserts that there is no such thing as innocent suffering since all observed inequalities are the result of *karma* previously accumulated (*samchita*) in earlier lifetimes which is currently manifested or "being performed" (*kriyamāna*) in a person's life. This seems to solve the seemingly insuperable moral difficulty of a child who, for example, is born into extreme poverty or who becomes terminally ill. For the transmigratonist, God can never make the innocent subject to suffering, therefore, all suffering must be attributed to previously committed evil.

Upon examination, however, this 'answer' to Theodicy raises more questions than it resolves. Upadhyay, in a mock debate with a fictional opponent, asks if it is just for someone to be punished in this life for the sins of a past life of which he has no memory. He likens it to a school-boy who commits a serious offense and must

---

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. In Upadhyay's re-statement of the New Programme of *Sophia Monthly* in January 1896, the defeat of the doctrine of transmigration remains prominent. The sixth point is as follows: To show that the theory of transmigration is a philosophical blunder and is destructive to the principle of the brotherhood of man. See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #1 (Jan., 1896): 5; Lipner, ed., 9.

stand before his comrades and receive thirty lashes. However, the Head Master administers a potion to the offender as well as to all who have assembled which makes them forget any offense that has ever been committed. The boy is then lashed thirty times and then all are administered the potion again so that no one is aware of either the original offense or the punishment. Upadhyay asks, "What do you think of this sort of moral discipline? Isn't it a farce? The theory of punishment by transmigration is ludicrous to the extreme."<sup>211</sup> For Upadhyay, punishment is just only if it is clearly tied to specific acts of evil for which the punishment is administered.

**b) The doctrine of transmigration has an inadequate view of evil**

The second major objection of Upadhyay to the doctrine of transmigration is that it views evil as a *negative* principle, rather than a *privative* principle. In general, the most dominant view of evil among the Indian schools of philosophy (*āstika darśanas*) is that it is a negation of the good. But Upadhyay, following Aquinas, makes the important distinction between the dominant Indian idea which views evil as the absence of something which is good as opposed to the "deficiency of some good which ought to be present."<sup>212</sup> According to Aquinas, privation is "the absence of a perfection which is due by nature to some subject." It is no evil, argues Upadhyay, that a "rose-plant is not as tall as a palm," or that "a butterfly is not as huge as an elephant." The mere absence of some good is not evil. "The badness of a thing does not lie in the negation of any good whatever, but in the absence of that

---

<sup>211</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (March, 1894); Lipner, ed., 241. In the November 1894 issue, he makes a similar point in an article entitled, "The Theory of Transmigration Refuted." In that article, he uses as an example a small baby suffering with fever on account of infidelity in a previous life. Upadhyay asks, "Is it just for an Almighty God to burn a small child with fever, meting out to it the just punishment due to its past infidelity?" See, 8, 9.

<sup>212</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (March, 1894); Lipner, ed., 198.

good without which it cannot have the fulness of being due to it.”<sup>213</sup> Thomism teaches that being and goodness are interchangeable terms. Goodness is defined as the fullness of being. This has extreme importance for the doctrine of transmigration, because in the *Manusmṛti*, the standard work setting forth the doctrine of transmigration, worm-life is ranked lower than bird-life because the worm seems to be suffering from a greater evil, i.e. experiencing more negations of potential good, than a bird.<sup>214</sup> In fact, argues Upadhyay,

the worm which lives upon filth is not at all unhappy because it cannot enjoy like the cuckoo the sweetness of luscious fruits and the cool purity of the zephyr. Place it in the position of the cuckoo on a leafy bough of a mango-tree, it will sigh of its dirty home... to say that the worm, because of filthiness, is suffering from a greater evil than the cuckoo, is only drawing upon imagination.<sup>215</sup>

It is this same false sentiment which Upadhyay cites as causing Hindus to look at all of creation in a scale which views material existence as a greater evil than vegetable life and vegetable life a greater evil than irrational life and the latter more so than rational life and so forth. The scale of beings becomes, for the transmigrationists, a scale of inequalities, which is a scale of evil, and therefore cannot be the creation of a just God. In contrast, Upadhyay insists that “the perfection and supreme felicity of a creature lie in the attainment of the fulness of being measured to it by the decree of the Creator.”<sup>216</sup> In a Brāhmo meeting in Hyderabad as early as 1893, Upadhyay

---

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> See, Max Müller, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 25, *The Laws of Manu* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964, 1967) 493, 494. Manu states, for example, that “immovable insects, both small and great...are the lowest conditions to which Darkness leads. Elephants, horses, Śūdras and despicable barbarians, lions, tigers and boars are the middling states” See, 12:42, 43.

<sup>215</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (March, 1894); Lipner, ed., 199.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 201. In the June 1894 issue, Upadhyay quotes *Manusmṛti* 12:55-59 and 12:62-67 to illustrate how Manu assumes evil in diversity. For example, if a Brahmin drinks liquor he/she migrates into a worm or an insect. See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #6 (June, 1894): 12, 13.

made the distinction that for a picture not to have sight is no evil because it does not belong to its decreed nature, but for a man to be blind is evil for “sight belongs to human nature; its absence would be a privation, an evil.”<sup>217</sup>

Theosophists such as Annie Besant sought to blunt Upadhyay’s attack by restricting transmigration to humans only; thus, speaking of reincarnation rather than transmigration. Besant challenged Upadhyay to explain how two children sitting in the same classroom under the tutelage of the same Mathematics teacher could be so different. One might excel and go on to become a great leader, while the other might drop out and become a simple artisan. Man, according to Besant, must be the source of such diversity, lest God be charged with divine favoritism by giving such a wide diversity of endowments. However, restricting transmigration to human re-incarnation still assumes that diversity in nature implies evil or an absence of justice. Upadhyay responds,

Whatever and wherever a man may be - be he a peasant or a king, a mechanic or a philosopher, a merchant or a statesmen, a common soldier or a general, let him to be true to his vocation, let him love God with all his might, and he shall be endowed in heaven with the supreme felicity of union (not pantheistic absorption) with God.<sup>218</sup>

For Upadhyay, God has endowed each person with a vocation as a part of the “economy of creation” and this in no way implies divine favoritism:

The Premier of a realm as well as a poor artisan, though their intellectual capacities may be extremely disproportionate, has equal facilities to exercise the love of God. The grace of God hovers around the Cabinet in the same way as it hovers around a humble workshop.<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 53. This statement was made in response to Sadhu Hiranand who remarked that Christianity gave to the principle of evil a positive existence. Upadhyay does not acknowledge that there were certain figures in the early Church, such as Irenaeus, who did give evil a positive role in advancing spiritual development. The Augustinian conception did, however, become the dominant strain of thought. For more on this, see, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994): 228-231.

<sup>218</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #9 (Sept., 1895): 2.

Evil in humanity is accounted for by the exercise of free will. If someone becomes a thief is it, as the transmigratonists claim, because they were a thief in a previous life or because they were free agents who abused their freedom? If the transmigratonists are correct then the problem is merely shelved *ad infinitum*. Why did the first person steal? In short, for Upadhyay, both the doctrines of transmigration and reincarnation wrongly ascribe inequality and evil to the diversity of creation rather than recognize the variety of perfections which are due by nature to the whole and to each part of creation. Upadhyay remains convinced that unnecessary refuge is taken in these doctrines to explain the presence of evil and diversity in the world.

**c) The doctrine of transmigration is unscientific**

The Theosophists frequently claimed that the doctrine of transmigration had a solid foundation in the latest science. For example, the Theosophist Thomas Williams wrote an article entitled, "Reincarnation: A Scientific Necessity" in which he argues that reincarnation<sup>220</sup> is a demonstrable fact since "it has been abundantly proved that no single grouping of cells remains unchanged... and that during a normal life the particles of matter in both body and brain are changed completely, not only once but several times, showing that identity cannot possibly proceed from matter."<sup>221</sup> The scientific point is that the outward body is in a constant state of cellular change, so much so that the material particles which make up the human

---

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>220</sup> As noted earlier, the Theosophists generally prefer the term "reincarnation" to "transmigration," emphasizing only human migrations. In the January 1897 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay challenges Besant for inconsistency in her writings. In her *Manual on Reincarnation* printed in England, she claimed that a man cannot be reborn as an animal and that this was a widespread and "mistaken idea" in the East. However, when challenged concerning this in India, she said that the true nature of transmigration was "suppressed before Europeans lest they might be shocked." See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol.4, #1 (Jan., 1897): 10.

<sup>221</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #7 (July, 1894):11; Lipner, ed., 252. The Lipner-Sauche edition has omitted the long quote from Thomas Williams, including the portion quoted here, but it appears in the original.

body are completely displaced, proving that the inner essence (soul or *ātman*) of a person is actually independent of the body and is in a constant state of migration even *within* as well as at the end of a particular life's sojourn. Upadhyay responds by comparing Thomas Williams to the man in the fable who sawed off the same bough on which he sat. If, in fact, the permanent, self-conscious soul or *ātman* is distinct from and independent of the body and if it migrates from infancy into youth and youth into old age without losing consciousness, why, when changing from one habitation to another does it destroy the ongoing strain of consciousness? Indeed, "to say that the soul becomes oblivious of its identity after death, is, according to the above irrefragable argument, to deny its immateriality and independence. The transmigrator has been caught in his own trap. There is no escape."<sup>222</sup>

Upadhyay's argument is, in short, that one of the key characteristics of the soul is its sense of continued identity. The transmigrator's response to Upadhyay is articulated by Durga Prasad, the President of the Lahore *Ārya Samāj*. In an essay entitled "Metempsychosis," Prasad argues that "as we are apt to forget many details of the past years of our life, so we forget in our present life that we had a past one."<sup>223</sup> Upadhyay grants that in the course of a lifetime we do forget thousands of details, "but who ever heard that with the forgetfulness of details...one has lost the consciousness of being the same person as before?"<sup>224</sup> The transmigrator's, in Upadhyay's view, fall into error by confusing the remembrance of details with the sense of self-identity.

---

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; Lipner, ed., 252. Indeed, the *Gītā* itself makes no distinction between the passing of youth into old age and the habitation of a new body: "Migration into another body (after death) is like the change of infancy into youth and youth into old age" (2:13).

<sup>223</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. Vol.1, #8 (Aug., 1894): 10, 11; Lipner, ed., 253.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 11; Lipner, ed., 253.

Prasad offers further scientific evidence in the observation that a baby will nurse almost immediately subsequent to birth. Since this “piece of knowledge” is certainly not acquired in this life, reasons Prasad, then “it must have been acquired by them in an antecedent life.”<sup>225</sup> Upadhyay responds by claiming that animals as well as humans have “inherent principles of action” which are “natural to its organic constitution” and do not have to be learned in this life. However, even if one concedes that actions such as a baby nursing or the universal fear of death in animals is due to knowledge acquired from previous lives, then the problem is not solved, but merely evaded. If there are no innate principles of action, then either they must be an original acquisition of this knowledge (which they deny) or one must go back *ad infinitum*. The latter, known as the fallacy of *anavasthā* (indefinitude) is recognized as a logical flaw in Hindu philosophy.<sup>226</sup> For Upadhyay, the only logical supposition is to renounce the theory of transmigration.

Unlike the other doctrines examined in this chapter, Upadhyay never attempts any sort of theological reconciliation with the doctrine of transmigration. On the one hand, he acknowledges that the doctrine did not come from the ancient Āryans and does not appear in the *R̥gVeda*.<sup>227</sup> On the other hand, it is clearly taught in the *Gītā* and is prevalent in all schools of Hindu philosophy, including *Advaita*.<sup>228</sup> After extensive and regular discussions concerning transmigration, Upadhyay never

---

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 254. Similar “pieces of knowledge” are offered by Prasad such as the inherent fear of death which is in animals and humankind alike.

<sup>226</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #10 (Oct., 1894): 14; Lipner, ed., 255. This is the third installment in a series of four *Sophia* articles refuting transmigration. Upadhyay labels these arguments I, II, II-A and III. In the Lipner-Sauche volume the arguments are numbered more simply, I, II, III and IV.

<sup>227</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 16. Upadhyay is quoting from the Bombay Catholic Examiner.

<sup>228</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #6 (June, 1895): 15. Upadhyay states that “there is not a single school of Hindu philosophy, atheistic, pantheistic or dualistic, without its theory of transmigration.” See also, *Gītā* 2:22.

addresses it again after the December 1897 issue of *Sophia* and, indeed, is silent about the doctrine throughout the next four years of his theological revolution. The most likely reason is that Upadhyay never changed his mind as to the incompatibility of the doctrine with Christian thought, and that the only way he could maintain consistently positive writings concerning *Advaita* was simply to ignore the doctrine completely.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4. Atonement and Vicarious Suffering Related to the Doctrine of *Karma*

The third theme related to Upadhyay's development of soteriological issues in *Advaita* is his treatment of the central Hindu theme of *karma*. Throughout his writings, Upadhyay remains steadfastly opposed to the Hindu doctrine of *karma* which, in his view, destroys the very basis for the Christian conception of the atonement which is achieved through the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ. *Karma* says more than "one reaps what one sows," it says that an individual "reaps what he alone has sown" or, as Upadhyay puts it in another place, "what one is reaping one must have [personally] sown."<sup>230</sup> In short, the Vedāntins insist that the doctrine of

---

<sup>229</sup> Only once does he even mention the word 'transmigration.' It occurs in *Sophia Weekly* in an article which recaps an address given by S. N. Tagore on Buddhism. The sentence simply states how "the lecturer (Tagore) could not understand how Buddhists could hold the doctrine of transmigration when they did not believe in the persistence of the individual ego. Nirvana was extinction." See, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #12, New Series (1 Sept., 1900): 7. It is unclear if Upadhyay even wrote this summary. In the 24 November issue of *Sophia Weekly*, a letter to the editor appears which links the question of caste (which Upadhyay supports) to the issue of transmigration. However, even with this opportunity, Upadhyay's response never mentions or alludes to the doctrine.

<sup>230</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 113 and *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #5 (May, 1898): 77. Upadhyay, in passing, makes another statement as to why he opposes the doctrine of *karma*. The doctrine pre-supposes that all diversity is evil, i.e. the result of various levels of punishment inflicted by the Law of *karma*. He states, "to the *karmavādins* all diversity is evil....the whole of creation, then is a gigantic evil." See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898); Lipner, ed., 213. Upadhyay also applies the *anavasthā* critique to *mokṣa* when he states the following: "According to the theory of *karma* my rank and state in the scale of beings in the beginning of the present cycle, was determined according to my *karma* in the previous cycle, and my rank and state in the scale of beings in the beginning of the previous cycle was determined according to my *karma* in one previous to it, so on, *ad infinitum*." What is the origin of the original state and rank? See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 11 These critiques are not developed here since they are only passing references and Upadhyay has already used these arguments to respond to the way the proponents of the doctrine of

*karma* allows no room for vicarious suffering or vicarious atonement. Each person must suffer for one's own sins. The editor of the *Ārya Messenger* summed up the typical Hindu attitude regarding vicarious suffering when he wrote as follows:

Never was a more absurd doctrine fathered upon mankind than [the] Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement...not the breaker of the law should suffer for his evil deeds, but a third party who had nothing to do with the breaking of the law!<sup>231</sup>

Likewise, it was not unusual for letters to the editor to appear in *Sophia* expressing outrage at the doctrine. One writer stated in his letter, "no sensible Hindu can ever swallow the doctrine of the innocent undergoing penalty due to the guilty. We have too strong a sense of Divine justice for that."<sup>232</sup>

Upadhyay responds by demonstrating how vicarious suffering "is the very central principle governing the present economy of nature."<sup>233</sup> Throughout his writings, he gives many illustrative and anecdotal examples to demonstrate how common vicarious suffering actually is. Perhaps the best example of this is found in a lecture entitled "National Greatness" delivered in Karachi in July 1896, later reprinted in *Sophia*. One of the signs of a great nation, declared Upadhyay, is when we "bear one another's burden, suffering one for another." Upadhyay proceeds to give two examples of *involuntary* vicarious suffering. First, he pictures a young wife grieving over an unfaithful husband; then a father grieving over a son who has left the path of virtue. Next, two examples of *voluntary* vicarious suffering are given: A young man crossing deserts, risking his life to save a friend in distress and an Indian

---

transmigration cannot respond to the *ad infinitum* argument and, who, likewise, view all diversity in creation as inherently evil.

<sup>231</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #6 (June, 1898); Lipner, ed., 175. Upadhyay is quoting from the 23 March, 1898 issue of the *Ārya Messenger*.

<sup>232</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #1, New Series (16 June, 1900): 8.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

patriot suffering heroically out of his love for the Fatherland.<sup>234</sup> These examples serve to illustrate what Upadhyay calls the “moral tie” which establishes the principle of brotherhood and the “solidarity of the human family.”<sup>235</sup> Humanity is like an organic body, argues Upadhyay, the wound of one member afflicts the whole organism. Indeed, “without this principle of vicarious suffering, where would be the virtue of self-sacrifice, the sanctifying sense of responsibility?”<sup>236</sup>

A response to this line of reasoning appears a few years later in a letter to the editor of *Sophia Weekly*. The writer notes that the Vedāntin position is that,

the interdependence of our relations is only apparent, not real. I do not suffer for or on account of another, but *through* another, yet so that the responsibility of that other for the act remains, only he is not responsible for the suffering caused to me. That is quite independent of his act. It is my own desert.<sup>237</sup>

So, for example, if a teacher willfully neglects his or her students, the teacher is wrong and merits punishment because of it. But the students “have forfeited by their own sins the benefit of good teaching, and hence they get the kind of teacher best fitted to inflict the Law’s punishment on them.”<sup>238</sup> Upadhyay strongly rejects such reasoning because it makes “society an unfeeling machine, a mere aggregate of units without any moral tie to bind them into an organic whole...it is tantamount to saying that nobody is his brother’s keeper, that we stand or fall, not together, but each by

---

<sup>234</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #8 (Aug., 1896): 7, 8. The same examples are also given in answer to a letter to the editor in *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #1 (16 June, 1900): 8. Other anecdotal examples of vicarious suffering cited by Upadhyay may be found in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #4 (April, 1894): 14; Lipner, ed., 243 and in vol. 5, #6 (June, 1898): 176-178.

<sup>235</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2, New Series (23 June, 1900): 9; Lipner, ed., 186; *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 113; Lipner, ed., 213.

<sup>236</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894); Lipner, ed., 244. This quote actually comes from the fictionalized opponent of Upadhyay known as “Enquirer” whom Upadhyay has finally convinced of the doctrine of vicarious suffering.

<sup>237</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #2 (23 June, 1900): 9; Lipner, ed., 185.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 186.

himself.” Following with his own example, Upadhyay points out that a drunkard could tell his distressed wife and children that they are all reaping their own sowing and they would suffer the same whether he drinks or not!<sup>239</sup>

Having established the negative principle that a single immoral act of one man adversely affects the whole family as well as the positive principle that a single heroic act of one soldier might save an entire nation, Upadhyay extends this principle to the biblical teaching regarding vicariousness. It is vital for Upadhyay’s theology to establish both a finite beginning to evil as well as a source of evil which lies outside of God; otherwise he risks sacrificing God’s goodness, as well as his previously established teaching regarding God as the only eternal and necessary Being who is without privation, but constitutes and defines the very fullness of Being Itself.

Upadhyay argues that “original sin is the primary cause of the tendency to evil” in the human race. The fall of Adam deprived human nature of its sanctifying grace and is the original source of the “human tendency to evil.”<sup>240</sup> Conversely, it is through the vicarious suffering of Christ that sin may be atoned for and the penalty of original sin eradicated. Upadhyay writes,

A person to be the Saviour of mankind must be divine, for it is God alone who can save. He must be human too, because God cannot suffer in his divine Nature. Redemption, according to Christianity, can be effected by the compassionate sufferings of God in the human nature adopted by him.<sup>241</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #3 (March, 1894); Lipner, ed., 239. Upadhyay views the Fall as essentially humankind having their adoption as the children of God canceled as well as the forfeiture of the beatific God-vision. However, the Fall, argues Upadhyay “did not impair the faculties of man in their intrinsic nature, as the so-called reformers of the sixteenth century taught. Man can reason rightly and choose what is good, but he is much hampered in his rational acts by his inordinate passions.” See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894); Lipner, ed., 245. This is consistent with his view of natural theology as discussed in chapter four.

<sup>241</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900): 7; Lipner, ed., 189.

Christ effects this through his sinless death on the cross. This, for Upadhyay, is the ultimate example of vicarious suffering. It is powerful enough to reverse the effects of evil vicariously transmitted through the Fall:

the evil arising from the influence of [a] bad example is remedied by the influence of [a] good example...God does not suspend the law of communication because, for some reason or other, evil comes out of it, but repairs the evil by the action of the very same law. Man has lost sanctifying grace owing to the law of communication. It is the decree of God that by the same law he will restore it to him.<sup>242</sup>

As with the doctrine of transmigration, Upadhyay never modifies his basic negative attitude towards the doctrine of *karma*. However, unlike the former, he continues, even after 1898, to regularly denounce the Hindu doctrine of *karma*, contrasting it with the Christian doctrine of vicarious suffering. Indeed, Julius Lipner comments that the doctrine of vicarious suffering remains “a favourite of Upadhyay” and “important in his Catholic apologetical writings.”<sup>243</sup>

### 5. Final State and the Doctrine of *Mokṣa*

The fourth and final theme related to soteriology is the Hindu doctrine of the final state, or *mokṣa*. The doctrine of *mokṣa* is not found in the *Samhitās* or *Brāhmaṇas*, but first appears in the Upanishads.<sup>244</sup> In the Upanishads, it generally refers to “final absorption of the Self into Brahman” and thus “the solution to the problem of *saṃsāra*.”<sup>245</sup> *Mokṣa* is one of the four *arthas* or goals of Hindu life and is, therefore, “regarded as axiomatic by most schools of Hindu philosophy,” though the importance of the doctrine for religious life and the purported means for

<sup>242</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #5 (May, 1894); Lipner, ed., 244. Upadhyay is following closely the theology of Romans chapter five, while never explicitly quoting from it.

<sup>243</sup> Lipner, ed., 176, fn. 9 and 243, fn. 6.

<sup>244</sup> R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford: University Press, 1962, 1966): 57.

<sup>245</sup> A. L. Herman, *Hinduism* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991): 78.

achieving it may vary considerably.<sup>246</sup> This is important for Upadhyay, because the theological flexibility of the doctrine allows him the freedom to affirm the doctrine, but to describe it in a way which is consistent with Christian teaching while yet remaining within the broad parameters of Hindu thought.

**a) Using the *advaitic* language of *mokṣa***

In his earliest writings, Upadhyay tends to refer to the doctrine pejoratively as a way of exposing what, at that time, he sees as the absurdity of *advaitism*. For example, in the November 1894 issue of *Sophia Monthly* he writes that, according to *Advaita*, “my salvation consists in the realization of the fact that I am God.” Indeed, once the “temporary obscurations” are removed, I will realize that “I am the Supreme, the Highest, the Eternal God Himself...not a creature, but the Creator Himself and in this knowledge consists salvation.”<sup>247</sup> However, by the middle of 1900, Upadhyay has entered the third phase of his theological reformulation along Vedāntic lines. This is evidenced by the fact that he now accepts the broad parameters of the *advaitic* conception of *mokṣa*.

The following letter to the editor appeared in *Sophia Weekly* on the theme of *mokṣa*, providing an opportunity for Upadhyay to advance his new views:

I should be obliged if you...would enlighten me on the true interpretation of *mokṣa*...A word of explanation of my question: There is found a world of difference among different religions and their sub-divisions about the meaning of *mokṣa*. In Hinduism *mokṣa* is interpreted in different ways. Vedānta speaks of it as freedom from *māyā* ornescience, *Sāṃkhya* says that separation between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* (soul and nature) is *mokṣa*. The Vaishnava’s *mokṣa*

<sup>246</sup> J. L. Brockington, *The Sacred Thread*, University of Edinburgh Press, 1981, 1996: 5. The four “goals” or *arthas* are: *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (sensual love), *dharma* (duty of vocation) and *mokṣa* (liberation from *saṃsāra*). While there are certain broad parameters of agreement, Upadhyay devotes several articles denouncing the views of Swami Dayananda who, unlike other schools of Hindu thought, does not affirm that *mokṣa* is final and everlasting. In the December 1894 and October 1895 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay seeks to expose the weaknesses and novelty of the *Ārya* view.

<sup>247</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #11 (Nov., 1894): 10.

consists in his eternal serving of God. The Christian, I believe, holds that salvation, absolution or *mokṣa*, whatever you may choose to call it, consists in believing in Jesus Christ. The Buddhist's *mokṣa* or *nirvana* is his merging in the Great. Thus, we see various conceptions which come under one category - *mokṣa*. Is there not a harmony among all the aspects mentioned above?<sup>248</sup>

In the following week's edition of *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay seeks to answer this query. He writes that "we cannot arrive at a truth in its integrity and synthetic entirety by fitting in its fragmentary and partial conceptions." Upadhyay goes on to show the errors of the *Sāṃkhya*, *Vaiṣṇava* and Buddhist views of *mokṣa*, and concludes by affirming "the Vedāntic conception of *mokṣa* being freedom from *māyā* or nescience, is philosophically sound." Nescience is now understood by Upadhyay as "looking upon the finite as an entity independent of God, or handling it as one's permanent goal." It is, to use the language of Thomism, attributing necessary existence or being to what has only contingent being. *Mokṣa*, therefore, is simply "to know God as the absolute reality."<sup>249</sup>

#### **b) Identification of *mokṣa* with the beatific vision**

In only the second issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay writes that "the last end of man is the vision and enjoyment of the divine essence."<sup>250</sup> However, his discussion of this "beatific vision" is held in contrast to the teachings of Hinduism which, in his view, assert that this final state is attainable through human effort, whether through knowledge or devotion. Upadhyay writes, "Can man attain the beatific vision by the exercise of his natural powers? Can a tortoise, with all its

---

<sup>248</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #5, New Series (14 July, 1900): 8.

<sup>249</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6, New Series (21 July, 1900): 8; Lipner, ed., 293.

<sup>250</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894); Lipner, ed., 236.

struggles and efforts, fly like a bird?"<sup>251</sup> On the contrary, Upadhyay quotes Aquinas'

teaching which emphasizes that the vision of the divine essence,

is above the nature not only of man but of every other creature. For the natural knowledge of every creature whatsoever is according to the mode of its substance. But every knowledge that is according to the mode of a created substance, falls short of the vision of the divine essence, which infinitely exceeds every created essence. Hence neither man nor any other creature can gain final happiness by the exercise of his own natural powers.<sup>252</sup>

On the basis of this teaching, Upadhyay argues that the Catholic religion stands over against all other religions because the former is able to lift humanity above the natural mode to a supernatural mode, whereas other religions never rise above the natural. He declares that "the Catholic Church alone, as taught by her divine master reveals to man his right to the supreme blessing of immediate God-vision." By "immediate" Upadhyay does not intend to give it a temporal meaning, i.e. 'now,' but rather a spatial meaning, i.e. a *direct* vision with no mediation.<sup>253</sup> This is significant because Upadhyay does not believe the beatific vision is possible to attain in this life. He, therefore, denounces various Hindu leaders who claim to have had an immediate experience with God:

But strange to say there are many to be found now-a-days who profess that they have seen God. They are no doubt inspired with extravagant ideas. They have a very low ideal of God-vision and mistake the realization of his presence to be the direct perception of his essence.<sup>254</sup>

---

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, Lipner, ed., 238.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay is quoting from Aquinas' *Summa Theologica I.II, 5.5*. See, T. Gilby, ed., *Summa Theologiae*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Blackfriars edition, 1969): 131.

<sup>253</sup> This is evident, not only because of the context of the passage, but later in the same article he clarifies his point by saying, "His blessed will is that the sanctified man shall...see him and possess him as he sees and possesses himself, *without any intervening medium*." See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 237, emphasis mine.

<sup>254</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1894): 236.

In contrast, he writes, “Catholic teaching is that a man may even lose his physical consciousness in the ecstatic contemplation of God, but it is not given to him in this life to behold God face to face.”<sup>255</sup> Nevertheless, Upadhyay clearly affirms that while this “God-vision” is unattainable in this life, it is an “article of faith that the last end of man is everlasting felicity which consists in the beatific vision of the divine essence.”<sup>256</sup>

In his later writings in *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay makes similar affirmations, but rather than contrasting it with Hindu thought, he builds bridges between the beatific vision and the doctrine of *mokṣa*, especially as understood by *Advaita*. He writes,

What is *mokṣa* or salvation? God-vision. To see God, face to face, without any intervening medium, to know his inner life which is full and complete without any correlation with the finite, to be nourished into perfection by feeding upon his substance, to be like him, to be one with him, is *mokṣa*. This is the Catholic idea of *mokṣa*.<sup>257</sup>

Upadhyay now seems to emphasize the connection with *advaitism*, even willing to define Catholic *mokṣa* as becoming “one with him,” an identity which echoes the familiar strains of *tat tvam asi*.

## E. Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Upadhyay attempted to build what he regarded as the ‘supernatural’ neo-Thomistic thought on the ‘natural’ foundation of *Advaitic* Vedāntism. After initially building his theology on the foundation of natural theism and human reason, after 1898 he increasingly began to build his theology on the foundation of *advaitism*. His application of Thomistic thought to three central

---

<sup>255</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #11 (Nov., 1895): 15.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>257</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #6, New Series (21 July, 1900): 8.

themes in *advaitism* has been explored: the nature of Brahman, the relationship of Brahman to the world and the way of *mokṣa*, or release, from the bonds of *saṃsāra*. Using these three *advaitic* themes as a starting point, this chapter has sought to demonstrate how Upadhyay grew to accept *advaitism* as a valid foundation for Christian theologizing. The result was a re-statement of the Christian faith using the language and thought forms of *advaitism*, while seeking to remain faithful to the teachings of Aquinas.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Religion and Culture: Building Christianity on the Foundation of Indian Culture**

#### **A. Introduction**

Chapters four and five have explored how Upadhyay sought to build Christianity on the foundations of Primitive Theism as expressed in the Vedas and confirmed through human reason, and Śaṅkara's *Advaitism*, which he regarded as the highest expression of Indian philosophy. It remains to examine Upadhyay's attitude toward Indian culture and the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism. Indeed, in many ways, Indian culture becomes a third foundation upon which Upadhyay seeks to construct Christian thought. Upadhyay's definition and understanding of Hinduism as well as his attitude toward Hindu culture, including the various expressions of popular Hinduism in India, were often misunderstood even by his contemporaries. Therefore, this chapter will seek to explore this theme by first analyzing the development of Upadhyay's understanding of the word 'Hinduism' and what it means to be a Hindu. Then, Upadhyay's views concerning three aspects of the relationship between Hinduism and Indian culture will be examined: the role of caste, the role of iconic symbols in worship and the significance of Upadhyay's performance of *prāyaścitta* (penance) in 1907 several months before his untimely death.

#### **B. Hindu, Hinduism and 'Hinduness' in Upadhyay's Writings**

##### **1. Defining 'Hindu'**

Central to a proper understanding of Upadhyay's theology is a clear understanding of what he means when he uses terms such as 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism.' J. Lipner, in *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, points out

a wide variety of ways in which the term 'Hinduism' has been understood.<sup>1</sup> Most of the definitions of what constitutes being a 'Hindu' fall into four broad categories. First, there are various definitions which insist on the acceptance of a common source of authority without necessarily insisting on any specific doctrinal content. For example, many insist that an orthodox Hindu must accept the authority of the Vedas or the Upanishads or the general belief that Hinduism is the *sanātana dharma* without attaching to that authority any specific theological or doctrinal content. Second, other definitions are more culturally bound, equating being a 'Hindu' with simply being an Indian or being born in India. Third, others attach certain social obligations to being a Hindu, without any necessary reference to a common source of authority or any common theological commitments. For example, if one maintains caste restrictions, dietary guidelines, and accepts the obligation of the four stages of life (*varṇāśramadharmā*), then one is, by this reckoning, considered a Hindu. Finally, there are others who do insist on a core of theological doctrines such as the belief in transmigration, *karma* and/or *mokṣa*. It is clear, therefore, that how one defines a 'Hindu' will dramatically affect whether or not being a 'Hindu' must be given up if one becomes a Christian.

## 2. Upadhyay's Understanding of the Term 'Hindu'

In some of his earliest *Sophia* writings, Upadhyay tends to identify Hinduism with certain doctrines which, as a Christian, he has come to reject. For example, in the September 1894 issue, Upadhyay writes that,

the teaching of Christ is in direct opposition to the Hindu doctrines of transmigration, of the eternity of soul and matter, of the multiplicity

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994): 2-4. A similar discussion occurs in J. Brockington, *The Sacred Thread* (Edinburgh University Press, 1981, 1996): 1-7.

of gods and incarnations, and the missionary cannot help emphasizing this opposition, if he be true to his task.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that Upadhyay goes on in the same article to declare his opposition to “denationalizing converts” and insists that the “Catholic church has never taught her converts to give up national customs and habits which are not expressive of superstitions.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, these latter comments more likely reflect his life-long desire to affirm one’s Indian nationality which, it would appear, he does not necessarily equate with being a Hindu.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the early years of *Sophia Monthly* Upadhyay is almost militant in his opposition to certain Hindu doctrines and practices such as *karma*, transmigration, idolatry and pantheism which he sees as incompatible with Christianity. In the June 1897 issue, he openly ridicules the Hindu reformers who were trying to take Hinduism and “allegorize its filthy myths” and naïvely borrow from Christianity “to dress up their own national creed in the garb of Christianity.”<sup>5</sup>

However, Upadhyay becomes increasingly saddened by his *Brāhmo* friends who were rejecting Christianity because, in his view, it is “being presented by sectarian missionaries as European, and not the Catholic religion.”<sup>6</sup> By December of 1897, Upadhyay no longer sees any fundamental conflict between being a Christian and being a ‘Hindu,’ because he defines the former theologically and the latter culturally and socially:

---

<sup>2</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, #9 (Sept., 1894); Lipner, ed., 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The very fact that he refused to unite with the Anglican, or any other, church at his baptism in Feb. 1891 demonstrates that from the beginning he is committed to his Indian identity. This research has already explored how important this point was in his eventual uniting with the Roman Catholic church in September 1891.

<sup>5</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 9.

Does the word 'Hindu' denote a religion or a nationality? Does it belong to the category of names like Mahomedan, Buddhist, Christian etc., or to the category of names like German, Afghan, Chinese, etc.? If it belongs to the first category, a Hindu ceases indeed to be a Hindu by becoming a Christian, but not if it belongs to the second one, as little as a German ceases to be a German by becoming a Buddhist. We think we are able to prove that a Hindu is a national name. For there is no such thing as a Hindu religion.<sup>7</sup>

Upadhyay's "proof" is to point out that Hinduism cannot be defined as a religion (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century western sense of the term) because of the radical doctrinal discontinuity between the various Hindu systems of thought. He points out the remarkable differences in Hinduism in North India and South India as well as the religion of Brahmins from the lower castes. Yet, all are regarded as Hindus even though their beliefs may range from "the lowest fetishism to the highest monotheism."<sup>8</sup>

At this point, it is clear that Upadhyay is rejecting any kind of theological definition of Hinduism, but it is not entirely clear whether he is embracing a broad cultural definition or something closer to the social definition noted earlier. Eventually, it becomes clear that Upadhyay embraces a social definition of Hinduism, without necessarily denying the cultural dimension. He regards the *Sādhan Dharma*, or doctrinal heritage of Hinduism as "not its characteristic connotation." In contrast, the *Samāj Dharma*, or social obligations, he cites as "the strength of Hinduism." He goes on to ask, "Is not Hinduism purely a social economy? The test of being a Hindu cannot, therefore, lie in religious opinions."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 15, 16. Upadhyay is commenting on a debate which was currently being aired in the pages of the *Bombay Catholic Examiner*.

<sup>8</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade* (Calcutta: Roy and Son, n.d.): 202. This was originally published by Upadhyay in *The London Tablet* in 1903, but reflects statements made throughout his writings about the theological diversity present among Hindus.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

With even more clarity he would later write, “to be a Hindu one should only be born Hindu and observe caste distinctions.”<sup>10</sup> This social definition of Hinduism is why Upadhyay, as early as 1898, could refer to himself as a Hindu-Catholic, without fear of contradiction. His full explanation of this designation appears in the July 1898 issue of *Sophia Monthly*:

By birth we are Hindu and shall remain Hindu until death. But as *dvija* (twice born) by virtue of our sacramental rebirth, we are Catholic; ...In customs and manners, in observing caste or social distinctions, in eating and drinking, in our life and living, we are genuine Hindus; but in our faith we are neither Hindu, nor European, nor American, nor Chinese, but all-inclusive. Our faith fills the whole world and is not confined to any country, or race; our faith is universal and consequently includes all truths... In short, we are Hindus so far as our physical and mental constitution is concerned, but in regard to our immortal souls we are Catholic. We are Hindu Catholic.<sup>11</sup>

This definition of Hinduism, as shall be demonstrated, is what allowed Upadhyay not only to promote indigenous expressions of Christianity, but also to provide what he hoped would be a new basis for nationalistic unity in India which would unite India under a banner which was not tied to religious sectarianism.

Upadhyay called this tie that would bind India, ‘*Hindutva*,’ or ‘Hinduness.’

<sup>10</sup> *Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #8 (Aug., 1901); *The Blade*, 201. According to Animananda, the same statement also occurred in the April issue of the *Baṅgadarśana*.

<sup>11</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #7 (July, 1898): 101, 102; Lipner, ed., 24, 25. As early as 1895 in his “Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant” Upadhyay does refer to himself as “a Brāhman by birth and a Christian and Catholic by faith,” though the extent of the meaning of this phrase is not at all clear. For a more complete history of the term “Hindu-Christian” see above, chapter one, fn. 18. In an issue of *Sandhyā*, published only a few days after Upadhyay’s death, he had written: “we will remain Hindus in our dress, eating and drinking etc. A Bengali must remain a Bengali, no matter what religion he adopts.” See, *The Blade*, 202. There is some confusion in the literature about how early Upadhyay calls himself a “Hindu-Catholic” because heretofore almost all reflections on Upadhyay have relied upon secondary source materials. The important quote cited above, for example, is cited by Kaj Baago as occurring in July 1897, rather than in July 1898. See, Baago, *Pioneers of Indian Christian Theology* (Madras: CLS, 1969): 125.

### 3. Upadhyay's Conception of 'Hinduness'

By July 1898, Upadhyay clearly understood that by becoming a Christian he had not, thereby, ceased to be Hindu. His insistence that being a Hindu does not depend on specific religious beliefs became a regular theme in his public lectures and journalistic writing. However, in 1901 Upadhyay published a Bengali article in the *Baṅgadarśan*, an influential monthly periodical edited by his friend Rabindranath Tagore, in which his thought is advanced further through the concept of '*Hindutva*,' or 'Hinduness.'<sup>12</sup>

The purpose of the Sanskrit construction which places the suffix '*tva*' to a noun stem to form an abstract noun is "to attribute a property in the form of a universal," or to describe a "mode of being" without any particular implications "about the metaphysical status of the property itself."<sup>13</sup> Thus, to declare that someone "exemplifies '*hindutva*' is to say, properly, that they exist in a particular way; it is not to make an existential statement, explicitly or implicitly, about the kind of thing that *hindutva* may be."<sup>14</sup> This is a vital distinction from a word such as 'Hinduism' which, like Buddhism or Sikhism or Christianity, has been made, particularly by westerners, into a religion which is a 'thing,' such that the word 'Hinduism' has gradually become viewed as "an objective systematic entity."<sup>15</sup> This reification of a word like 'Hinduism' is in direct contrast to what Upadhyay means by

---

<sup>12</sup> This research will use an English translation of this article by J. Lipner entitled, "The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race" which appeared in *Vidyajyoti*, vol. 45, #9 (Oct., 1981): 410-422.

<sup>13</sup> J. Lipner, "On '*Hindutva*' and a 'Hindu-Catholic,' with a Moral for our Times," *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin*, vol. 5 (1992): 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Lipner points out that this reifying tendency is even present among Indian academics. He cites as an example Radhakrishnan's exposition of Hinduism which he views as "a monolithic phenomenon comprising a hierarchical structure, with 'animism' at its lowest levels, followed progressively by polytheism, incarnational and non-incarnational monotheism, and monism at the top." See, Lipner, ed., 2.

'*Hindutva*.' Hinduness, for Upadhyay, far from being some kind of objective entity, is rather a distinctive "mode of Hindu thinking" which is signified by a characteristic 'way' or 'approach' with which Indians deal with intellectual, cultural and religious issues. Upadhyay maintains his previously articulated social basis or foundation of being a Hindu which finds its essence in the duties of caste and following the stages of life. However, these social commitments of 'Hinduness' are driven and directed by what Upadhyay calls 'one-centredness' (*ekniṣṭhatā*).<sup>16</sup>

Upadhyay explains 'one-centredness' in a typically Indian fashion by appealing to various metaphors which he uses to contrast the mode of western thinking with the mode of Indian thinking. He first pictures two birds from the same nest. One flies straight up, through clouds and sky and eventually out into space finding its bliss in "this directionless void." In contrast, the other bird flies to all four points of the compass, noting the beauty, the varied correlations, and the "cause-and-effect-begotten splendour," finding its bliss in the many wondrous particulars of Nature and their relatedness.<sup>17</sup> Second, he pictures two fish on "a sacred journey to determine the true nature (*svarūp*) of the ocean." One fish dives into the depths finally coming "to the bottomless bottom and fell silent." The other fish swims, always keeping sight of the shore. The fish bravely swims through storms and waves, but keeps its eye on the shore until it gets lost in the immensity of the shore. "The first (bird/fish) is the oriental, the Hindu; the second, the westerner, the German."<sup>18</sup> The metaphors illustrate two ways of thinking:

---

<sup>16</sup> J. Lipner, tr., "The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race," 414, 415.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 416. A similar use of the two metaphors by Upadhyay may be found in *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 2.

The Hindu's distinctiveness is to enter the core of that thing. The distinctiveness of the European perspective is to know the relation between one thing and another and to perceive unity through that relationship. The mark of the first is one-centredness or interiority (*antardhān*) while that of the second is many-centredness (*bahuniṣṭhata*) or integration (*samādhān*).<sup>19</sup>

Almost a year before this Bengali article appeared, Upadhyay had called on Indians to “overthrow the foreign yoke” and “to fight for the cause of independence.”<sup>20</sup> However, the yoke he had called on India to throw off was not, at this point in his life, a political yoke, but the yoke of this European mode of thinking:

Friends and patriots! Do not be alarmed. We do not advocate rebellion in the physical realm, but in the realm of thought...Our faith obliges us to look upon the English dominion as a glorious manifestation of the Divine Sovereignty. The insurrection that we advocate is against the ascendancy of European *thought* over Hindu *thought*.<sup>21</sup>

The ‘one-centredness’ of Hindu thought is always seeking to penetrate the “origin of things” whereas the European ‘many-centredness’ mode of thought is “prone to see the relations of things.” The former mode leads to “universalism, quietude, asceticism, whereas the latter leads to “individualism, activity and the enjoyment of the goods of this world.”<sup>22</sup> According to Upadhyay, the difficulty arises when one begins to identify a certain mode of thinking with the particulars of a religious belief system. This creates great confusion because it falsely identifies Christianity, for example, with western thought and culture. For Upadhyay, the European mode of

---

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #10, New Series (18 Aug., 1900): 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. In this article, Upadhyay is careful to assert that one mode is not better than the other, but each steadies or balances out the other. However, in a personal, handwritten letter from Upadhyay (dated 9 April 1903) to the Indian Institute while he was in Oxford, he says: “It can be safely asserted without any dogmatism that Hindu thought will mould the coming era. But it will take a long time to make the ideal a *fait accompli*. I am doing what I can in my humble way...it is a tremendous up-hill march.” (This extract is taken from an unpublished, personal letter of Upadhyay’s located in the archives of Goethal’s library, St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta.)

thinking does not emerge out of Christianity, but out of the intellectual tradition and heritage of ancient Greece. The very fact that the religion of ancient Greece is fundamentally different from Christianity serves to demonstrate “that [a] ‘mode of thinking’ is different from religious belief.” Likewise, India has variations of belief which are as different as ancient Greek religion is from Christianity, yet “on scrutiny it will indubitably be seen that one and the same current of thinking gradually flows below all differentiation.”<sup>23</sup>

The burden of Upadhyay’s argument was initially to promote a Christianity in India which is expressed and re-stated through *Hindutva*, or the Hindu mode of thinking. He is convinced that “the highest fulfillment of the Hindu’s one-centredness is in Śaṅkara’s teaching of pure non-duality (*śuddhādvaita*).”<sup>24</sup> The European mode of thinking focuses on creation, God’s causation of the multi-faceted world, and our relations with one another and with God. In contrast, a Hindu mode of thinking will recognize that “his being the cause of the world is not essential to him. His essence consists only of ‘being-consciousness-bliss’ (*saccidānanda*).” A truly Indian expression of Christianity will, like *advaitism*, scale the walls of contingency and see beyond it into the very essence of pure non-duality. Indeed, Upadhyay says that “the tendency to one-centred thinking, the seeing into the thinghood of a thing, the experience of ultimate non-difference between Agent and effect, the knowledge of the deceptiveness of multiplicity, comprise the Hindu’s hinduness.”<sup>25</sup> Only as this ‘hinduness’ is applied to Christian truth does Upadhyay

---

<sup>23</sup> Lipner, tr., “The One Centredness of the Hindu Race,” 416, 417.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 420. It should be noted that in this context Upadhyay does not use Śaṅkara’s term for non-dualism, i.e. ‘*advaita*,’ but the term used by Vallabha, ‘*śuddhādvaita*.’

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

believe that indigenous expressions of Christianity will emerge. In *Sophia Weekly*

Upadhyay writes,

Europeanism should not be considered to be the invariable, necessary product of Christianity. No mistake could be more fatal to progress than to make the Indian Christian community conform to European social ideals because Europeans happen to be prominent in the Christian world. So long as the Christians of India do not practise their faith on the platform of Hindu life and living and Hindu *thought and thinking*, and evaluate the national genius to the supernatural plane, they will never thrive. The Indian Christian community is devoid of vigour because they have been alienated from national life and thought.<sup>26</sup>

Later, this unifying ‘one-centredness’ of the Hindu mode-of-thinking becomes the basis for his call to national unity and patriotism despite the religious diversity in India, but this development of Upadhyay’s thought lies outside the scope of this research.

### **C. Upadhyay’s Application of ‘Hindutva’ to Aspects of Indian Culture**

#### **1. Role of Caste and Life-Stages in Hindu Culture**

##### **a) Introduction**

Traditionally, Āryan society accepted four divisions or *varṇas* in the social system: The *Brāhmaṇas* or priests, the *kṣatriyas* or warriors, the *vaiśyas* or merchants and the *śūdras* or servants. Likewise, the *āśramas* or stages of life traditionally refer to four stages of spiritual growth which should be attained successively as one progresses through life: *brahmacarya* (celibate student stage), *gārhasthya* (householder stage), *vānaprasthya* (forest dweller stage, retired from worldly pursuits) and *sannyāsa* (total renunciation). Throughout his writings, Upadhyay accepts this *varṇāśramic* pattern of life almost unquestionably, though in

---

<sup>26</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #18, New Series (27 Oct., 1900): 6, emphasis mine.

his later years he tends to place a greater emphasis on its importance for the regeneration of the nation.

It has already been demonstrated how Upadhyay, in defining Hinduism, accepts someone as a Hindu based on their adherence to the *Samāj Dharma*, or social obligations. For him, Hinduism is “fundamentally a social organization with a well defined hierarchy of class divisions.”<sup>27</sup> However, the caste system and the four stages of life cannot be maintained if analyzed from the western point of view because of the western emphasis on individuality and relations between the castes. Ironically, it is upon these same grounds that Upadhyay rejects the “perversion of the law of *karma*”<sup>28</sup> as being ‘un-Hindu’ because *karma* assumes variety in the social scale to be an evil. *Karma* is fundamentally ‘many-centred’ rather than ‘one-centred’ because, as Upadhyay pointed out in an 1898 lecture, “the soldier as such is regarded as being inferior to the teacher as such, and the trader again as inferior to the soldier. The consequence of this is disunion. There is no harm in having social distinctions according to different callings in life.”<sup>29</sup> If, however, one views caste from the perspective of ‘one-centredness,’ the emphasis is on the *origin* and the *goal* of the caste system and its expression through the vocations in the four stages of life. Upadhyay’s views concerning the origin and goal of caste will be explored, followed by his concept of vocation as expressed in the four stages of life.

---

<sup>27</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 202. Animananda is quoting from Upadhyay’s statement which appeared in the *London Tablet* in 1903.

<sup>28</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898); Lipner, 286. Upadhyay asserted that this view of *karma* was being propagated by the creed of the neo-Hindu, though it is unclear what Upadhyay’s understanding of an earlier, purer form of *karma* might be.

<sup>29</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #5 (May, 1898): 77.

**b) 'One-Centredness' and the origins of the caste system**

In the January 1901 issue of *The Twentieth Century*, Upadhyay writes that

“Orthodoxy holds that *varṇāśram* is a Divine institution, that Āryan society was divided by the Almighty Lawmaker Himself (*vidhātā*) into four *varṇas* or classes.”<sup>30</sup>

The antiquity of this claim as well as its scriptural basis is found in *ṚgVeda 10.90*.<sup>31</sup>

According to Upadhyay, the four *varṇas* were established to reflect in society the individual human constitution whereby, according to traditional Hindu thought, each individual is composed of four divisions: “first, the organs of work, as hands and feet; second, the organs of sense; third, the *manas* or mind which governs these organs, and the fourth is *buddhi* or intellect which deals with supra-sensuous things.”<sup>32</sup> According to this scheme, the *śūdras* correspond to the organs of work, the *vaiśyas* the organs of sense, the *kṣatriyas*, as the ruling class, correspond to the mind, and the *Brahmins*, as the sacerdotal class, are identified with the *buddhi* or intellect.<sup>33</sup> Upadhyay then departs from the traditional four fold scheme and insists that there is a higher spiritual part of man beyond the *buddhi* which corresponds to the order of *sannyāsi*, the world renouncer.

<sup>30</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 8. Hindu Reformers, influenced by a western perspective were arguing at the time that the *varṇa* system was a later innovation without any primitive or divine warrant.

<sup>31</sup> *ṚgVeda 10:90* says, “When they divided the Man, into how many parts did they disperse him? What became of his mouth, what of his arms, what were his two thighs and his two feet called? His mouth was the Brahmin, his arms were made into the nobles, his two thighs were the populace, and from his feet the servants were born.” See, W. O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (London: Penguin, 1975): 27. This text from the *ṚgVeda* is also repeated in the *Manusmṛti*. See, W. Doniger and B. Smith, *The Laws of Manu* (London: Penguin, 1991): 6. The creation account in the *Manusmṛti* may be found in 1:1-119, the specific text noted above is 1:31. See also, G. Buhler, ed., *Sacred Books of the East*, (vol. 25): 13, 14.

<sup>32</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 10.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* In a footnote, Upadhyay acknowledges his indebtedness to the commentator *Medhātīthi* who explains that the text in the *ṚgVeda* and *Manusmṛti* utilizes the language of imagery, “the mouth signifying reading and teaching, the arms fighting, the thigh stability and the feet service.”

A year later, in a follow-up article published in the *Baṅgadarśan*, Upadhyay revised his explanation of the origin of caste, identifying the four *varṇas* and the order of *sannyāsi* with the traditional five sheaths that make up a person: the body, the breath, the sensation, the mind, and ecstasy or bliss.<sup>34</sup> His new explanation is more reflective of his ‘one-centredness’ theology: “The non-dual Spirit (*advayātma*) having entered the five sheaths...has [been] manifested in the form of the self-conscious individual. Just as there are five sheaths to every person, so too society has five sheaths.” Using this scheme, the *śūdras* correspond to the bodily sheath because they earn their living by manual labor and service. The *vaiśyas*, or merchants, are identified with the sheath of breath “because society survives by the transactions of buying and selling.”<sup>35</sup> The *kṣatriyas*, or rulers, correspond to the sheath of sensation because “just as the faculty of sensation controls the sense organs, so the *kṣatriyas* control the citizenry.” The *Brahmins* correspond to the sheath of consciousness or mind, since their duty is primarily study and directing the minds of their disciples to “uncover the inner vision, and direct the mind’s various constructs towards the One.” Finally, the renunciators or *sannyāsins* are like the sheath of bliss since they have transcended impermanence.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> I appreciate the willingness of Dr. Julius Lipner of Cambridge University to share with me his personal translations of the Bengali material. This chapter could not have been included in this dissertation without his assistance in providing these unpublished materials. This argument of Upadhyay is found in an article entitled “The Traditional Code of Caste-Orders and Stages of Life.” It originally appeared in Bengali under the title “*Varṇāśrama Dharma*” in *Baṅgadarśan* (New Series: Bengali Era, Phalgun 1308; C.E., Feb.-March, 1902): 534-547. This periodical was edited by Rabindranath Tagore. This article, as noted by Lipner, is a follow up and further development of the article which appeared in the January 1901 issue of *The Twentieth Century*.

<sup>35</sup> Lipner comments, “Just as an organism survives by breathing, which is a transaction between the organism and its environment, so the social organism survives through buying and selling.” B. Upadhyay, “The Traditional Code of Caste-Orders and Stages of Life,” p. 17, fn. 25, J. Lipner, tr., unpublished translation.

<sup>36</sup> B. Upadhyay, “The Traditional Code of Caste-Orders and Stages of Life,” 16, 17, J. Lipner, tr., Unpublished translation.

Under either scheme, the importance for Upadhyay's thought lies in his commitment to an original "social differentiation according to vocation" which he calls "the distinctive feature of the Indo-Āryan community."<sup>37</sup> The hierarchy and "inter-connection" of the four orders and the *sannyāsin* establishes mutual dependence and benefit until the society is "unfettered by the tie of interdependence," and encounters "an Intelligence beyond the limitations of subject and object," and thereby has "no more need for pilgrimage outside Its infinitude."<sup>38</sup>

The originally instituted caste system was designed to safely assist Hindu society in reaching the goal of Oneness. Thus, the current caste system "should be restored to its original salutary order of divisions," abolishing the "unnecessary divisions and sub-divisions of caste" which have created such abuse, and re-capturing the original conceptions of vocation. If this is done, then Upadhyay insists that the caste system and stages of life may still be embraced, because the invigorating power of '*Hindutva*' will direct the many, through the vehicle of the *varṇāśramadharmā*, to the One. It is to this goal that we now turn.

**c) 'One-Centredness' and the goal of the caste system as achieved through linking caste and vocation**

Upadhyay insists that the goal of caste, as seen through the perspective of '*Hindutva*,' was to encourage selflessness, discourage comparisons which arise from relations and to foster unity as all seek to become lost in the Oneness and non-difference of the Ultimate:

*Varṇāśramadharmā* nurtures the unity of society by encouraging its followers to be content with their social niche and progress selflessly in life with the integrity and good of the collective in view. "The aim of the caste divisions is to make the different non-different, the many

<sup>37</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (Jan., 1901): 9.

<sup>38</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #10, New Series (18 Aug., 1900): 7.

united.” And the four stages foster service to society and selflessness since they culminate ideally in a spirit of renunciation.<sup>39</sup>

Upadhyay argues that this goal of caste has been largely missed because of the debilitating effects of *karma* and the influence of western thinking. The Hindu race has perpetuated what he calls a “blunder” by “upholding a false philosophy which teaches that men of lower castes, common people, uneducated and unintelligent, should honor the finite manifestation of God as God.”<sup>40</sup> Upadhyay calls this a “monumental error, nay, a crime,” illustrating his point with the following metaphor:

Two brothers, however unequal their intellectual attainments may be, possess the equal privilege of honouring their father as father. It will be a shame, an ignominy, to ask the less educated son to honour a servant as his father. The son who is intelligent and educated may know more of the riches and glories of his father, but he stands on the same platform with his less advanced brother so far as the entire “acknowledgment” of fatherhood is concerned. Likewise, all men, high or low, educated or uneducated, should worship none else but God as God.<sup>41</sup>

While the goal of all Hindus may be to worship and achieve Oneness with the same God, the vocational paths are, admittedly, quite different. From the European mode-of-thinking, this is merely a point of comparison, competition, division and strife. The many-centredness of European thinking renders it impossible to focus on the Oneness of the common goal. However, Upadhyay asks, “Is there a Hindu whose frame does not quiver with life when the ever-memorable words addressed to Arjuna, the hero of the *Mahābhārata*, ring in his ears: ‘It is praiseworthy to die in one’s own vocation, because strange vocations are full of risks.’”<sup>42</sup> The connection between

<sup>39</sup> J. Lipner, “On ‘Hindutva’ and a ‘Hindu-Catholic,’” 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #1 (Jan., 1898); Lipner, ed., 286.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #6 (June, 1901); Lipner, ed., 39. The citation comes from the *Bhagavad-Gītā* 3:35 which, of course, is a part of the larger epic, *Mahābhārata*. The word Upadhyay translates “vocation” is *dharma* which he does not equate with religion. In the 28 July 1900 issue of

vocation and caste is absolutely essential to Upadhyay. In *Sophia Weekly* he writes as follows, “It should not be understood that we are in favor of preserving the caste-privilege even when unaccompanied by legitimate vocations.”<sup>43</sup> If one does not fulfill their vocation, they have no right to claim caste privileges. The genius of the Hindu *varṇāśramadharmā*, according to Upadhyay, is that it links work with lineage. He affirms that “India’s past greatness can be traced more or less to the principle of conservation of vocations by means of hereditary differentiation.”<sup>44</sup> In his view, the linking of work with lineage safeguards Hindus to focus on the ultimate ideal. European thought focuses on the work, whereas Hindu ‘one-centredness’ encourages one to look beyond the particulars of the work *per se* and instead “to be established in one’s true nature (*svarūpa*) after having dispensed with work.”<sup>45</sup> This is why the householder stage is followed by the *vānaprasthā* and, ultimately, the *sannyāsa*. The focus is no longer on the work, or the fruit of work, but on the singular goal to which all Hindus are moving, regardless of their particular vocation:

The Hindu’s Hinduness consists in loving the work while giving up the fruit of this work, in severing the bonds of work by practising selfless action. Only those who desire to immerse themselves in the actionless bliss of complete non-duality, can fathom the depth of this high ideal.<sup>46</sup>

---

*Sophia Weekly*, an orthodox Hindu cited this text as evidence that Krishna advised Arjuna not to change *religions* and thus asked Upadhyay why he was encouraging Indians to convert to Catholicism. Upadhyay responds as follows: “Sri Krishna advises Arjuna not to leave the *dharma - dharma* here means vocation and not religion... (since contextually) there was no danger then of Arjuna’s conversion to Mahomedanism or Christianity. Sri Krishna would have given utterance to something very absurd had he advised Arjuna, who was an orthodox believer, not to abandon his faith,” 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #20, New Series (10 Nov., 1900): 5. The same statement is repeated in *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (31 Jan., 1901): 10. It should also be noted that I am not conforming Upadhyay’s spelling to American English, as he frequently spells honor and favor in the American style. Apparently, the strict differentiation between American and British spelling was not as prevalent in 19th century India.

<sup>44</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (31 Jan., 1901): 10.

<sup>45</sup> B. Upadhyay, “The Traditional Code of Caste-Orders and Stages of Life,” 10, J. Lipner, tr., unpublished material.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, 15.

The European mode-of-thinking focuses on enjoying the fruits of work and the acquisition of power, which creates “excess competitiveness” and “lack of equanimity.” In contrast, “the one-centredness of the Hindu race, having destroyed the divisive seeds of work, has relied on the discipline of the code of caste-orders and stages of life to attain the bliss of undividedness, and it is this one-centredness which underlies the structure of the *varṇa*-divisions.”<sup>47</sup>

#### **d) Conclusion**

Upadhyay’s application of ‘*Hindutva*’ to the *varṇāśramadharmā* attempts to place both the origins and the goal of caste and life stages within an acceptable social context. His purpose in this is to secure a natural social foundation upon which Christian faith and practice can be built, rather than import European social practices which, if linked to Christian proclamation, would inevitably render the Christian gospel alien. The second, even more controversial, application of ‘*Hindutva*’ to the Hindu cultural context is his dramatic re-interpretation of how Indian Christians should regard iconic symbols, especially Krishna.

## **2. Role of Iconic Figures and Symbols in India**

### **a) Introduction to Upadhyay’s view of icons prior to July 1903**

An icon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian context refers to a representation of some sacred personage itself regarded as sacred and honored with relative worship.<sup>48</sup> Icons are a central feature of popular Hinduism and have thereby become deeply imbedded in the popular culture and in the social consciousness of Indian society. It is

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> This is a working definition for the purposes of this research and applies only to the Indian context without making any reference to iconology in the Orthodox tradition. My purpose is to avoid referring to these figures/symbols either pejoratively as idols or exaltingly as gods, though both designations are widely used, depending on one’s perspective. For more on the historical and theological background concerning icons see, Jim Forest, *Praying with Icons* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1997) and Michael Quenot, *The Icon: Windows on the Kingdom* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1991).

therefore essential if Upadhyay is seeking to build Christianity on the foundation of Indian culture to examine his view of icons. This section will examine his general view of icons before his return from Europe in July 1903, excluding his writings concerning Krishna which will be dealt with separately.

In his early writings, Upadhyay is critical of the iconic expressions of popular Hinduism. His position, as has been explored in chapter four, is that India has roots in Primitive Theism and the widespread worship of icons are “later and time-born” developments which distract the worshipper from “the knowledge of the ancient, eternal Parabrahman, the most precious treasure bequeathed by [our] ancestors.”<sup>49</sup> He calls it a “blunder, nay a crime, to say that a man, a rational being, should worship the Finite, pay to creatures the homage due to the Creator, because he happens to be born of parents low in the social scale or not much advanced in learning.” He goes on to pay tribute to the Sikhs who, regardless of one’s position in the social scale, nevertheless worship the “Infinite Being (*Kartā Purush*).”<sup>50</sup> In contrast, Upadhyay attacks the neo-Hindu reformers who, in his view, were seeking to “revive all the absurdities and obscenities of the *Purāṇas*” rather than “lead India back to her primitive purity.”<sup>51</sup>

As a Catholic, Upadhyay was careful to distinguish between what he called “Hindu idol worship” and “Catholic image veneration,” devoting several articles to

---

<sup>49</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #3 (Mar., 1899): 240.

<sup>50</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #2 (Feb., 1898): 25. Upadhyay does not use the term which would have been most likely used by 19th century Sikhs to describe the supreme being; namely, *Akāl-Purakh*.

<sup>51</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #9 (Sept., 1897): 3. For more on Upadhyay’s attack of the neo-Hindu reformers rehabilitation of icons among India intellectuals see, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 9, 10. Upadhyay also regularly ridicules the Theosophic attempts to establish a scientific basis for “idolatry.” Theosophy taught that the “maker of the idol imparts to it a pure magnetism” which, in turn, is passed on to the devotee. See, *Sophia Monthly* vol. 3, #10 (Oct., 1896): 12 and vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 3.

the subject. He compares Catholic image veneration to the way the subjects of Britain honor the portrait of the Queen. He cites examples to demonstrate how a real person can be honored or dishonored in the way someone treats his/her image or representation. Yet, he argues, "it is not the image or the representation as such that receives the honor. The respect shown to it is *relative*. The *raison d'être* of the honor thus paid is not in it but in the original."<sup>52</sup> The difference between the manner in which a Catholic may honor an image or representation of a British monarch or a saint or even Jesus Christ is not, in his view, a difference in kind, but only a difference in degree.

The Hindu attitude toward images, in contrast, is of an entirely different kind and falls into what Upadhyay calls, "the heinous sin of idolatry." He cites as an example the worship of the *Gaṅgā* which is widely regarded as able to wash away sins and sanctify those who bathe in its sacred waters. Upadhyay asks,

Can a creature, and that an inanimate one, wash away sins? The revivalists may argue that God is the giver of grace while the *Gaṅgā* water is only its vehicle. If so, why then is the *Gaṅgā* personified, represented in the form of a woman riding on a fabulous fish? Why do Hindus pray and offer sacrifices to her? Think of a Christian making an image of the baptismal water and praying to it for forgiveness of sins! How monstrously blasphemous would not that act be? But the truth is that millions of Hindus, who pay her divine honor and make images of her for the purpose of worship, believe that the river *Gaṅgā* is a person and is one of the better halves of the god *Śiva*. Children of God praying to a river for sanctification! Making images of it considering it to be a wife of a god and offering sacrifices to it! If this be not idolatry, let the word 'idolatry' be erased from all lexicons.<sup>53</sup>

Other examples are cited such as the widespread worship of the *Śiva liṅga* (genital organ), or more localized examples such as the worship of the mangled corpse of

---

<sup>52</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

*Devī* in *Kamrupa*, a town in Assam. In every case, Upadhyay declares that the difference between the Catholic veneration of saints and the Hindu worship of their images is “as far as heaven is from hell.”<sup>54</sup> Even as late as his *Sophia Weekly* writings, Upadhyay makes a similar distinction between Catholic image veneration and, what he terms, Hindu idolatry. It is wrong, he writes,

for a man to worship birds and beasts and snakes as givers of temporal and spiritual benefits, when he raises a hero to the rank of God incarnate...He who elevates the finite to the infinite or *vice versa*, is an idolater. There is no harm in making images, but it is sinful and carnal to make the images so many means to belittle God or magnify puny creatures.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, throughout his *Sophia* writings, Upadhyay holds a similar attitude toward Indian icons. Because his later writings (after his return from Europe in July 1903) so significantly develop his concept of icons as it applies most particularly to Krishna, the growth of his attitude specifically toward Krishna will now be explored.<sup>56</sup>

### b) Upadhyay’s view of Krishna before July 1903

#### (1) Brief overview of Krishna

Krishna is widely regarded, along with Rāma, as one of the most important *avatārs* of Viṣṇu, not only because of his role in the development of devotional religion in India, but because Krishna is the voice of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (200 B.C.E.), one of the most influential sacred books in the history of India and a part of

---

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

<sup>55</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #4, New Series (7 July, 1900): 8. In this article he again uses the analogy of British subjects honoring the image of the Queen.

<sup>56</sup> The relationship between icons and *avatāra* such as Krishna is rooted in the *Pāñcarātra* system which teaches that Viṣṇu manifests himself in the world in five different modes, only one of which is *avatāra*. Indeed, the dominant mode in which Viṣṇu presents himself, according to the *Pāñcarātra* literature, is that in which the “deity graciously condescends to be present in this material world in his *arcā* form for image worship.” See, J. L. Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1992): 29.

the Epic tale, *Mahābhārata*.<sup>57</sup> The high-point of the *Gītā* is in chapter eleven in which Krishna reveals himself to Arjuna in his ‘supreme form as the Lord,’ and “this revelation inspires the terrified Arjuna to confess Krishna as being ‘more prized even than Brahman.’”<sup>58</sup> Beginning around 100 C.E., new legends began to develop concerning Krishna’s birth and life which served to promote him as a figure of *bhakti* worship. It is during this period that the child Krishna is depicted both with the cowherds and milkmaids of Brindaban, and in his battles with the God Indra. By the sixth century, “the legends were expanded to include his loving exploits with the milkmaids (*gopīs*).”<sup>59</sup> By the tenth century, the devotional literature known as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* developed the erotic adventures of Krishna into the “dual routes of *bhakti* through maternal and sexual love.”<sup>60</sup>

A second strand of thought concerning Krishna developed in sixteenth century Bengal largely through the influence of the followers of the Brahmin scholar Chaitanya (1485-1533). The Chaitanya movement rejected both the way of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) as well as the way of action (*karma mārga*) in favor of “total and absolute *bhakti* to Krishna.” Brahman was conceived as personal as well as transcendent; both the immanent God within as well as the creator of the phenomenal world.<sup>61</sup> Chaitanya’s disciples, known as the *Gosvāmins*, identified single-minded worship of Brahman with exclusive devotion to Krishna, thus

---

<sup>57</sup> J. L. Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> *Bhagavad-Gita* 11:37; R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: Oxford, 1962, 1966): 93.

<sup>59</sup> A. L. Herman, *Hinduism* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991): 20. It must be viewed as an act of humiliation/condescension for a *kṣatriya* such as Krishna to look after cows since members of the upper castes would not participate in this vocation and, indeed, viewed it as an act of penance (See, *Manusmṛti* XI:79). Upadhyay’s “Brindaban” refers to Vṛndāvana, his spelling reflecting his own Bengali pronunciation.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 25. Chaitanya himself wrote very little, the theology of the movement was taken up by his disciples.

regarding Krishna as the only true or pure *avatār* of Brahman (*pūrṇa-avatāra*) as opposed to other *avatārs* which were only partial (*aṃśa-avatāra*). Indeed, this purity is possible because, according to Chaitanya's followers, Krishna is not a mere *avatār* of Viṣṇu, but the personal incarnation of the supreme deity. This brief overview of the emergence of Krishna as a central figure in popular Hinduism serves to underscore the importance of Upadhyay's treatment of Krishna.

### (2) Krishna in Upadhyay's *Sophia* writings

In the January 1896 re-statement of *Sophia's* program, Upadhyay dedicates the periodical to eleven key issues. The eighth point is as follows:

To show that Jesus Christ is the only God-man and that the life of Krishna, the most prominent of Hindu incarnations, as depicted in the *Bhagavat*, one of the most sacred Hindu scriptures, deserves to be blotted out of the memory of man, and that the sooner it is blotted out, the better for the spiritual and moral welfare of India.<sup>62</sup>

Upadhyay wastes little time in keeping this commitment because in the very next issue he denounces Hindu revivalists who are seeking to "preserve intact...the idolatry and the gross superstitions of the *Purāṇas* [and] the most unholy and obscene legends about gods and goddesses." He rhetorically asks the Hindu revivalists, "How can you believe Krishna to be God incarnate when he was so voluptuous as to take away the clothes of the milkmaids and compel them to appear before him entirely naked?" He goes on to chide them for trying to purify the legend by declaring it a "grand allegory of *vastraharan* (stealing of clothes)" which carries "esoteric meaning." He concludes by asking, "What sort of occultism is it that is only fit to be clothed in unholy allegories and emblems?"<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #1 (Jan., 1896): 5; Lipner, ed., 9. Upadhyay's reference to the *Bhagavat* refers to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* noted earlier.

<sup>63</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 7; Lipner, ed., 10.

In the May 1896 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, he calls the readers attention to how Sanskrit dramas regularly begin with praise and invocation to various gods and/or goddesses. He cites with disdain how in these invocations Krishna “distinguishes himself by his extraordinary sensuality, being the consort of no less than 16,000 milkmaids.”<sup>64</sup> In a later issue, he quotes directly from the *Bhāgavata Purāna* in which King Parikshit asks the Krishna devotee Śuka how Krishna could possibly be a pure incarnation and the revealer and master of religious laws when he himself had violated them by committing adultery. Śuka replies that “the violation of religious laws by the gods and the daring acts of the glorious do not bring any stain on them...but those that are not gods should never commit such deeds even in thought...therefore an intelligent man should do only what they say.” In response, Upadhyay declares, “How shocking! No man having the least trace of morality in him can pay homage to such an impure confraternity of gods.”<sup>65</sup> Finally, in the June 1897 issue, Upadhyay declares that the “culminating blasphemy” is reached when the Hindu revivalists “set up Krishna as rival to Christ and talk of the ‘imitation of Krishna.’” But, in what, he writes, “are we to imitate Krishna? Just imagine the state of a society in which everybody, in faithful imitation of the cow-herd god of *Vrindavan*, goes about hunting on everybody else’s wife or daughter or sister.” This is why, he declares, again recalling the exchange between Parikshit and Śuka, that the latter teaches that “we should do as the glorious ones *say*, not as they *do*.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #5 (May, 1896): 5.

<sup>65</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 7, 8.

<sup>66</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 12. Upadhyay’s “Vrindavan” reflects the more standard form, in contrast to his own Bengali pronunciation referred to earlier. See, fn. 59 above.

This survey of Upadhyay's earliest views concerning Krishna is important to establish because after this June 1897 article decrying the "imitation of Krishna" there is a three year span in which Krishna is not mentioned in any of his writings. Indeed, even after the beginning of *Sophia Weekly* in June 1900, there are only three references to Krishna in the entire twenty-four issue history of the journal. None of the three are articles initiated by Upadhyay, but are merely his response to questions raised in letters sent to the editor. The first concerns the meaning of Krishna's admonition to Arjuna to "not leave one's *dharma*" (*Gītā* 3:35). As noted earlier in this chapter (fn. 42), Upadhyay responds by pointing out that *dharma* in this passage means vocation, not religion. The second reference appears when a reader asks, "why should Christ be considered the saviour of mankind? Why not Buddha, Krishna, Rāma and other great souls?" Upadhyay responds by stating that a true savior must meet two criteria: First, the savior must be divine since, Upadhyay reasons, only God can save. Second, the savior must be fully human as well since it is impossible for God to suffer in His Divine Nature. Using these two criteria, he concludes that "you will not hesitate to admit that Buddha, Krishna and Rāma cannot be called saviours according to this Christian interpretation of the term."<sup>67</sup> The third and final reference occurs when a Punjabi reader asks what the difference is between the Hindu and Christian ideas behind incarnation. In other words, can the terms 'avatār' and 'incarnation' be used interchangeably? Upadhyay's theological perspective on this important question will be explored momentarily, but in his answer to the Punjabi he does point out that Krishna is the only incarnation regarded

---

<sup>67</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900): 7.

by Hindus as a full incarnation (*pūrṇa-avatāra*). However, he declines to develop his thoughts further by simply stating that “it would not be relevant to the question to discuss here how far the belief about Krishna is justified by the facts.”<sup>68</sup> While these references are Upadhyay’s last English writings on the subject of Krishna, his later Bengali writings develop his theology and the application of *Hindutva* to Krishna along bold lines. However, before examining these writings it is important to explore in more detail Upadhyay’s writings concerning the distinction, if any, between ‘incarnation’ and ‘*avatār*,’ because a proper interpretation of his later writings concerning Krishna hinges largely upon an understanding of how he uses these two terms.

### c) Incarnation and *avatār* defined and distinguished

In the February 1895 issue of *Sophia Monthly*, Upadhyay defines

‘incarnation’ as follows: “Incarnation means that God, a Being of Infinite, uncompounded, independent nature, enters into a personal union with a human nature, so that the actions of the assumed nature become His personal actions and derive their dignity from Him.”<sup>69</sup> The word ‘*avatār*’ may be more broadly defined as a ‘descent’ or a Divine ‘coming down into the world’ without necessarily distinguishing what the nature, extent or limitations of this descent may be. These remain working definitions of each term which are applicable throughout the writings of Upadhyay. Starting from his definition of ‘incarnation,’ Upadhyay, over the course of his writings, develops five major distinguishing characteristics of an ‘incarnation’ which serve to highlight its distinctiveness from the Hindu conception

---

<sup>68</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 188.

<sup>69</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895): 11.

of 'avatār.'<sup>70</sup> However, as shall be noted, not every distinguishing aspect of a Hindu *avatār* necessarily applies to Krishna since the latter is sometimes attributed qualities which go beyond what applies more generally to *avatāra*.

First, a true incarnation represents *a unique, singular act*. Because his understanding of the term 'incarnation' implies an act of God's initiative whereby He "takes to himself a human nature," it is, therefore "one single fact which will last in its consequences forever; the union between God and human nature once assumed will continue for all eternity."<sup>71</sup> This is in direct contrast with the Hindu 'avatār' which is an event repeated over and over in human history. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* clearly states this in the famous *avatār* passage found in chapter four: "Whenever there occurs a decay of righteousness (*dharma*) and a springing up of unrighteousness, then I send forth myself. To protect good men and to destroy evil-doers, in order to establish righteousness (*dharma*), I come into being from age to age."<sup>72</sup> In contrast, Christianity teaches, writes Upadhyay, "that God incarnated himself only once to save sinners by virtue of his sufferings which are of infinite value in the sight of divine justice. So one incarnation suffices...for all climes and ages."<sup>73</sup> Yet, while admitting that belief in multiple *avatārs* is commonplace in

---

<sup>70</sup> In the context of his writings, there are times when his main point in discussing the meaning of 'incarnation' is not to distinguish it from 'avatār' *per se*, but from 're-incarnation' because of the tendency of the Theosophists to use the word 'incarnation' to refer to re-births since they denied animal migrations as implied in the term, transmigration or metempsychosis. At other times, his writings concerning incarnation are used to turn back notions of pantheism. I am outlining his arguments only as they apply to the concept of *avatār*.

<sup>71</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895): 11. Upadhyay, of course, is indicating something much more than V. Chakkari did in *Jesus the Avatār* which states that *Krishna* and *Rāma* were temporary *avatārs* since they left the world after they accomplished their task, whereas Jesus continues to be incarnated in human hearts.

<sup>72</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā* 4:7,8. There is no agreement as to the number of *avatārs*. Traditionally, it is accepted that Viṣṇu had ten *avatārs*, but Śaivism accepts as many as twenty-eight *avatārs* of Śiva.

<sup>73</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 188.

Hinduism, Viṣṇu's *avatār* as Krishna is considered unique since, as has been noted, it is widely (though not universally) regarded as the only *pūrṇa-avatāra*.

Second, a true incarnation is *a supernatural mystery*. Upadhyay argues that there are two kinds of mysteries, natural and supernatural. Natural mysteries are “those truths which man can find out by observation or inference, but cannot explain the ‘how’ or ‘why’ of them.” In contrast, he defines supernatural mysteries as “those truths which man can never find out but are revealed by God himself or through his infallible messengers.”<sup>74</sup> He cites the doctrine of the Incarnation, along with other doctrines such as Trinity, Atonement and Resurrection as examples of the latter. The doctrine of the Incarnation, writes Upadhyay, could never be “found out by reason.”<sup>75</sup> This becomes an important point in the later discussions concerning whether or not Krishna represents a reflection of the natural human yearning for an incarnation, as some missionary scholars taught who were contemporaries of Upadhyay.

Third, in a true incarnation, as noted in his definition above, God takes on or enters into a union with human nature, but there is *no human person*. In 1897, Upadhyay writes the following:

The central doctrine of the Christian religion is that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. “The Word was made flesh” means that God, at a definite period of time, assumed a created human nature. In Jesus Christ, the God-man, there is no human *person*, but a human *nature* - finite reason and will and a body - *united* with the Eternal Divine nature, but *everlastingly distinct* from each other, the unifying principle being the Divine Person Himself.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #3 (Mar., 1896); Lipner, ed., 51.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 12.

He holds that although there is a hypostatic union of the two natures in one Divine person, each nature remains separate and distinct “in their respective spheres” lest the Divine nature becomes “mixed or confused or mingled with the human nature” which is impossible “since mixture implies a change, and God is unchangeable.” Thus, “incarnation - in the Christian sense - is the union of two natures, the divine and the human, under one Person.”<sup>77</sup> In contrast, one of the key aspects of the Hindu concept of *avatāra* is the “blending of divine and human in their lives.”<sup>78</sup> This vital distinction of two natures united in one person is largely absent from Hindu discussions concerning *avatāra*.

Fourth, a true incarnation must be *a free act of God*, not compelled by necessity or the result of accumulated *karma*. Upadhyay directs this point particularly towards those who would blur the distinction between an *avatār* and the presence of the divine in all persons. Nevertheless, it is significant for our purposes because in his explanation Upadhyay makes (or, at least, allows) an unequivocally positive statement concerning *Krishna*:

When God appears as an individual assuming a form of Himself, without being impelled by any necessity, He is said, according to Hinduism, to incarnate Himself in the strictest sense of the word. *Rāma*, *Krishna* and other *avatārs* were God made flesh out of free choice while other human beings are the necessary products of their *karma* in previous lives.<sup>79</sup>

Upadhyay seems only to be allowing that *Krishna* is an *avatār*, or at the least, is regarded as such by the teachings of Hinduism. Nevertheless, in this case, an *avatār* is similar to a Christian understanding of incarnation in that both arise out of free

---

<sup>77</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #2 (Feb., 1895): 11. Similar statements may also be found in his explanation of Athanasius’ theology in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899); Lipner, ed., 183.

<sup>78</sup> J. L. Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity*, 26.

<sup>79</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #10 (Oct., 1897): 10.

choice and are not dictated by any necessity. This is not to equate the varying cosmic and soteriological motives which may have given rise to such a free act of condescension, but is merely making the point that both Christ and *Krishna* are viewed as taking on human flesh as an act of divine freedom.

Finally, Upadhyay teaches that in a true incarnation the incarnate one is, by necessity, *sinless*. In the 28 July issue of *Sophia Weekly*, a writer asks how someone is to distinguish between a true incarnation and a false one. Upadhyay's reply re-affirms the previous point as well as insisting on the necessity of sinlessness:

The first test is that the body of the True incarnation is not a result of *karma*, His birth and death depending wholly upon His will. The second test is that He is sinless. These are two negative tests and by the application of these two alone you will be able to eliminate all intrusions.<sup>80</sup>

Indeed, it is upon the basis of this fifth criterion that Upadhyay writes critically of the attempts by Swāmi Vivekananda and his disciples to regard Ramakrishna as an *avatār* on the same level as Rāma and Krishna. Upadhyay recalls his own personal experience with Ramakrishna over many years in which he noted that “the sense of sin was very acute in him” and that he often repudiated the “divine honor being paid to him.”<sup>81</sup> Unquestionably throughout Upadhyay's *Sophia* writings, as noted earlier, he regards Krishna as grossly immoral and rejects any attempts to allegorize the legends or render their meaning symbolic, although this is difficult to reconcile with some of his statements within the pages of *Sophia* indicating in 1897 that Krishna was free from *karma* and in 1900 that he was “above all bondage,” unless he was

---

<sup>80</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900): 8

<sup>81</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #10 (Oct., 1897): 11.

merely acknowledging what Hindus widely believe without necessarily stating whether he agreed with it or not.<sup>82</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear from an examination of Upadhyay's *Sophia* writings concerning the Christian conception of incarnation and the Hindu view of *avatār* that he makes several important distinctions between the two doctrines. It remains to be seen how this may be applied to his Bengali writings and lectures concerning Krishna after his return from Europe in 1903. Furthermore, it is important to explore how his emerging use of *Hindutva* as a way of doing Christian theology in India is applied to Krishna.

#### **d) Upadhyay's view of Krishna after July 1903**

##### **(1) Introduction**

In October 1902, Upadhyay set out from Bombay to Europe in what would become another important turning point in his life. By this time, his latest publication efforts, *Sophia Weekly* and *The Twentieth Century* had been successively banned by the Catholic ecclesiastical authorities. His hopes to establish the *Kastalik Maṭha* on the banks of the Narmada river to train Christian *sannyāsins* in the philosophies of Śāṅkara and Aquinas had, likewise, been opposed and effectively squashed. His only remaining hope was to travel to Rome in hopes that the authorities there might be more sympathetic to his work and overturn Mgr. Zaleski's ban.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, he learned in September 1902 of the death of Vivekananda, the famous representative of Indian thought who had traveled West and electrified the

---

<sup>82</sup> See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #10 (Oct., 1897): 10 and *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (Sept. 1900); Lipner, ed., 188. That Upadhyay is probably merely stating Hindu beliefs is further attested by his statement in the *Sophia Weekly* passage which says that "it would not be relevant to the question to discuss here how far the belief about Krishna is justified by facts." See, Lipner, ed., 188.

<sup>83</sup> See, *The Blade*, 90, 91, 103, 119. For many of the personal details of Upadhyay's year abroad, I have consulted J. Lipner's personal translations (totaling sixty-seven pages) of the letters Upadhyay wrote back to India from Britain to be published in the *Baṅgabaṣī*.

delegates at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Upadhyay decided to make an extended journey to Rome to address the issue of the ban, and then on to Britain to provide an alternative to the neo-Hindu voice of Vivekananda which, in Upadhyay's view, had given the West a distorted view of Hinduism.<sup>84</sup>

During the year abroad, Upadhyay became convinced more than ever of the need to distance Indian expressions of Christianity from European social and cultural norms which, in his view, were often wedded to how Christianity was viewed and presented in India by western missionaries. This desire to believe as a Catholic while living and acting as a Hindu is certainly not new. What is new is the increased emphasis on what it means to be a Hindu after one has accepted Christianity. This, coupled with an ardent nationalism which is expressed in a succession of three new Bengali medium periodicals, represents a new phase in Upadhyay's thought and career. His nationalistic work and writings through his journals, *Sandhyā*, *Karālī* and *Svarāj* as well as his untiring efforts on behalf of the nationalistic *Svadeshi* movement are outside the scope of this research. However, his affirmation of Hindu culture in the face of nineteenth century British imperialism led him to new and important insights into the relationship of religion and culture which are pertinent to this research. One of the most significant is the development of his understanding of Krishna as a Hindu *avatār* and nationalistic icon.

---

<sup>84</sup> A. Nandy in *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1996), argues that Upadhyay went West to intentionally complete his friend's unfinished task which, in the broader sense and despite theological differences, was about "'firingijaivrata,' i.e. the rite of conquering the whites," 64. It is beyond the scope of this research to explore Upadhyay's attitude toward the well known Vivekananda. However, his writings concerning Vivekananda may be found in the following issues of *Sophia*: Vol. 2, #8 (Aug., 1895): 12-16; Vol. 3, #7 (July, 1896); Lipner, ed., 273, 274; Vol. 3, #10 (Oct., 1896): 4-8; Vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 9-11; Vol. 4, #4 (April, 1897): 12-14; Vol. 4, #10 (Oct., 1897): 8-11; Vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 228-231. After his return from abroad, Upadhyay became more positive about Vivekananda. See, for example, the quote in his nationalistic periodical *Sandhyā* concerning Vivekananda which is quoted in *The Blade*, 136.

**(2) Lecture on “The True Nature of Śrī Krishna”  
(Śrīkr̥ṣṇatattva)**

In July 1904, Upadhyay delivered a lengthy lecture in Bengali on the fifth anniversary of the *Sāhitya Sabhā* in the home of Raja Benoy Krishna De in Calcutta.<sup>85</sup> The lecture was later published in the *Sāhitya Samhitā*.<sup>86</sup> The lecture created a stir of controversy leading many of his Christian friends to assume that Upadhyay had put Christ and Krishna on an equal footing and, quite possibly, forsaken Christianity and reverted back to Hinduism.<sup>87</sup> Thus, it is important that the major themes of the lecture be clearly set forth. The lecture may be divided into four major sections. First, he begins with an introduction which sets the context for the lecture. The second portion of the lecture is an historical assessment which deals largely with the dating of the *Gītā* and the historicity of Krishna, but in the process sets forth important parameters defining how the Hindu concept of *avatār* should be understood. In the third section, he sets forth the purpose of an *avatār*. Finally, in the last part of the lecture, he demonstrates how Śrī Krishna is a true *avatār*. The themes of each section will now be explored.

**(a) Lecture introduction**

Upadhyay begins by acknowledging that there are many diverse opinions regarding Krishna, but that he will only accept views which are consistent with the *advaita* of Śaṅkara. This caveat is vital for Upadhyay because it will allow him to distance himself from or, in some cases, re-interpret various *Purāṇic* traditions regarding Krishna which heretofore has caused him to cast Krishna in such a negative

---

<sup>85</sup> I am using Dr. Julius Lipner's unpublished translation of this lecture from the Bengali. The only published summary of the lecture in English appears in *The Blade*, 123-130.

<sup>86</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 123. The citation is *Sāhitya Samhitā*, vol. 5, #6, 7; B.E. 1311 (1904 C.E.): 321-341.

<sup>87</sup> The controversy this lecture created among his closest colleagues is recounted in *The Blade*, 184f.

light. He goes on to acknowledge the widespread, almost universal, regard for Krishna among Hindus, largely due to the growing influence and popularity of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In short, Krishna has become a cultural and religious icon and cannot (as he has previously done) be simply dismissed if one is to make a necessary connection with the Indian people. He then begins to denounce the western missionaries (*dharmapracāra*k) who, by attacking Krishna, “are determined to institute western religion, knowledge and mores in this country after having extirpated our Hinduness (*hindutva*).”<sup>88</sup> By attacking Krishna’s morality and historicity, he argues, their real intention is to undermine various aspects of *hindutva*, four of which he mentions: belief in non-duality, the four stages of life, the Hindu moral code and image worship. This would effectively guarantee that Christianity, as propagated by westerners, would be clothed in a European cultural garb and be hostile to Indian culture. This, Upadhyay declares, is unacceptable: “Śrī Krishna is the living root of Hinduness. If they were to overthrow Śrī Krishna their national civilisation and sectarian religion would reign supreme.”<sup>89</sup>

Upadhyay concentrates his attack on the then recent writings of the Scottish fulfillment theologian J. N. Farquhar who, in his view, epitomizes the western determination to propagate a European form of Christianity coupled with a negative assessment of Hinduism and a broad denouncement of Indian culture. Farquhar would have certainly viewed his position as a more enlightened approach to

---

<sup>88</sup> B. Upadhyay, “The True Nature of Sri Krishna”, unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali by J. Lipner, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Hinduism than other, more confrontational, theologians such as Alexander Duff.<sup>90</sup>

Farquhar had arrived in Calcutta in 1891 as a teacher at the L.M.S. Bhowanipur Institution. He quickly came to see that the confrontational attitude towards Hinduism would no longer be effective in the face of the growing Hindu revival, particularly evident in Bengal.<sup>91</sup> Instead, Farquhar advocated an evolutionary relationship between Hinduism and Christianity, with Christianity representing the fulfillment or the perfection of what was only foreshadowed in Hinduism.<sup>92</sup>

However, Upadhyay views the subtlety of Farquhar's approach as more dangerous to a truly indigenous Christianity than the earlier overtly confrontational missionaries.

The earlier missionaries had blatantly attacked Hindu religious beliefs, whereas Farquhar was attacking India's *hindutva* which, in Upadhyay's view, was contributing to the destruction of the very basis upon which Christianity must be constructed in India. The main difference between the position of Farquhar and Upadhyay is that the former, while affirming Hinduism, still viewed it as a religion which found its fulfillment in Christianity and was therefore ultimately subordinate to the Christian revelation. Upadhyay, in contrast, interpreted Hinduism culturally and therefore saw no fundamental conflict or connection between Christianity and

---

<sup>90</sup> For an excellent survey of the theological positions of many of the leading western fulfillment theologians of this period, especially Farquhar, see, Eric J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil* (Uppsala: Gleerup, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1965).

<sup>91</sup> Farquhar was a contemporary of Upadhyay, both being born in 1861. The full statement of Farquhar's position does not appear until 1913 with the publication of *The Crown of Hinduism*. However, his articles and ideas were circulating much earlier, as Upadhyay's knowledge of Farquhar's thought indicates. Upadhyay could have read *The Crossbearer* (published in 1900) as well as his open letters "to the thinking men of Calcutta" such as *Christ and the Gospels* and *Criticism and Christianity*. In addition, his *The Science of Religion as an Aid to Apologetics* was published in *Harvest Field* in 1901. See, Sharpe, 167. In a footnote to the printed "Sri Krishna" lecture, Upadhyay refers to Farquhar's pamphlets entitled, "Permanent Lessons of the *Gītā*" and "*Gītā* and Gospel," both published in 1903. *The Blade* cites these writings as the reason for Upadhyay's lecture, 123.

<sup>92</sup> E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, 169. See also, R. Boyd, *Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1975, 1994): 89.

Hinduism. Farquhar saw Hinduism and Christianity as two religions, one of which foreshadowed and was fulfilled by the latter. Upadhyay saw Hinduism as a culture, a way of life, a social framework, i.e. an expression of *Hindutva* which could serve quite well as a natural foundation for an indigenous expression of Christianity.

Farquhar, therefore, confuses this distinction when he seeks to show that the *Gītā* is really about Jesus Christ. Upadhyay quotes from Farquhar's *Permanent Lessons of the Gītā* where he writes:

The *Gītā*'s author has really spoken about Jesus Christ in the name of Krishna. But because he was unaware of Christ he resorted to Krishna in his imagination. In fact, the *Gītā* is wonderfully prophetic about Jesus. The *Gītā*'s sentiments find their fulfilment in Jesus.<sup>93</sup>

The *Gītā* emerged, in Farquhar's view, because of "the natural yearning in the human heart that God should come down and deliver the human race from its sins."<sup>94</sup>

Krishna is nothing more than a projection of this natural instinct which is later fulfilled in Christ, making Krishna obsolete once the latter fulfillment is realized and embraced.

The second part of Upadhyay's lecture will address these issues by demonstrating how, in his view, Farquhar's thesis is untenable.

#### (b) The historical assessment

Upadhyay cites three main objections to Farquhar's writings regarding Krishna and the *Gītā* and their respective relationship to Jesus Christ. First, he writes, "there is no hankering in the human heart that God should assume human

<sup>93</sup> B. Upadhyay, "The True Nature of Śrī Krishna," 4.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay, in the public lecture, merely summarized Farquhar's thought, but in the printed version he includes the entire text in the footnote whereby Farquhar writes as follows: "The truth is that man needs an incarnate saviour; our nature cries out for him; in his absence the human heart imagines him, responds even to a mythical representation of such a saviour, and falls down in reverent adoration before the mere imagination." Upadhyay takes this quote from Farquhar's *Permanent Lessons of the Gita*.

nature and make reparation for sin.”<sup>95</sup> Farquhar’s position violates one of the central tenets of a true incarnation; namely, that it is a supernatural mystery, unattainable through human reason. Upadhyay views the incarnation as a supernatural revelation which could not be known or even inferred from human nature or natural theology. Second, Upadhyay rejects Farquhar’s concept of a God who is somehow “constrained to fulfil man’s yearning by acting as atoner and saviour.”<sup>96</sup> Once again, this violates one of the key tenets of Upadhyay’s conception of a true incarnation; namely, that it must arise as a free act of God and not be compelled by necessity. It is, argues Upadhyay, “against the Christian scriptures to ascribe such constraint to God (*bhagavān*). All the Christian teachers say with one voice that God is not bound to deliver the creature by taking on a human body.”<sup>97</sup>

The third objection to Farquhar is that he is conflating the two terms ‘incarnation’ and ‘*avatār*.’ This violates yet another one of the defining aspects of a true incarnation; namely its uniqueness. Upadhyay says,

What the *Gītā* teaches and what Christians teach about divine descent are completely different. The *Gītā* teaches that the Lord descends from period to period to punish wrongdoers, protect the virtuous and establish *dharma*. But the Christians say that the Lord, having assumed human nature, has given up his life but once for the atonement of sin. Jesus cannot be said to be an *avatār* in the way this word is used in accordance with *Gītā* teaching. The nature of his appearance is completely different. The attempts such missionaries as Farquhar are making to insinuate Jesus into India through the *Gītā* are contrary to all their scriptures.<sup>98</sup>

Upadhyay’s statement in this quote about the nature of his appearance being completely different, points to an even larger problem with Farquhar’s position

---

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

which goes beyond an analysis of his individual points. From the perspective of *advaita*, Farquhar's attempt to make the gospel more appealing to Hindus through a fulfillment theology, serves only to reconstruct Christian theology at the level of *saguṇa* Brahman, which has only a contingent, not an ultimate reality. Farquhar's position unwittingly reduces the supernatural to the natural. In contrast, Upadhyay argues that "the very process, in the Christian view, by which the creature is saved lies outside the scope of nature (*prakṛti*). And that which transcends nature cannot come under nature's way."<sup>99</sup> Upadhyay closes this part of the lecture by arguing for the antiquity of the *Gītā* and the historicity and long standing veneration of Krishna in India.

**(c) The true nature of an *avatār***

The purpose of this third portion of the lecture is to remind the listeners of the purpose of a Hindu *avatār*. This is a vital part of the lecture because it serves to reinforce not only the differences between Hindu *avatār* and Christian incarnation, but to focus the lecture on the connection between *avatār* and *hindutva*. Upadhyay begins in true *advaitic* fashion by declaring that true Being is one and cannot be two. He is reasserting the ultimate perspective of *advaitism* on the nature of reality: "It is only when that non-dual true Being is *perceived* as having parts, that it appears as creating, sustaining and destroying in the form of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*." In other words, an *avatār* is the result of the "undivided Reality (*pūrṇasattā*) [being] apprehended as divided." This is what is meant, he argues, by the *Gītā* text which says, on the one hand, that Brahman is "unborn and of unchanging essence" and yet

---

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* Upadhyay's insistence that the Christian incarnation is of a fundamentally different nature than the Hindu *avatār* is further brought out by Farquhar's criticism that the *Gītā* is classified as *smṛti*, not *śruti*. Once again, if Hindu *avatārs* are expressions of *saguṇa* Brahman then it should come as no surprise that this text is considered *smṛti*, not *śruti*, as both are bound by time.

is able to “take birth by my wondrous power.”<sup>100</sup> One of the ways Upadhyay defines *māyā*, as explained earlier in chapter five, is the mysterious power of God to communicate multiplicity. When *dharma* wanes and *adharma* arises, the Lord descends in the form of an *avatār*. Thus, any *avatār*, whether full or partial, is ultimately an expression of *māyā* and, unlike Christ, has only a contingent or dependent existence. Once again, Upadhyay is emphasizing that the *nature* of Hindu *avatār* and Christian incarnation are poles apart.

This part of the lecture also emphasizes how the *purpose* of the two are different. An *avatār* occurs when *adharma* arises in order to restore *dharma*. J. Lipner acknowledges the difficulty in translating this portion of the lecture by leaving the words ‘*dharma*’ and ‘*adharma*’ untranslated. However, in a footnote, Lipner (from the perspective of this research mistakenly) notes that “in the context of the time, Upadhyay may well have translated *dharma* by ‘religion.’”<sup>101</sup> While he is certainly correct in noting that in the nineteenth century ‘*dharma*’ is often translated ‘religion,’ this is precisely what Upadhyay is never prepared to do. Indeed, in the well known passage in the *Gītā* where Sri Krishna advises Arjuna not to leave his *dharma*, Upadhyay points out that

*dharma* here means vocation and not religion...there was no danger of Arjuna’s conversion to Mahomedanism or Christianity. Sri Krishna would have given utterance to something very absurd had he advised Arjuna, who was an orthodox believer, not to abandon his faith.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, fn. 20. A similiar translation occurs in Lipner’s unpublished manuscript entitled, “The Degeneration of the Hindu Race.” In the lecture, Upadhyay points out that “‘*Hindutva*’ is divided into two parts: *dharma* and *jñāna*.” Lipner translates the former term as “religious practice,” rather than “social practice/duty/vocation,” 11, unpublished manuscript.

<sup>102</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #7, New Series (28 July, 1900): 8. See, *Bhagavad-Gītā* 3:35.

Indeed, the entire context of the passage reinforces the point that the purpose of an *avatār* is to restore vocational purity (*varṇāśramadharmā*), not to establish or restore a religion. Upadhyay vividly describes *adharma* as “longing for worldly pleasures” and the destruction of “the set stages of life” and the emergence of “mixed races opposed to an ordered society,” resulting in “sectarian division.”<sup>103</sup> In contrast, Upadhyay describes *dharma* in a social context as the perfect balance between detachment (*nivṛtti*) and worldly engagement (*pravṛtti*):

If only detachment (*nivṛtti*) remained, family life and work would suffer. If, on the other hand, worldly engagement (*pravṛtti*) remained, unrighteousness and oppression would destroy society. Thus, we call *dharma* the balance between worldly engagement and detachment, between action and knowledge.<sup>104</sup>

*Avatārs* come from time to time to restore the proper *Samāj Dharma* (social obligations) whereas the Christian incarnation is a singular revelation to establish the proper *Sādhan Dharma* (doctrinal heritage); namely that “God, having taken on human nature, came down and, offering up his own life, did reparation (*prāyaścitta*) for the sins of the human race.”<sup>105</sup> This is consistent with Upadhyay’s long held belief that “there is no such thing as the Hindu religion” and that the term Hindu refers to a “national name.”<sup>106</sup> For Upadhyay, Hinduism is national whereas true religion must, by definition, be universal, transcending all nationalities.<sup>107</sup> The

---

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

<sup>106</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #12 (Dec., 1897): 15, 16. P. Turmes in *A Teacher of Genius*, recalls that Upadhyay once noted as follows, “Missionaries misunderstand Hinduism and Hindus misunderstand the Christian message. On the one side, missionaries argue as if Hinduism was a religion. It is not. It is but a Social System. On the other side, Christianity for Hindus means wearing pants, using fork and spoon, drinking, smoking and living promiscuously. What a confusion!” See, P. Turmes, 2.

<sup>107</sup> In *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #23, New Series (1 Dec., 1900): 5, Upadhyay writes, “those who have not the privilege of possessing the Universal Religion talk of building up a new faith by harmonising different scriptures and philosophies...The Universal Religion does not originate in eclecticism...it is

mistake of Farquhar and other western missionaries, according to Upadhyay, was to confuse this point by making endless superficial doctrinal comparisons between Hinduism and Christianity, especially since the purpose was to ultimately undermine Hinduism and demonstrate the superiority of Christianity. In his view, the missionaries were actually “waging war against the Hindu social system” rashly assuming that it was “incompatible with the spirit of civilization and Christianity.”<sup>108</sup> On the contrary, Upadhyay held that a robust Hinduism is entirely consistent with a faithful expression of Christianity in the Indian context.<sup>109</sup>

When this balance between worldly engagement and detachment (i.e. the synthesis of knowledge and action) breaks down, then “the Godhead (*īśvaratva*) mingles with the empirical individual” enabling the latter “to rise to a plane above spiritual ignorance.” This is, according to Upadhyay, the essence of an *avatār* which, he defines as a “praeternatural (*aprākṛta*)... participation in humanity” which “enters into *māyā* [and yet] his birth is not subject to the law of *karma*.”<sup>110</sup> The result is that mysteriously the “oneness of God and empirical individuality are established in the

---

fixed, immutable. Not an iota can be added to or subtracted from it. But its presentation may be different in different climes or ages. It may change its garb but never itself.” See, Lipner, ed., 36.

<sup>108</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 210.

<sup>109</sup> Upadhyay even opposed the doctrinal comparisons being done by Annie Besant or neo-Hindus to demonstrate the superiority of Hinduism, since, ultimately, it makes the same error. See, for example, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 6-10 and vol. 4, #6 (June, 1897): 5-8, 11-13. *The Blade* records Upadhyay’s response to one of the critics of his lecture which reinforces this vital distinction: “Sri Krishna was a unique manifestation of rational wisdom and power, but Christ was the Saviour of sinners. Krishna was an *avatār*, but Christ was the Incarnation of God” (184, 185).

<sup>110</sup> B. Upadhyay, “*The True Nature of Śrī Krishna*,” 22, 23. Lipner comments in fn. 22 that ‘praeternatural’ does not necessarily mean ‘supernatural,’ 22. A. MacDonell defines *aprākṛta* as “not original, secondary; unusual, extraordinary,” *Sanskrit Dictionary*, 22. Lipner translates the term ‘*aprākṛta*’ in this general sense (praeternatural), although in the context Upadhyay may have been using the term in a technical sense to mean ‘not part of *prakṛti*,’ i.e. a part of ‘*puruṣa*’ or spirit which would emphasize the divine element more.

figure of the *avatār*” in such a way that an *avatār* may be truly regarded as both “divine” and a “genuine human person.”<sup>111</sup>

It is this definition of an *avatār* which created such a controversy among Upadhyay’s Christian colleagues because he failed, in their judgment, to adequately distinguish the *theological* difference between a Hindu *avatār* and the Christian incarnation, irrespective of other differences which he allowed for. However, what they apparently overlooked is that in his definition Upadhyay declares that an *avatār* is a genuine human *person*.<sup>112</sup> In the Christian incarnation, as noted above, Upadhyay held that Christ has two *natures*, but there is only one divine person. In short, Christ, unlike an *avatār*, has a human nature, but no human personhood.

Upadhyay ends this portion of the lecture by pointing out that the distinction between a “pure” *avatār* (*pūrṇa-avatāra*) and a “partial” one (*aṃśa-avatāra*) has nothing whatsoever to do with whether the *avatār* is a full or a partial manifestation of the supreme Being. It is impossible for any *avatār* to be considered a full manifestation of God since, as the *ṚgVeda* text declares, “Three quarters of the supreme Being is unmanifest, and only one quarter is manifest.”<sup>113</sup> From “the non-dual point of view, everything from [the demiurge] *Brahmā* to inanimate things are nothing but partial forms of the truly Real.” In fact, the distinction has to do with whether or not the *avatār* appears wholly as a free act of the will and is completely free from the bondage of *karma*. Taken as a whole, this last point provides further evidence that Upadhyay regards all *avatārs*, whether ‘pure’ or ‘partial,’ as

---

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>112</sup> The full phrase Upadhyay used is as follows, “*avatār yathārtha manaba puruṣatva.*”

<sup>113</sup> B. Upadhyay, “*The True Nature of Sri Krishna*,” 24, quoting *ṚgVeda* 10.90.2-3.

expressions of *saguṇa*, not *nirguṇa Brahman* (since they emerge from *Brahmā*, not *Parabrahman*) and are, therefore, ultimately to be regarded as having only contingent being.<sup>114</sup>

**(d) The Śrī Krishna Avatār**

In the final portion of the lecture, Upadhyay seeks to show how the most sublime characteristics of an *avatār* are present in Śrī Krishna. His main argument is that Krishna fully embodies the ideal balance, discussed earlier, between worldly engagement and detachment. This is, of course, one of the great insights of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* which seeks to resolve the centuries old tension in Indian society between active involvement in the world and withdrawal from and denial of the world. The *Gītā* resolves the tension by declaring that one can be fully active in the world while maintaining an inward detachment from the world. Arjuna was counseled to act in the world, fulfilling his *dharma*; yet to do it with inward detachment, unconcerned about the fruits of his work or action.

---

<sup>114</sup> B. Animananda records in *The Blade* (129) a small chart with an accompanying explanation which he claims is taken from “an old yellow paper” written “in the handwriting of Upadhyay.” Upadhyay writes, “Now it is clear that there is a vast difference between Christ and Krishna and they differ from each other beyond comparison. I draw a chart first of all to show the relation of Śrī Krishna to God and the Universe:”

<b>God</b>		
<b>Brahma</b>	<b>Vishnu</b>	<b>Maheswar</b>
<b>Universe</b>		

**Sri Krishna**

“Now if the Universe ceases to exist, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar cannot exist and Śrī Krishna being the *Avatār* of Vishnu cannot exist. Now God in Himself manifests Himself in three: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost...But if this Universe ceases to exist, they exist all the same for they are Three in One and One in Three. Only Christ as man ceases to exist, but Christ as God remains to exist...I cannot understand then why there should be any misunderstanding. We should not mix up Christ with Krishna, though they are nothing but of the One God, still we cannot put them in the same category.”

The fact that Krishna was not bound by *karma* and he perfectly exemplified the *Gītā* ideal of ‘inner detachment’ is how Upadhyay finally comes to terms with the *Purāṇic* legends about Krishna which celebrate, for instance, his youthful, sensuous relationship with the milkmaids. Upadhyay declares that “in Krishna’s character during his youth, worldly engagement found its fullest expression.”<sup>115</sup> Yet, it was not immoral since Krishna was unbound by *karma*: “If the defect of *karma* were present, this kind of display of tenderness, bereft of sensual attachment, could not occur.” The “sectarian worshippers” who have turned the “exquisitely unspeakable bliss” of Krishna into “a Bacchanalian festival”<sup>116</sup> have, according to Upadhyay, ignorantly overlooked that Krishna perfectly embodies not only worldly engagement, but total detachment and renunciation. His very life embodies the harmony between the two; the synthesis between knowledge and action. Upadhyay concludes the lecture by declaring that it is through the grace of Krishna that “India exists as foremost in *dharma*” and, indeed, through the influence of Śrī Krishna, “the Hindu race will be anointed as the teacher of the whole of humankind.”<sup>117</sup>

In conclusion, upon careful scrutiny it is evident that this controversial lecture is actually a consistent application of views which Upadhyay had held previously concerning the nature and purpose of the Christian incarnation and the Hindu *avatār*. Upadhyay’s attack on Farquahar is designed to restore both Christ and Krishna to their proper and respective spheres.

---

<sup>115</sup> B. Upadhyay, “*The True Nature of Śrī Krishna*,” 28.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. See also footnote on page 130 of *The Blade* where Upadhyay is quoted as declaring that “the Krishna as represented by *Vaiṣṇava* sects is to be denounced.”

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

### e) Other iconic figures and symbols

Upadhyay's post-1903 views regarding iconic figures and symbols goes far beyond a single lecture on Śrī Krishna, though that lecture is his most important, comprehensive and formal explanation of his attitude towards key elements in popular Hinduism. However, two other events in Upadhyay's life deserve special note as further application of how deeply he accepted Hinduism as a social and cultural phenomenon quite distinct from one's particular religious commitment: First, his allowing *pūjā* to be performed in honor of *Sarasvatī* in February 1905, causing his closest friend and colleague Rewachand (Animananda) to break fellowship with him; second, his allowing the idol *Shivaji* to be placed at the feet of *Durgā* during the *Shivaji* festival which Upadhyay organized in June 1906. Both of these events will be briefly explored.

#### (1) *Sarasvatī pūjā*

*Sarasvatī* is one of the few Hindu goddesses who is acknowledged throughout India, along with *Durgā*, *Lakṣmī* and *Kālī*.<sup>118</sup> *Sarasvatī* is the goddess of wisdom (*sophia*), knowledge and culture, making her an appropriate symbol for Upadhyay to further demonstrate how his application of *Hindutva* applied to Indian icons rendering them as primarily cultural, not religious objects. As one might expect, one of the most common places to see *Sarasvatī* was in schools and places of learning. Indeed, in addition to his journalistic endeavors, Upadhyay was involved in the establishment of, and in a limited way, teaching in various schools, giving him a natural connection with *Sarasvatī*.<sup>119</sup> It is important to remember that every issue of

<sup>118</sup> D. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1982, 1993): 131.

<sup>119</sup> Upadhyay's activity as an educator is largely outside the scope of this research and certainly less important than his journalistic contributions. However, a general summary may be helpful. During his Brāhmo Samāj days (1888), Upadhyay founded a school in Hyderabad known as the Union Academy (also, Hiranand Academy) with Nandal Sen and Hirananda. After his conversion, he became the

*Sophia Monthly* contained a tribute to a personified *Sophia* taken from the book of Wisdom. Upadhyay apparently recognized that both *Sophia* and *Sarasvatī* were cultural and theological equivalents, although the connection between *Sarasvatī* and *Sophia* never appears in any of his writings.<sup>120</sup>

After his return from Europe, Upadhyay became involved once again in the school he had helped to found which, by this time, had moved from Simla street to another part of Calcutta. According to Upadhyay's biographer, B. Animananda, the number of boys in the school had increased from eight to thirty-five.<sup>121</sup> In February/March (Bengali, *Magh*), Hindus celebrate the feast of *Sarasvatī*. On the eve of the feast in 1904, Upadhyay sent a young man named Nanda to obtain a

---

Assistant Manager of the C.M.S. High School in 1891 teaching a wide variety of classes, including Persian. He also served for a short time as a teacher of Latin and Mathematics in St. Patrick's High School in Karachi. Upon returning to Calcutta, he began a school with Animananda and Khemchand at Bethune Row (former home of the Concord Club where Upadhyay worked in 1886), which was later moved to Simla Bazar Street. In December 1901, the famous poet Rabindranath Tagore came to visit his friend Upadhyay and they agreed to move the school to his estate at Bolepur about 150 kilometers from Calcutta. This was the beginning of the Santiniketan school. In 1902, the children who had formerly been a part of the Simla street school again separated from the Santiniketan School and continued to grow quite successfully until 1904 when Animananda broke fellowship with Upadhyay over, to use his words, "Krishna worship and the *Sarasvatī* festival." Animananda left to found the Boy's Own School. In 1906, Upadhyay was involved in the National Council on Education, helping to set national educational policy. See, *The Blade*, viii, 23, 29, 32, 36, 46, 93-94, 145, 152, 186-188; J. Lipner, ed., *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, xl.; P. Turmes, S. J. *A Teacher of Genius: B. Animananda* (Xavier Pub., 1963): 9, 13, 15, 22-24; B. Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Story of His Life*, pt. 1 (Calcutta, 1908): 28-33. *The Blade* also notes that, while Upadhyay was instrumental in setting up the Simla and Santiniketan schools, he rarely did "regular teaching work," 95. It was difficult for these schools to prosper since they were reluctant to accept money because of the prohibition against Brahmans receiving money for teaching in *Manusmṛti XI:63*.

<sup>120</sup> This is the tribute to *Sophia* which was printed on the inside cover of each issue: "I called upon God, and the spirit of *Sophia* (wisdom) came upon me: and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her." "I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her light cannot be put out." "She knoweth and understandeth all things and shall lead me soberly in my works and shall preserve me by her power." "For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? Or who can think what the will of God is? Or who shall know Thy thought except Thou give *Sophia*, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above: and so the ways of them that are upon earth may be corrected, and men may learn the things that please Thee?" "For by *Sophia* they were healed, whosoever have pleased Thee, O Lord, from the beginning." See, *Wisdom of Solomon 7:7,8* (phrase one); *7:10* (phrase two); *9:11* (phrase three); *9:13, 14, 17* (phrase four); *9:18* (phrase five). Upadhyay used the Douay version.

<sup>121</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 119. Significantly, Animananda implies throughout that these boys are all from Hindu backgrounds and none are in communion with the Catholic, or any other, church.

“statue of the goddess.” Another young man named Gora was instructed to get the choir ready.<sup>122</sup> Sensing their hesitation, Upadhyay was certain that Rewachand (Animananda) had already instructed the boys that any participation in the *Sarasvatī* festival was wrong and un-Catholic. He ordered Rewachand to stay in a small room located on the terrace with the words “stay there till the *pūjā* is over.” The *pūjā* to *Sarasvatī* was performed and the choir sang, though Father Turmes insists that Upadhyay himself did not join in the *pūjā* as a sign of obedience to the Church’s prohibition.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, Rewachand left the school, broke fellowship with Upadhyay, and had only occasional correspondence in the remaining years before Upadhyay’s death in 1907.<sup>124</sup>

After the *Sarasvatī* festival was over, Upadhyay reportedly gave a lecture on *Sarasvatī* to the students and staff alike which emphasized that the goddess is merely representative and emblematic of the aspect of *cit* which is wisdom and knowledge.<sup>125</sup> Later, in a letter to Rewachand, Upadhyay clarified that “I have never held that Christians should worship *Sarasvatī*... whether Christians can assimilate this *Sarasvatī* devotion is a question beyond my province; mine is a question of procedure in our dealings with non-Christians.” His letter goes on to demonstrate the wide gulf between Hindu *pūjā* and Christian worship:

Will man bathe the Absolute, the Perfect, the Blissful One? God makes Himself small to fulfil his devotee’s desire of approaching Him. But beware lest thou insult Him by believing Him to be in reality small and in need of thy services. See His greatness in His self-abasement, but do not consider Him small. He is infinite: the heavens, the clouds, the

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 121 and P. Turmes, 24.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, 211.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 187, 188. Animananda notes that their letters to one another were warm and cordial though he openly admits that “Krishna worship and the *Sarasvatī* festival had shaken my belief in the guru.”

<sup>125</sup> Animananda summarizes a Bengali version by Pal Parbhan of what was said, but no text of his words are extant.

rains, the forests, are His abode. Yet He comes to thee. Transcend all smallness. See the Infinite in every small finite being.<sup>126</sup>

It is unclear whether his willingness to allow Hindus to “see the infinite in the finite” is meant as an allowance for *Christian* practice which would, in effect, equate Hindu icons and, perhaps, certain expressions of *pūjā*, with Catholic image veneration. Indeed, in *Sophia Weekly*, he does write that it is “not only legitimate, but it is absolutely necessary for man to betake himself to images in the act of conceiving spiritual things...It is through material images that we can have a peep into the region of the spirit. From the visible we rise to the invisible.”<sup>127</sup> Yet, in the same article he goes on to warn that these images and symbols can “become extremely harmful when they, instead of elevating us to the domain of the invisible, drag down spiritual things to befoul them with carnal grossness...He who elevates the finite to the infinite or *vice versa* is an idolater.”<sup>128</sup> Is Upadhyay merely maintaining a careful distinction between “seeing the infinite in the finite,” which he commends, and “elevating the finite to the infinite” which he condemns, or does his allowing *pūjā* to *Sarasvatī* represent a fundamental shift in his thinking?

Since we have on record such strong denials of his equating Hindu *pūjā* to icons with Catholic image veneration, as well as his own unwillingness to participate in the *pūjā*, it is more likely an acknowledgment that the goddess *Sarasvatī* is a reflection of *cultural* ideals within India which need not be discarded since they are ultimately not related to the Christian religion or Christian worship any more than a statute of a Greek goddess in the town square of a western city is not normally

<sup>126</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 211.

<sup>127</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #4, New Series (7 July, 1900): 8.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

viewed as an idol or as being in any conflict with Christian worship. This view is also consistent with the trend of 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal which was increasingly turning the national goddesses into politicized symbols to inspire patriotism and inspiration for self-rule.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, on the fiftieth anniversary of the periodical *The Jote*, a monthly moral, social and educational periodical, the editors pay tribute to the memory of Upadhyay. In the tribute they remind the readers of how “he used the right Hinduism gives and encourages of interpreting symbolically.” The tribute goes on to demonstrate how this symbolic interpretation was applied to *Sarasvatī* (wisdom), *Kālī* (motherhood) and Krishna (civic fabric).<sup>130</sup> Thus, it is likely that his view of what constitutes idolatry *per se* has not changed, but he has shifted his view of Hindu icons from a religious basis to a more cultural one. From a western perspective, what appears to be idolatry may, from the point of view of *Hindutva*, be merely an expression of a cultural ideal which an Indian Christian may affirm, or at least allow, without any inconsistency.

## (2) *Durgā* and the *Shivaji* festival

Traditionally, *Durgā* is a warrior goddess who defeats the forces of evil in order to protect the cosmos. She is often depicted as having sixteen arms, each

---

<sup>129</sup> A classic example of this occurs in an article Upadhyay wrote in the Bengali daily paper *Sandhya* entitled, “Mother *Kālī* of the Dance” (*Ma Nr̥tyakālī*). The article appeared sometime between July of 1904 and Oct., 1907, the exact date being unknown.

<sup>130</sup> N. F. Kotawani, ed., “Dedicated to the Memory of Four Great Men,” *Jote* (October, 1946): 13, 14. Upadhyay was one of the co-founders and editors of the periodical (along with Khemchand, Parmanand and Animananda), but as far as I can ascertain, never submitted an article for publication. *The Jote* makes an error of fact when it claims that Upadhyay “bid farewell at an early age and ... having left me (*The Jote*) he started ‘*Sophia*’ my sister. She lived only five years,” 5. In fact, the *Sophia* began in Jan. 1894, nearly three years before *The Jote* began in October 1896, though undoubtedly his work on the *Sophia* explains his inability to continue any active involvement with *The Jote*. In the entire history of *Sophia* (monthly and weekly) Upadhyay only makes one reference to *Sarasvatī* and that is a condemnation of Hindus who worship Annie Besant as *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of wisdom. See, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, #7 (July, 1895): 11.

wielding a weapon, and riding a lion or tiger.<sup>131</sup> *Durgā* is widely regarded as a savior goddess since she is able to “rescue her devotees from exceptionally dangerous circumstances.”<sup>132</sup> She became an especially poignant figure for the Bengali nationalists who, as has been noted, used the goddesses to promote patriotism and, in this case, used the imagery to suggest her delivering India from the dangers of British colonialism.

In *Sophia Weekly*, Upadhyay refers to *Durgā* as “the female personification of the Divine Force.” He goes on to point out that “God’s power to create, to preserve and to dissolve [the universe] is, according to Hindu philosophy, not necessary to His being.” Since *Durgā* is identified with this contingent “Force” or “Divine Power,” then it must be concluded that *Durgā* is an expression of *saguṇa* and cannot, therefore, be worshipped as the Infinite God. For Upadhyay, *Durgā* illustrates how the “fertile Hindu imagination has dressed up the creative power of God as a female deity.” The result is a degradation of the infinite down to the level of the finite. Instead, he recommends that “our people should discard the *Purāṇic* fables and go back to their primitive scriptures to re-learn the grandeur and glory of God-power, if they are anxious to rise in power and greatness.”<sup>133</sup>

However, as with *Sarasvatī*, he does not so much abandon this position in his later attitude as shift the ground on which one views *Durgā*. From the perspective of *Hindutva*, *Durgā* is not a religious symbol which impugns the majesty of God’s

---

<sup>131</sup> D. Kinsley, 131.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #15, New Series (29 Sept., 1900): 15. In another passage in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 11, Upadhyay mocks how *Śiva* and his wife *Durgā* are “subject to ungovernable lust,” the former being “shamelessly represented in the shape of a *liṅga*.” These passages demonstrate Upadhyay’s early view of Hindu icons as primarily religious depictions which bring the Infinite down to the level of the finite.

power or brings down *nirguṇa* to the level of *saguṇa*, but is merely a cultural symbol which effectively aids in creating social cohesion. The annual *Shivaji* festival became the context with which Upadhyay would illustrate this new perspective.

In 1906, Upadhyay accepted responsibility, on behalf of the nationalistic *Svadeshi* movement, for the organization of the annual *Shivaji* festival. The primary association of the festival was nationalistic and cultural since *Shivaji* had long been associated with helping to drive the Moghuls out of India. One of the booths for which Upadhyay made provisions was a booth “with a large picture of *Shivaji* at the feet of *Durgā*,” the latter also carrying nationalistic significance since *Durgā* represents the Motherland.<sup>134</sup> Thus, the *Shivaji* festival became another clear opportunity for Upadhyay to demonstrate how icons could be utilized in a cultural context. However, the Christians in the Calcutta branch of *Svadeshi* fiercely objected, and Upadhyay refused to change his mind. Upadhyay’s only recorded statement in the discussion was that the icon was “essential if the *Svadeshi* movement was to become popular.”<sup>135</sup> The discussions became so heated that an arbitrator had to be brought in, but, in the end, the picture of *Shivaji* at the feet of *Durgā* as well as several other pictorial representations were permitted at the festival.<sup>136</sup>

In reflecting on both the *Sarasvatī pūjā* as well as the pictorial representation of *Durgā* at the *Shivaji* festival, it seems that both illustrate Upadhyay’s commitment to the “one centredness of Hindu thinking” which rejects a religious or theological

---

<sup>134</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 150.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* In the end, a picture of *Rām Dās* (*Śivāji*’s guru) and the meeting of Krishna and Arjuna also found a place at the festival.

interpretation of *Sarasvatī* and *Durgā* and, instead, views them both within the larger social context of Indian culture. Indeed, by liberating these images from a sectarian religious context Upadhyay was able to utilize them as symbols of Indian nationalism and reinforce the context in which indigenous Christianity, divorced from European cultural forms, could thrive in India.

### 3. Upadhyay's Performance of *Prāyaścitta*

#### a) Meaning of *prāyaścitta*

The third and final application of *Hindutva* to be explored is Upadhyay's performance of *prāyaścitta* in August 1907, only two months before his death.

Broadly considered, *prāyaścitta* means 'penance' and refers to one's restoration to the proper *dharma* and re-admittance to one's place among the 'twice-born.'

According to the *History of Dharmasāstra*, the word is used frequently in Vedic works and appears in two variant forms: *prāyaścitti* and *prāyaścitta*.<sup>137</sup>

Significantly, in some of the passages where the concept is used, "no question of sin arises." The word means "doing something which would get rid of some accidental happening or mishap such as the breaking of an *ukha* (a saucepan for boiling), a cow overturning the milk pot or the sacrificial fire accidentally going out."<sup>138</sup> Following this line of thinking, the word '*citta*' means 'knowledge' and it refers to being publicly restored to the right knowledge about a religious or social observance which has been defiled, without any necessary reference to sin.<sup>139</sup> From this perspective,

---

<sup>137</sup> P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, vol. 4 (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1953): 57.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 57, 58.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

*prāyaścitta* refers more to a social chastisement than to penance, as it is a civil and social restoration to Hindu society which is at issue, not sin.<sup>140</sup>

On the other hand, the term is also associated with “a resolve to undergo *tapas* or ...the firm belief that it will be a means of the removal of sin.”<sup>141</sup> An alternative derivation in support of the same idea suggests that the word ‘*prāyas*’ means ‘sin’ and ‘*citta*’ means purification. Thus, according to this etymology, *prāyaścitta* means ‘purification from sin.’ Yet another teacher insists that the word ‘*citta*’ means ‘mind’ and is a reference to the mind of a sinner which is troubled until it is set free from its emotional state by the assembly of the learned *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>142</sup>

Even among commentators who agree that the word ‘*prāyaścitta*’ refers primarily to the purification of sin, there is disagreement about whether the performance of *prāyaścitta* has the power to “destroy sins intentionally committed” or whether it merely admits someone back into the ‘twice-born’ and enables one to perform the sacrificial rituals without necessarily destroying the consequences of the sinful deeds performed.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 73. Unfortunately, Kane tends to dichotomize the two uses of *prāyaścitta* into a strictly legal or religious context which, according to J. Brockington, obscures the fact that the real dichotomy is not legal and religious, but *cultural* and religious. Furthermore, there must be grave doubts about whether the early compilers of the *Dharmaśāstra* would have fully appreciated the modern distinction between culture and religion, or the idea of a ‘sin’ unrelated to civil and social responsibilities, though by Upadhyay’s time this distinction would have certainly been present. Thus, the key to understanding how it was understood by Upadhyay relies not so much on a proper exegesis of the *Dharmaśāstra* than how it was later understood and interpreted. Nevertheless, Kane tends to view what is probably a social means to make amends in the more harsher terms of “legal punishment.” For our purposes, the important point is that there are two very different traditions regarding the proper interpretation of *prāyaścitta*, though the boundary lines between these traditions are not always clear.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. A commentator, Angiras, taught that the term ‘*prāyas*’ meant ‘*tapas*,’ and ‘*citta*’ meant ‘resolve’ or ‘firm belief,’ which explains the definition.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 62. Manu and Chāgaleya, for example, both make a clear distinction between sins committed unintentionally and intentionally, but affirm that various *prāyaścittas* may be performed to destroy the sins of both types. However, “Yaj., it seems, implies that the results of sin intentionally committed are not got rid of.” See, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 63. Others make the distinction

Apparently this debate about the exact meaning and purpose of *prāyaścitta* continued right into the 19<sup>th</sup> century because many of the same issues discussed in the *Manusmṛti* and the other *Dharmaśāstras* continue to be debated. As the Bengali Renaissance brought about many new intellectual and cultural ties with the West, it also renewed concerns about the appropriateness of requiring *prāyaścitta* for Indians who, for example, ate with Europeans or crossed the ocean. For example, in a letter to the editor which appeared in *Sophia Weekly*, a reader describes how the Brahmins had condemned Mr. N. N. Ghose “to the humiliation of the disgusting *prāyaścitta* for the crime of crossing the *kāla pāni* (ocean).” The reader denounced the Brahmins as hindering social reform by continuing to inflict such “absurd restrictions and intolerable penalties.”<sup>144</sup> Upadhyay did not respond to this letter, but almost a year later (June 1901) Upadhyay told Animananda that “we must make *prāyaścitta* [and] eat a little cow-dung.”<sup>145</sup> Two months later, apparently as a result of conflicting understandings of the ceremony among his Christian friends, Upadhyay devotes an article in *The Twentieth Century* to *prāyaścitta*. In the article, Upadhyay defines *prāyaścitta* as “social penance” in order to “impose upon guilty persons certain social chastisements.” Clearly, Upadhyay is viewing the ceremony from a social, not a religious perspective. Indeed, he goes on to say that “society cannot arrogate to itself the power of removing moral defilements, but it has every right to punish social violations.”<sup>146</sup> If, for example, a Hindu “enters into a social alliance with aliens” which threatens to “injure the integrity of his race, society has every right to impose

---

between sins which cause one to lose caste and sins which do not, 65. See also, *Manusmṛti* chapter eleven which is devoted to laws concerning *prāyaścitta*, especially, 11:54, 153, 181 and 190.

<sup>144</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900): 8.

<sup>145</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 159.

<sup>146</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #8 (Aug., 1901); *The Blade*, 160.

corrective chastisements on such a truant.”<sup>147</sup> From Upadhyay’s perspective, *prāyaścitta* is a useful social tool to prevent “foreign intrusions into Hindu society” and it is not related to “*internal* purification” but to the performance of an *external*, “humiliating act prescribed by the injured society... as an act of public confession of sorrow for the...breaking of social integrity.”<sup>148</sup> It is in this context that we shall now examine Upadhyay’s performance of *prāyaścitta* in 1907.

### **b) Upadhyay’s 1907 *prāyaścitta***

After Upadhyay’s return from Europe, he again began to raise the possibility of performing *prāyaścitta*. He choose a Brahmin Catholic boy and sought, without success, to get him to “perform the expiatory rite without abandoning his faith and be a member of the Hindu *Samāj*.”<sup>149</sup> Upadhyay increasingly interpreted *prāyaścitta* not only along social lines in general, but also with a distinctive nationalistic emphasis, as has been demonstrated with his re-evaluation of the role of Hindu icons. He participated, for example, in the formation of *Svadeshi ashrams* in which Bengalis might “observe our *Svarāj* policy...and make *prāyaścitta* for the impurity caused by mixing with Europeans.”<sup>150</sup>

In August 1907, Upadhyay traveled to Bhatpara and performed *prāyaścitta* under the guidance of Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna.<sup>151</sup> Many of his friends understood this as a sign of his apostatizing from Christianity and returning to the Hindu fold, even though there was another ritual used in the 19th century to signify

---

<sup>147</sup> *The Blade*, 160.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 161, emphasis mine.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 161, 162.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*; B. Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Story of His Life*, pt. 1, 48. The tribute in *The Jote* says that the reason Upadhyay finally submitted to *prāyaścitta* was that he realized that he was going to stand trial. He wanted to do so as a Brahmin in full standing with the Brahmin community in Bengal. See, *The Jote*, 13.

one's return to Hinduism from Islam or Christianity known as *śuddhi*.<sup>152</sup> However, after Upadhyay's death, Animananda visited the Pandit's home where the penance had been performed and asked why, in his view, Upadhyay had done so.<sup>153</sup> He responded that "Upadhyay made *prāyaścitta* because he had taken food with the *Mlecchas*." He went on to explain that "if one took food more than forty-eight times with the *Mlecchas*, he would be guilty of violating the *Samāj Dharma*."<sup>154</sup> When asked about the various interpretations of *prāyaścitta* the pandit explained that there were two authorities in interpreting the rite, Raghunandan and Mitākṣara. The former held the view that "*prāyaścitta* absolved sin while giving no right to be re-admitted as a member of the Hindu *Samāj*." The latter held the view that "one's sins are not absolved by undergoing the ceremony, but that he may be admitted as a member of the Hindu *Samāj*."<sup>155</sup> These two views represent, as noted above, long-standing, historic differences in interpreting the rite. The pandit insisted that Upadhyay performed *prāyaścitta* according to Mitākṣara, indicating that he viewed it as an external, social rite, not an internal, religious act, which is consistent with Upadhyay's own earlier writings on the subject. He went on to relate how Upadhyay had visited him even before he went to Britain to inquire "whether he could undergo

---

<sup>152</sup> The *Ārya Samāj*, of which Upadhyay was well acquainted, frequently used the *śuddhi* ritual to reclaim converts to Islam and Christianity. See, chapter seven of *The Ārya Samāj* entitled, *Śuddhi Work of the Ārya Samāj* as found in S. K. Bhatia, ed., *The Ārya Samāj* (Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1991). In more modern times, the concept of *śuddhi* is sometimes used to refer to the purification of Hinduism itself and can carry both religious and social connotations. For a fuller treatment of this see, J. F. Seunarine, *Reconversion to Hinduism through Śuddhi* (Bangalore: CISRS and Madras: CLS, 1977).

<sup>153</sup> Animananda, by this time, was sympathetic to Upadhyay's views and was, in fact, seeking to respond to criticism by Jesuits such as Vāth that Upadhyay had renounced his faith. This interview takes place nearly twenty years after the fact and cannot be corroborated.

<sup>154</sup> *The Blade*, 163.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 163, 164. Animananda interviewed the pundit's son on 19 July, 1925 and the Pandit himself on 3 Sept., 1925, eighteen years after the event. The interview was prompted by an article Animananda had written in 1922 on the life of Upadhyay which alluded to his performance of

*prāyaścitta* though retaining faith in Christ, for his contention was that so many religious sects flourish in India which are quite antagonistic to one another yet all these sectarians are recognized as Hindus.” The Pandit replied that he could do so, since his violations were social as in “putting off the sacred thread, non-performance of *Sandhyā* and mixing and dining with the Mlecchas.”<sup>156</sup> Some years later, Upadhyay made the necessary arrangements and underwent what was, in his view, the social chastisement of *prāyaścitta*, allowing him to be re-admitted into Hindu society, but not absolving him of any sins, nor forcing him to renounce his faith.<sup>157</sup> It is difficult to be certain how Upadhyay may have understood the relationship between his continuation in Christian *faith* and his membership in the Catholic *church*, which had so ardently opposed him since June 1898. Though the evidence indicates that Upadhyay did not renounce his faith, he would have certainly been aware that his performance of *prāyaścitta* would be interpreted, at the very least, as his formal separation from the Catholic church. However, as Upadhyay died only two months after he performed the ritual, there is no evidence that he attached any greater significance to his act than that of social purification.

Upadhyay’s performance of *prāyaścitta* is an important application of his understanding of Hinduism as rooted in *Samāj Dharma*, not *Sādhan Dharma*, i.e. in social obligations, not doctrinal beliefs. This act, which was one of the last of his

---

*prāyaścitta* as merely a social penance. This created a “storm of indignation” among Indians who held it to be a religious, not a social act. Animananda decided to do further research on the matter.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 165. Upadhyay had cast off the sacred thread when he declared himself a *sannyāsin*. However, the pandit said that this had been done arbitrarily. He needed to be re-admitted into the *Dharma Samāj* as a Brahmin and then become a *sannyāsin* according to the appropriate rites.

<sup>157</sup> In addition to the testimony of Animananda, the tribute in *The Jote* which appeared in 1946 states that “*Prāyaścitta* was performed not because he wanted to desert Christianity and return to Hinduism, but for his having violated caste-rules,” *The Jote*, 14. See also, Turmes, *A Teacher of Genius*, 48-53.

life, strikingly declared that religious adherence should not violate one's continued participation in one's own culture. His performance of *prāyaścitta* symbolically returned him, full circle, to his beloved *Hindutva* without his ever having left his Catholic faith. Indeed, despite all of his earlier statements in writing, it is with this deed that Upadhyay, the Bengali journalist, truly becomes a Hindu-Catholic.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This chapter has examined how Brahmabandhav Upadhyay gradually came to recognize that his own conception of the term 'Hindu' had been shaped largely by a European definition of religion. From this vantage point, Hinduism and Christianity were opponents representing two different views of reality. Eventually, Upadhyay came to view Hinduism not as a religion *per se*, but as primarily a social and cultural reality driven by a certain way of thinking or perspective which he termed "one-centredness." From this vantage point, Hinduism was not an opponent of Christianity but, indeed, the very context in which an indigenous Christianity must be constructed.

Christianity in India must, in his view, be understood, believed and practiced from the perspective of *Hindutva*; otherwise, it will always remain a foreign religion unnecessarily united with European cultural forms which remain inimical to Indians. This chapter demonstrated how this new insight was applied by Upadhyay. In particular, three areas were examined: First, the way his understanding of *dharma* as a social and vocational, rather than a religious reality led him to affirm an idealized form of the *varṇāśramadharmā*; second, his dramatic re-assessment of the role of icons in Indian society, especially national figures such as Krishna, *Sarasvatī* and *Durgā* which were viewed in a natural, social or nationalistic context, but not in a

supernatural one; finally, his performance of *prāyaścitta* which provided dramatic and public testimony of his conviction that adherence to Hindu *dharma* was in no ultimate conflict with his continued commitment to Christian faith.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The Theological Legacy of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay**

#### **A. Introduction**

It has been the presupposition of this work that it is the legitimate right of Christians in every culture to do their own theologizing within the context of their own, sometimes unique, questions which emerge in their own part of the world. Nineteenth century India produced several important theological pioneers who intentionally sought to explore an Indian, Christian theology, i.e. a theology which would be Indian in its thought forms, theological terminology and general sensitivity to the Indian experience. Of these early theologians, the work of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay has been largely neglected, primarily because of the inaccessibility of the primary source materials. This dissertation has sought to undertake a thorough examination of all of the theological writings of Upadhyay in the hope that his theological legacy may become more widely appreciated and benefited from in the modern context.

Chapters four through six of this dissertation have demonstrated how Upadhyay interacted with indigenous Indian religious, philosophical and cultural traditions and, in the process, left behind an important theological legacy which continues to shed light on issues which are still relevant today. It is the purpose of this concluding chapter to explore this legacy. The use of the word 'legacy' implies more than merely an attempt to establish Upadhyay's historical place among Indian Christian theologians of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It implies that he has produced a body of work which continues to address perennial and contemporary issues which could

not only benefit the ongoing theological work among Indian theologians, but also contribute to wider theological discussions as well.

This chapter will be divided into three parts: First, an examination of seven key areas where Upadhyay's writings provide significant contribution; second, suggestions for further research; and finally, a brief analysis of Upadhyay's overall place in the history of Indian Christian theology.

## **B. Seven Key Theological Contributions of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay**

### **1. Role of Natural Theology in the Non-Christian Context**

The western impact on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century India brought about an unprecedented surge of rational inquiry by Indians. Beginning with Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the *Brāhmo Samāj*, and flowering under his immediate successors, Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, there was an increased emphasis on seeking a source of authority beyond an established text, such as the Vedas. The *Samāj* officially rejected the doctrine of Vedic infallibility in 1850 and began to explore universal truths known through "intuitive knowledge" and "nature."<sup>1</sup> As a student of Sen and a member of the *Samāj* from 1881 through 1890, Upadhyay was undoubtedly influenced in his own growing appreciation for universally apprehensible truths. Nevertheless, while acknowledging his indebtedness to these early figures, Upadhyay is the first Indian Christian to utilize natural theology as a foundation for constructing Christianity in India.

Upadhyay's belief in universal, primitive theism, attainable through human reason is a hallmark of his early theologizing between 1893 and 1898. His writings

---

<sup>1</sup> A. Rambachan, "The Nature and Authority of Scripture: Implications for Hindu-Christian Dialogue," *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 8 (1995): 21. D. Killingley points out that Ram Mohan Roy often saw continuity between Vedic teaching and universal, rational religion. Nevertheless, Roy seems increasingly to rely upon reason to confirm anything which may be taught in the Vedas. See, D. H. Killingley, "Rammohun Roy of the Vedānta Sūtras," *Religion*, vol. 11 (1981): 151, 152.

on this theme provided an important contribution to the early dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism since Upadhyay believed that all religions, at their root, contained universal dimensions. He viewed the Vedas, including the Upanishads, as important manifestations of the *cognitio insita* (implanted knowledge) and, therefore, provided a testimony which must be taken seriously.<sup>2</sup> Chapter four demonstrated, for example, how he taught that the Veda testified to the *cognitio insita* through its early belief in monotheism. Upadhyay was also the first theologian to advance the classical cosmological argument, particularly as highlighted in Aquinas' five proofs, and relate it to the famous Vedāntic definition of Brahman as 'sat' 'cit' and 'ānanda.' For Upadhyay, 'sat' is the infinite, absolute being who is worshipped as the First Cause, 'cit' is the intelligence which alone allows Infinite Being to think and reflect upon that which was non-existent, and 'ānanda' signifies the divine freedom whereby the First Cause created out of blissful freedom, not necessity. These insights from the Vedas and Upanishads demonstrate how Upadhyay felt free to find confirmation of universal truths through the Hindu sacred writings. Thus, his work stands as an early, indigenous alternative to the confrontational attitude regarding religious Hinduism and its scriptures which pervaded much of the writings of 19<sup>th</sup> century missionaries.

Upadhyay's views regarding natural theology as it applied to Hindu sacred texts also highlight another aspect of his contribution regarding natural theology in the Indian context. Upadhyay's ectypal theology of revelation (*theologia ectypa*)

---

<sup>2</sup> This "implanted knowledge" is closer to the Hindu view of *śruti* which apprehends the *sanātana dharma* and then records it historically, than the concept of revelation being communicated immediately *via* a Prophet or seer.

rejected the kind of radical distinction between *revelatio generalis* and *revelatio specialis* which was so common, especially among 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestants. Instead, he viewed both forms of revelation as genuine revelation and, ultimately, never contradictory. Thus, Upadhyay helped to lay the foundation for the later discussion concerning whether or not the Hindu scriptures could take the place of the Old Testament in its propaedeutic function for Christian revelation.<sup>3</sup> Upadhyay's writings consistently demonstrate that because the promulgators of the Vedas were endowed with *cognitio insita* it is entirely appropriate for Hindu sacred texts to serve in this capacity. Therefore, he has contributed significantly to how natural theology applies to the Indian context and the implications this has for one's view of revelation in the non-Christian context.

## 2. Adaptation and Use of Vedāntic Language

A second area where Upadhyay has made a valuable contribution is in his pioneering challenge to the idea that the language of western creeds and other theological formulations is fixed.<sup>4</sup> Upadhyay's writings demonstrate that even well established creeds like Chalcedon or theological systems such as Thomism need to be re-stated using the indigenous vocabulary of Indian, not western, philosophy. In the process, much of the new language adapted by Upadhyay brings out new insights

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, this issue raised by S. Arulsamy in "Can the Hindu Scriptures Take the Place of the Old Testament?" *Indian Theological Studies* vol. 21, #3,4 (Sept. - Dec., 1984): 309-321 and by A. Sharma in "Can the Tanak, the Bible and the Qur'an be Regarded as *Śruti*?" *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 28, #1 (Jan.-Mar., 1979): 33-39.

<sup>4</sup> This attitude was prevalent in both Protestant and Catholic circles. J. Saldanha, S.J. points out that the reason the Catholic Church insisted on Latin as the medium of instruction prior to Vatican II was because "the mere use of terminology taken from Eastern philosophies was suspect because it was held to conceal pantheistic tendencies, whereas it was felt that the Christian revelation was more securely preserved in the Latin language." This helps to further illustrate the significance of Upadhyay's use of non-Latin vocabulary as well as one of the key reasons the ecclesiastical authorities opposed him. See, J. Saldanha, "Theological Inculturation as a Missiological Problem," *Indian Theological Studies*, March, 1977.

which might otherwise remain obscured if the Christian truths were only to be allowed to be expressed in a fixed manner which was alien to Indian philosophical and metaphysical traditions. His significance is underestimated if one sees Upadhyay as only seeking to adapt or synthesize western language into the Indian context. On the contrary, he sought to establish a whole new philosophical base from which a truly Indian, Christian theology might be articulated.

After an initial attempt to construct theology on the foundation of human reason and the Vedic tradition, Upadhyay, after his return to Calcutta in 1898, began over the next five years to systematically re-state Christian theology using as his foundation Śaṅkara's *advaita* Vedāntism. Indeed, he believed that Śaṅkara's philosophy actually provided a base superior to that which Aquinas found in Aristotle. To use the words of J. G. Arapura in his article, "The Use of Indian Philosophical Traditions in Christian Thought," Upadhyay regarded Indian philosophy not "as a ladder to be kicked off, but something continually operative within Christian thought."<sup>5</sup> The fruits of Upadhyay's work in this regard are both original and insightful. Three specific examples will help to underscore this point. First, he re-stated the Thomistic distinction between what is *necessary* or *contingent* to God's nature, using the language of the Vedantic distinction between *paramārthika* and *vyāvahārika*. Second, Upadhyay moved far beyond his mentor, Keshab Chandra Sen, in his Trinitarian formulation, using the classical Hindu language of *saccidānanda*.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, his '*Canticle to the Trinity*' is widely regarded

---

<sup>5</sup> J. G. Arapura, "The Use of Indian Philosophical Traditions in Christian Thought," *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 29, #2 (April-June, 1980): 72.

<sup>6</sup> One example of a more recent acknowledgment of the important contribution the Vedāntic doctrine of *saccidānanda* has played in the formulation of Christian Trinitarianism may be found in F. Whaling's contribution to *Christianity and the Religions of the East* edited by Richard Rousseau,

as one of his most unique and insightful contributions and has taken its place as one of the most important Christian hymns ever composed in Sanskrit. Finally, his use of Vedāntic terminology to re-state *logos* theology using the concept of *ikṣaṇa* (thought) and maintaining the mystery of the incarnation as the God-man through the Vedāntic explanation of the five sheaths of human nature, is quite original. These three examples, aspects of which will be further highlighted in other portions of this chapter, are given here to illustrate Upadhyay's innovative use of Vedāntic language to re-state Christian theology and, in the process, provide a new, more indigenous, philosophical base for Indian Christianity.

### 3. The Nature of God's Existence

If Upadhyay's first contribution was found, in part, in his use of Aquinas' arguments on behalf of the cosmological argument for God's existence, his third contribution may, indeed, be found in the later limitations he placed on such arguments. In Upadhyay's post-1898 theology, one begins to sense his reluctance to follow the lead of western theological formulations which sought to establish God's existence through the lens of creation. In Upadhyay's view, this reinforced the relatedness of God as Creator with the creation itself, making it more difficult to get beyond creation and a Creator God (*saguṇa* Brahman) and capture a glimpse of the Absolute who is *asaṅga* or, in the language of Vedānta, *nirguṇa* Brahman. Upadhyay's theology increasingly emphasized that the language of Śaṅkara's *advaitism* may help Christian theology articulate the important point that God is ontologically distinct from the world.

---

(Scranton, PA: Ridge, 1982): 43-51. Professor Whaling's chapter is entitled, "The Trinity and the Structure of Religious Life: An Indian Contribution to Wider Christian Theology." See also, P. May "The Trinity and *Saccidānanda*," *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 7, #3 (July-Sept., 1958).

Vedāntic and Christian theology both affirm that in the beginning there was, to use the language of the Upanishads, only “one without a second” (*ekam evādvitīyam, Chāndogya 6.2.1*). Both theologies share the same metaphysical position that “there could not conceivably be a contingent object which exhibits temporal extension in the absence of God’s (*Brahman’s*) conserving power.”<sup>7</sup> However, western theologies went on to focus on creation and God’s causation of the multi-faceted world and our relations with one another and with God. Western theologies were anxious to avoid the extreme consequences of absolute transcendence as exhibited, for example, in a deistic god who created the world the way a clockmaker makes a clock. The result was an emphasis, to continue the analogy, that “the clock will not tick unless its creator is constantly present in every aspect of it, constantly ‘winding it up’ as it were.”<sup>8</sup> This view unwittingly places God within the creation giving both equal ontological status.<sup>9</sup> Even the parental model whereby God is viewed as Father and we as His children, belies the ontological distinction between God and creation since a parent and child do share the same ontological status. As Richard King points out, “After a child’s birth it no longer requires the *fact* of its parent’s existence to be an ontological entity.”<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Robert Oakes, as quoted in R. King, “Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in *Advaita Vedānta*,” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 12 (Aut., 1991): 111. Upadhyay’s firm belief that this is a shared starting point between the two theologies helps to explain his fierce attacks against the *Ārya Samāj* who maintained the eternity of matter, thus reducing God to what Upadhyay called a “potter.”

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Upadhyay once criticized the western theology of God as being overly influenced by empiricism such that the resulting theology has “mingled the life of God with nature and confined the Infinite within the bounds of cosmic relations.” See, *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1901): 36. In this article Upadhyay is writing under the *nom-de-plume*, *Narahari Dās*.

<sup>10</sup> R. King, “Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in *Advaita Vedānta*,” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 12 (Aut., 1991): 112.

Upadhyay believed that the *nirguṇa-saguṇa* distinction within *advaitism* helps to keep the transcendence and immanence of God in proper perspective. Of course, the criticism is that if western theologies have erred by failing to maintain a clear view of God's transcendence, Vedāntic theologies have erred by emphasizing it so much that God is regarded as wholly impersonal and the world's very existence is questioned. However, once Upadhyay placed the insights of *advaita* within a Christian theological context, Brahman is no longer impersonal and unknowable. Brahman is the Trinitarian '*saccidānanda*' which, in Upadhyay's view, separates Brahman from the cold, abstract 'God of the philosophers.' The creation of the world is a positive outflow of that bliss (*ānanda*) and, according to Upadhyay, allows the worshipper to become a "recipient of Divine grace and joy."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, V. P. Thomas affirms this contribution when he writes that, "Upadhyay, in using the Indian concept of *saccidānanda*, preserved the unity of God and raised it to the highest level of that which is absolutely personal."<sup>12</sup> Bringing the insights of the two systems together actually served to achieve the appropriate balance by correcting potential distortions and misunderstandings of both systems.<sup>13</sup>

The significance of Upadhyay's theological contribution in this area has also been underscored by R. G. Panikkar in "The Brahman of the Upanishads and the God of the Philosophers." Panikkar points to the "creative tension" between Brahman

<sup>11</sup> *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #1 (31 Jan., 1901): 10.

<sup>12</sup> V. P. Thomas, "The Indian Christian Theology and Its Identity," *Religion and Society*, vol. 25, #3 (Sept., 1978): 31.

<sup>13</sup> In the last few years, several scholars have begun to point out that post-Śaṅkaran *advaitism* as well as the western understanding of the same has, in fact, too rigidly separated *parabrahman* from *Īśvara*, *nirguṇa* from *saguṇa*. See, for example, Bradley Malkovsky, "The Personhood of Śaṅkara's Para Brahman," *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 77, #4 (Oct., 1997): 541-562. See also, Arvind Sharma, "A Note on the Doctrine of 'Grace' in the Upanishads," *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 27, #1 (Jan.-Mar., 1978): 28-31 and S. Mookerjee, "God and the Absolute in the Philosophy of Radhakrishnan," *Religion and Society*, vol. 7, #2 (Sept., 1960): 20-29.

who “stands at the end of a philosophical-theological speculation, ...at the limit of the intellect,”<sup>14</sup> and “God, on the other hand, who stands at the end, at the goal of human worship.”<sup>15</sup> Within the Hindu tradition, argues Panikkar, this tension is expressed in the two goals exemplified by *jñāna mārṅa* (way of knowledge) and *bhakti mārṅa* (way of devotion). Within the Scholastic tradition, continues Panikkar, the tension is found in the distinction between God as “*ens commune*, i.e. the mere essential quiddity of all beings, the universal substructure and the only condition of everything,” and God as “the *ens reale*, i.e. the concrete and living God, the real source of beings and the absolute reality which is not only *in* everything, but also *above* everything.”<sup>16</sup> Upadhyay’s theology regularly addresses this tension, always seeking the synthesis between *jñāna* and *bhakti*, *ens commune* and *ens reale*. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the height of Upadhyay’s theological reflection on the Trinity as *saccidānanda*, he produces his landmark Sanskrit hymn of worship to the Trinity using the language and thought-forms of *advaitism*. For Upadhyay, Brahman of the Vedāntists and the God of the Christians refers to the same reality, but are merely pointing to it from different, almost opposite, angles.

#### 4. Ontological Status of the World: Creation ‘*ex māyā*’ not ‘*ex nihilo*’

A fourth area in which Upadhyay’s writings deserve special attention is his alternative elucidation of what, in Christian theology, is known as creation *ex nihilo*. Upadhyay’s thought emerges out of his theological interaction with one of the major quests of the Upanishadic sages; namely, their desire to understand the relation

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.1 where it states as follows: “Know that as Being, as non-Being, as the supreme object to be desired, as the highest beyond the reach of man’s understanding.” See, S. Radhakrishnan, tr., *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London: Unwin Hyman, Ltd., 1953): 682, 683.

<sup>15</sup> R. G. Panikkar, “The Brahman of the Upaniṣads and the God of the Philosophers,” *Religion and Society*, vol. 7, #2 (Sept., 1960): 13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, 15.

between the One and the Many, the Infinite and the finite. *Advaita*, as explored in chapter five, is widely believed not to have a doctrine of creation, the world and its relations being merely the product of illusion. Upadhyay rejected this as a misunderstanding of Śaṅkara's (not later *advaitins*) understanding of *māyā* and, instead, defined it as 'the power to produce and sustain the world of contingent relations.' The vast difference between *māyā* as 'unreal' and *māyā* as 'contingent' can hardly be overstated. M. M. Thomas, one of the foremost Indian theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, remarks that this understanding of *māyā* as 'contingent' has become popularized in the writings of "Radhakrishnan and other Neo-Śaṅkarites; but it was not so when Upadhyay first propounded it."<sup>17</sup> Upadhyay not only pioneered a re-evaluation of Śaṅkara's understanding of *māyā*, but, in the process, helped to clarify a potential danger in the Christian articulation of creation *ex nihilo*.

In the Christian formulation, God creates 'out of nothing' or, as Richard King colloquially phrases it, "out of thin air."<sup>18</sup> While this view certainly affirms that the creation is completely dependent upon God for its existence, it fails to articulate what, if any, is the relationship between God's Being and the creation which comes from him. Creation *ex nihilo* is, what J. Lipner calls, "a thrusting into being...not the production of an illusion or the mere appearance of something," but the "actualizing of new being...that had not pre-existed or remained hidden qua being before the creative act."<sup>19</sup> What, then, is the relationship between our contingent being and His necessary being within the traditional parameters of the doctrine of creation *ex*

---

<sup>17</sup> M. M. Thomas, "Some Trends in Contemporary Indian Christian Theology," *Religion and Society*, vol. 24, #4 (Dec., 1977): 13.

<sup>18</sup> R. King, "Brahman and the World," 111.

<sup>19</sup> J. Lipner, "The Christian and Vedāntic Theories of Originative Causality: A Study in Transcendence and Immanence," *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 28 (1978): 2.

*nihilo*? Upadhyay's articulation of creation 'out of *māyā*' (*ex māyā*) emphasizes creation as the "abundance" or "overflow of His nature." *Māyā*, then, emphasizes not only the "mysterious divine operation which gives birth to multiplicity," i.e. a divine act, but also the eternal overflow of His nature communicated to us which causes that which should cease to exist (because it is only transient and contingent) to have what Upadhyay calls an "everlasting contingency" whereby the Being of God is eternally communicated to his creation.<sup>20</sup>

Undoubtedly, Christian theological formulation has traditionally united its doctrine of *ex nihilo* to an affirmation of the ongoing sustaining power of God in creation; He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe. Yet,

Even if it is accepted that God keeps us and the world in existence at every moment of our being by a conscious process of actualizing conservation, he yet remains so totally the Other by the transcendence and explosiveness of the creative act that beyond a mere statement of the fact, we find it difficult to conceive of him, within this philosophical setting, as in the words of St. Augustine: *intimior intimo meo* (more close to me than I am to myself).<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, both of the great Vedāntic philosophers, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, affirm what Lipner calls the "entitative immanence" of Brahman in "the whole of the finite order" in a way which is not normally associated with creation *ex nihilo*. Thus, when Upadhyay re-articulates the Christian doctrine of creation using Vedāntic, rather than

---

<sup>20</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #2 (Feb., 1899): 228; Lipner, ed., 215. In other words, Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the universe.

<sup>21</sup> J. Lipner, "The Christian and Vedantic Theories of Originative Causality," 5. Lipner goes on to say that "the language describing creation *ex nihilo* militates against the sort of language Christians use to denote a more intense, existentially continuous immanence of the deity when describing their spiritual life or when reflecting on religious experience," 6. In short, western Christians have often had difficulty understanding what may be meant by the declaration found in 2 Peter 1:4 that we are "partakers of the divine nature."

western, language he has re-focused and advanced the debate on the meaning and implication of the doctrines of *ex nihilo* and *māyā*.

### 5. Use of Śaṅkara's Advaitism as a Philosophical Base for Christianity

The second, third and fourth contributions noted above are all specific examples or fruits of a wider and more comprehensive contribution of Upadhyay; namely, his desire to reconcile Śaṅkara's *advaitism* with Thomism,<sup>22</sup> replacing the Aristotelian philosophical base used by Aquinas in the western context, with Śaṅkara's *advaitism* in the Indian context. Traditionally, as has been noted, Vedānta in general and *advaitism* specifically, has been developed according to the three major themes of the *Vedānta Sūtras*: The nature of Brahman, the relationship of Brahman to the world, and *mokṣa* or the way of release from *saṃsāra*. Upadhyay is the first Indian Christian theologian to attempt a development of each of these Vedāntic themes from a Christian perspective, demonstrating the continuity between Thomistic and *advaitic* thought. Beginning in January 1898, Upadhyay began to re-articulate the Catholic doctrine on this first Vedāntic theme on the nature of God by using the language of *advaitism*. February 1899 marks the beginning of his development of the second major Vedāntic theme with his re-examination of the meaning of the word '*māyā*' and a reconciliation of the two levels of Brahman which is so central to the Upanishads. Finally, beginning in August 1900, Upadhyay starts

---

<sup>22</sup> Upadhyay's knowledge of Thomism was derived from 19<sup>th</sup> century sources such as Faa di Bruno's *Catholic Belief* (already in its fifth edition in Upadhyay's time) and the *Stonyhurst Series*. In fact, he had correspondence with Father J. Rickaby, S. J. about certain philosophical and theological issues and met him when he made his trip to Britain. Upadhyay also corresponded regularly with Father Boedder, S. J. and Father Hegglin, both early supporters of Upadhyay's work. Father Hegglin, a Swiss Jesuit, collaborated with some of Upadhyay's early journalistic work in Sindh. From 1895-1912, Hegglin taught Sanskrit at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta. He opposed Upadhyay's understanding of *māyā* in articles he submitted to the *Bombay Catholic Examiner* in 1900 and in 1903. Upadhyay published one of these articles in his own journal and responded to it. See, *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #15 (29 Sept., 1900): 7, 8.

his re-examination of the third and final theme of *mokṣa*, arguing that the doctrine of ‘*tat tvam asi*’ refers to a primary relatedness (*mukhya sāmānādhikāraṇya*), not a “secondary relatedness” (*bādha sāmānādhikāraṇya*), and is, therefore, consistent with the Catholic doctrine of the beatific vision and final union with the Absolute. However, after Upadhyay’s re-orientation toward Vedāntic theology, he never again addresses the doctrine of transmigration and he continues to maintain a negative assessment of the doctrine of *karma*. His wholehearted acceptance of Śaṅkara’s view of Brahman and Brahman’s relationship with the world is in marked contrast to his reluctance to fully integrate the *advaitic* doctrines of transmigration and *karma*. It is unclear whether the ban on Upadhyay’s theological writings prevented him the sufficient time and opportunity to develop his views on these two important doctrines, or whether Upadhyay was simply unprepared to accept an *advaitic* explanation of soteriology, at least not to the degree he permitted in the first two Vedāntic themes. It is quite possible that Upadhyay’s deeply Christo-centric piety could not accept *advaitic* views regarding transmigration and *karma* which, in his view, might rob Christianity of its distinctiveness.

Nevertheless, scholars are in widespread agreement that Upadhyay’s most important legacy is his attempt to enter into a positive dialogue with the *advaitic* philosophical system. Indeed, Dr. T. Jacob Thomas says that “Upadhyay’s originality must be perceived not in his re-interpretation of *Advaita*, but in the non-reinterpretative use of the *Advaita* Vedānta as a basis for Indian theology.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, we find in Upadhyay not merely a re-statement of Christian theology using

---

<sup>23</sup> T. Jacob Thomas, “Book Review of *The Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay*,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 35, #2 (1993): 88.

the language of Vedānta, but rather a commitment to allow *advaitism* to explain the mystery of God and his relationship with the world in its own right, even if drawing limits in the area of soteriology. Upadhyay himself wrote that “the Vedānta has been seriously misunderstood. Strange doctrines have been foisted upon it by European *savants* and their Europeanised Indian followers who interpret the Vedānta philosophy in a way which is neither primitive nor traditional.”<sup>24</sup> When properly understood, writes J. Lipner, “Upadhyay was arguing not that *advaitic* insights were the most appropriate cultural base for Hindus to appreciate the validity of Catholic doctrine while Thomism performed a similar function for the west, but that *advaita* offered *per se* the best approach to supernatural verities.”<sup>25</sup> As noted earlier, he believed that a proper understanding of *saccidānanda* and *māyā* provided “the best philosophical underpinning available for articulating the Christian doctrines of creation and Trinity.”<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to know if, given the time, he may have been prepared to integrate the doctrines of transmigration and *karma* into his soteriology in a way which would have preserved the uniqueness of Christianity and yet remained faithful to the Vedānta. It is certainly safe to say that if he thought such a correlation was possible, Upadhyay would most likely have embraced it since his goal was to demonstrate that Christianity could be viewed, in the context of India, as an *āstika* (orthodox) philosophy.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, #13 (8 Sept., 1900); Lipner, ed., 32. Later, in *The Twentieth Century* he specifically criticizes M. Thibaut’s translation and notes of the *Vedānta Sūtras* which appeared in *The Sacred Books of the East*. He claims that Thibaut viewed the *Vedānta* “through colored glasses... and seems to be indoctrinated with a certain kind of European philosophy which is fundamentally opposed to Vedāntic Theism.” His reference seems to be to the influence of empiricism which, in Upadhyay’s view, has created a “bias” and a “distortion” in the way Thibaut understood and explained Śaṅkara’s *advaitism* in the West. See, *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, #2 (Feb., 1901): 36.

<sup>25</sup> J. Lipner., ed. *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, vol. 1 (Bangalore: UTC, 1991): xxxviii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

On several occasions, Upadhyay notes how Aquinas adopted the Aristotelian system in order to make it “a rational basis for the mysterious edifice of the Christian religion,” but that Aquinas adopted it “*minus its errors*.”<sup>27</sup> The fact that Aquinas found errors in Aristotle does not diminish his use of Aristotle since Aquinas was first and foremost a Christian theologian. Likewise, Upadhyay wrote that “the assimilation of the Vedāntic philosophy by the Church should not be opposed on the ground of its containing certain errors. Were not Plato and Aristotle also guilty of monumental errors?”<sup>28</sup> There is certainly evidence to support that Upadhyay believed the doctrine of *karma* to be one of these errors. However, it is unclear whether his rejection of such a doctrine automatically means that Christianity can never be considered *āstika*. Furthermore, the fact that Upadhyay may have viewed certain doctrines of Śaṅkara as being in error, does not seriously diminish his overall contribution, nor his general belief that Śaṅkara’s philosophy “soars higher than her western sister.”<sup>29</sup>

### **6. Balance between Universality and Particularity in the Indian Context**

The sixth contribution of Upadhyay relates to the insights his life and writings provide regarding the contextualization of the Christian message, especially as it pertains to India, but with application to a much wider audience. The term contextualization, though relatively modern, refers to the ongoing need to strike the proper balance between the universality of the gospel message and how it is

---

<sup>27</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 8; Lipner, ed., 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #8 (Aug., 1898): 124.

<sup>29</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #7 (July, 1897): 8, 9; Lipner, ed., 17, 18. Indeed, many others followed his lead and developed “neo-Vedāntic Christologies” which sought to deal more extensively with the area of soteriology. For a survey of such figures, see, K. P. Aleaz, “The Gospel in the Advaitic Culture of India: The Case of Neo-Vedāntic Christologies,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 35, #2 (1993): 10-19 and Aleaz’s book *An Indian Jesus from Śaṅkara’s Thought* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996).

explained, understood and applied within the particularity of a given culture. Indeed, the very proper adjectives *Indian* and *Christian*, when used to describe an Indian Christian Theology, imply “that there are theologies which are not Christian, and that theologizing also takes place in other, i.e. non-Indian, religio-cultural and socio-political contexts.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, proper contextualization must guard against two dangers: On the one hand, an insensitivity to culture by adhering to a particular formulation of theology which is thought to have universal validity; on the other hand, a disregard for the universal aspects of the Christian message without which the message ceases to be fully Christian. The problem, of course, is that there is widespread disagreement as to what constitutes the *kerygma* of the Christian message as well as how (and by whom) it may be indigenized into a particular culture. A conservative view, with a wide range of variations, links Christian theology with an *a priori* set of Christian beliefs that is regarded as non-negotiable since these beliefs have been given to the Christian Church through divine revelation as contained in the Scriptures and expressed historically in widely accepted creedal formulations and Christian tradition. A liberal view, with an equally wide range of variations, regards the Christian commitment as essentially to truth or, perhaps, to the expression of human faith, and insists that this truth, or faith, cannot be held to exist *a priori* or exclusively in the Christian tradition.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the locus of universality may be for some the universal recognition of the Christian Church, whereas for others it may be found in some universal expressions of truth or faith which give it perennial validity.

---

<sup>30</sup> O. V. Jathanna, “Indian Christian Theology: Methodological Reflections,” *Bangalore Theological Forum*, vol. 18, #2,3 (April-Sept., 1986): 71.

<sup>31</sup> R. Panikkar, “Indian Theology: A Theological Mutation,” *Theologizing in India*, (Bangalore: CBCI, 1981): 25.

These differences have contributed to wide disagreements about the nature, necessity, extent and even the validity of contextualization.

Upadhyay, throughout all of his Christian theologizing, remains committed to his belief in what he calls a “fixed deposit” of revelation which, for him, is embodied in the Catholic church which he regularly refers to as the “custodian of revelation.”<sup>32</sup> His understanding of contextualization would be to maintain a vigorous commitment to Catholic dogma as well as to Indian culture. In his defense of his writings after the ecclesiastical ban, Upadhyay published an open letter in the *Bombay Catholic Examiner* in 1901 in which he makes reference twice to his desire to present Catholic doctrines in a Hindu or Indian garb.<sup>33</sup> Contextualization, for Upadhyay, meant a life long desire to, in his words, “behold the beauty of the Catholic faith set off with oriental vestments.”<sup>34</sup> In his writings prior to 1898, Upadhyay’s theology emphasizes his defense of the ‘Catholic doctrine/dogma’ side of the equation. In his writings after 1898 and perhaps even more dramatically after 1903, he emphasizes the ‘Indian culture’ side of the equation. Nevertheless, he remained committed to both throughout his life.

Upadhyay’s contribution in the area of contextualization has been cited as consistent with the 17<sup>th</sup> century Madurai tradition pioneered by Roberto de Nobili, the famous Italian Jesuit who wore the saffron robe, claimed to be a Brahmin, refused

---

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, #2 (Feb., 1896): 6 and *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #8 (Aug., 1897): 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Bombay Catholic Examiner*, 17 Aug., 1901. The original, handwritten letter of Upadhyay may be found in Goethal library archives, St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta. It has been reprinted in *The Blade*, 105-107. Ironically, in Mgr. Zaleski’s opposition to Upadhyay’s writings, he specifically quotes a similar statement made by Upadhyay in *Sophia Weekly* (8 Sept., 1900). Upadhyay, referring to the purpose of the new weekly *Sophia* says that, “It will supply a new garb to the religion of Christ without affecting in the least the essential Christian tenets.” Zaleski’s opposition to Upadhyay finally came down to differing ideas as to the extent of contextualization which the church could embrace.

<sup>34</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, #1 (Jan., 1899): 193.

to criticize the caste system and, in general, sought to accommodate the Christian message with Indian culture.<sup>35</sup> While there are certain obvious comparisons, it seems that there is a fundamental difference between the two in their attitude towards Hinduism. De Nobili contextualized or “accommodated” the gospel to India with an eye to the displacement of the Hindu religion in a way which was much closer to Alexander Duff than to Upadhyay. De Nobili, like Duff, had a positive attitude toward Hinduism as a missiological technique, but his ‘technique’ was clearly designed to sow the seeds of its ultimate destruction. While this attitude may have been present in Upadhyay’s earlier writings, his mature theology, in contrast, fought vigorously for the necessary maintenance of Hinduism as a cultural expression of *Hindutva* if Christianity was to thrive when planted in Indian soil. For Upadhyay, contextualization was not a missionary ‘technique,’ but an on-going, living expression of Christianity in the Indian context.

### **7. The Relationship between Religion and Culture**

The final area where Upadhyay has left a lasting legacy is in his understanding of the relationship between Christianity and culture and how each, in turn, relates to Hinduism. Upadhyay’s knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century neo-Thomism, as understood in the documents of Vatican I (1869-70) and Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), gave him the theological basis for applying the natural -

---

<sup>35</sup> Robin Boyd, for example, in reference to Upadhyay’s writings, comments as follows: “Here we see the ideal of de Nobili asserting itself once more, and Upadhyay was conscious of the Madurai tradition.” See. R. Boyd, *Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1994): 64. See also, K. Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (Bangalore: CISRS and Madras: CLS, 1969): 29 and S. Arokiasamy, *Dharma, Hindu and Christian, according to Roberto de Nobili* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia, 1986). Upadhyay himself makes two references, both positive, to de Nobili in *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #3 (Mar., 1898): 44 and in a letter to the *Bombay Catholic Examiner* on 17 Aug., 1901. The original, handwritten letter of Upadhyay may be found in Goethal library archives, St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta. It has been reprinted in *The Blade*, 105-107.

supernatural distinction to the Indian context.<sup>36</sup> Gradually, Upadhyay perceived that he had been unduly influenced by western writers and missionaries in viewing Hinduism as a supernatural religion of revelation which was somehow opposed to the Catholic faith. As demonstrated in chapter six, Upadhyay rejected a theological definition of Hinduism and the western reification of the term, and replaced it with the concept of '*Hindutva*' which was not a religion *per se*, but a "mode of Hindu thinking" which arises out of the historic particularity of Indian culture. This enabled him to lift the whole debate about Christianity and Hinduism out of the confrontational context of the early years of Christian missions in India, as well as out of the newly emerging field of comparative religions and the particulars of the increasingly popular 'fulfillment theology.' Instead, Upadhyay viewed Hinduism as a natural expression of Indian culture which must be affirmed, while Christianity was a supernatural revelation of a universal religion which could be united with any culture. Thus, Upadhyay could live and behave as a Hindu, but believe as a Catholic without fear of contradiction. As Bolai Dev Sharma wrote in the periodical *Devālaya* concerning Upadhyay, "To submit to the laws of *varṇāśramadharmā*, though having faith in Catholicism - there lies the distinct and original contribution of Upadhyay in the matter of harmonizing Hinduism with Christianity."<sup>37</sup> As noted in chapter one, Upadhyay is not the first to use the expression "Hindu-Christian."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, he is the first to develop the theological and cultural significance of the

---

<sup>36</sup> J. Lipner, "On 'Hindutva' and a 'Hindu-Catholic' with a Moral for our Times," *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin*, vol. 5 (1992): 4, 5.

<sup>37</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade* (Calcutta: Roy and Son, n.d.), 202. The same quote also appears in C. Fonseca, "A Prophet Disowned," *Vidyajyoti* (April, 1980): 192. The use of the word "harmonizing" is unfortunate since Upadhyay is not seeking so much to harmonize (he repeatedly condemns those who favor eclecticism) as to promote and protect Christianity and Hinduism in their respective spheres.

<sup>38</sup> Chapter one, fn. 18.

expression. For example, he is the first to clearly delineate the significance of the *samāj dharma* and *sādhana dharma* distinction. Furthermore, he is the first to demonstrate how this practically applies in terms of his attitude to caste, his use of religious icons, and the maintenance of one's social responsibilities within Hindu society.

Upadhyay's insistence that Hinduism and Christianity belong to two different spheres, one natural, one supernatural, may have blinded him to the necessary interaction between the two. On the one hand, his strict separation of Christianity as a revealed desposit of revelation and Hinduism as an expression of Indian culture, allowed him to remain an Indian Christian without what, at the time, must have seemed like the almost inevitable associations of European culture and terminology which had heretofore been united with the dissemination of Christianity in India. On the other hand, his strict separation also tends to obscure the fact that for many Hindus their own self understanding of Hinduism has retained certain distinctive theological and doctrinal differences with Christianity which cannot be regarded as merely expressions of Hindu culture. Furthermore, Upadhyay's uncritical defense of the caste system (albeit a reformed one), along lines which would later be popularized by Gandhi, sometimes led him to ignore real social problems in India.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent Catholic thinking has revised the 'natural - supernatural' distinction such that the latter is not merely superimposed on the former like a building on a

---

<sup>39</sup> This is particularly evident in the Bengali letters Upadhyay wrote back from abroad which were published in the *Baṅgabaṣī*. For a criticism of Upadhyay as a racist see, Von Hans Harder, "Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (1861-1907) und die Befreiung von den Feringhees durch den *varṇāśramadharmā*: Gedanken eines frühen Svadesi 'Revolutionars'," *ZDMG*, Band 146, Heft 2 (1996): 492-506. The article strongly criticizes Upadhyay's comparisons between the class system in Europe and Indian caste as well as his insensitivity to the non-Indian races living in India.

foundation, but the supernatural “*animates* the ‘natural’ or rather the ‘finite,’ bringing the natural to a transformed fruition from within.”<sup>40</sup>

Throughout his writings, Upadhyay accepts rather uncritically that the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas represent the highest expression of Christian truth. He never really questions the natural foundation - supernatural structure of Thomistic thought, but uses it consistently throughout his writings. For Upadhyay, this *is* orthodox Christianity and thus, it serves as a fixed starting point for his more important work; namely, the building of bridges between *advaitic* and Christian thought. A constant reassessment of what constitutes Christianity *per se* would have hindered this theological process. Perhaps a more important issue is not his acceptance of Thomism as the highest expression of Christian thought, but his unwavering belief that Śāṅkara represents the highest expression of Hindu philosophy. The writings of later Indian theologians, such as A. J. Appasamy, have demonstrated a case for a similar work as Upadhyay has done, except using the philosophical theology of Rāmānuja.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, Upadhyay pointed the way forward to a new way of thinking about the relationship between religion and culture. His writings and practice

---

<sup>40</sup> J. Lipner, “A Case Study in ‘Hindu-Catholicism’: Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907),” *Zeitschrift Für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, Heft 1 (Jan., 1988): 50.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, A. J. Appasamy, “Christological Reconstruction and Rāmānuja’s Philosophy.” *International Review of Missions*, vol. 41 (162), April, 1952; *Christianity as Bhakti Marga* (Madras: CLS, 1928); *What is Moksha? A Study in the Johannine Doctrine of Life* (Madras: CLS, 1931). See also, Francis, T. Dayanandan, *A. J. Appasamy: A Christian Forerunner of inter-religious dialogue in India* (Madras: CLS, 1991) and Francis, T. Dayanandan, ed. *The Christian Bhakti of A. J. Appasamy* (Madras: CLS, 1992). Rāmānuja’s concept of the world as ‘God’s Body’ is one example of a source of fruitful possibilities between Christian and Hindu thought which is not present in Śāṅkara’s writings. See, for example, E. J. Lott, *God and the Universe in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja* (Madras: Rāmānuja Research Center, 1976), or N. Smart, “God’s Body,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 37, 1,2 (Fall/Winter, 1981-1982): 51-59. Upadhyay’s writings tend to equate Vedāntism with *advaitism* and he never seriously addresses the theological and philosophical writings of the viśiṣṭadvaitins and their objections to Śāṅkara’s thought.

continue to challenge Indian Christians to examine the way in which their understanding of Christianity has been unnecessarily influenced by the western, cultural context in which they received it. By redefining Hinduism as an expression of *Hindutva*, and pioneering the concept of “one-centredness” which drives *Hindutva*, Upadhyay has opened the way for Indian Christians to remain authentically Indian and authentically Christian. His thought may yet provide fresh insight relevant to the emergence of a truly indigenous Christianity in the Indian context. This may prove to define his most significant and lasting legacy for Christianity in India.

### C. Suggestions for Further Research

This research has focused on how Upadhyay interacted with various theological, philosophical and cultural traditions in India, as he sought to formulate the lines along which he believed an authentic Indian Christian theology should be pursued. However, there are several other fruitful avenues for research concerning Upadhyay which could be pursued, four of which will be briefly highlighted.

#### 1. Early Influences on Upadhyay’s Thought

As early as 1882, Upadhyay was involved with the *Brāhmo Samāj*, eventually becoming a member of the Church of the New Dispensation and a *Brāhmo* teacher in Hyderabad. M. M. Thomas has noted in *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, that Upadhyay’s early preoccupation with Christ represents a larger trend within the *Brāhmo Samāj* as it became increasingly more oriented towards Christianity under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen.<sup>42</sup> The influence of the *Brāhmo Samāj* on Upadhyay’s theology, especially his views of primitive theism,

---

<sup>42</sup> M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Madras: CLS, 1991): 101.

needs further exploration. Indeed, Upadhyay was friends with many of the leading lights of the Bengali renaissance both within and beyond the *Samāj* such as Vivekananda, Keshab Chandra Sen, Priya Nath Mullick, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and P.C. Muzumdar. How was he influenced by these men and how, in turn, may he have influenced their thought? There seems, for example, to be a clear influence between Sen's articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in terms of *saccidānanda* and the later development of it by Upadhyay. Furthermore, the Jesuit scholar C. Fonseca has stated that Upadhyay's philosophical stand was inspired by Bankim Chandra.<sup>43</sup> All of these influences deserve closer scrutiny and exploration.

Upadhyay's friendship and relationship with the poet Rabindranath Tagore has also been frequently noted, and has been explored in a limited way by Ashis Nandy in his book, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*. Tagore models several of the heroes of his novels after Upadhyay and explicitly pays tribute to Upadhyay in the preface to *Char Adhyay*. In the preface, Tagore writes as follows,

Upadhyay was a *sannyāsi*, Roman Catholic yet Vedāntist. He was powerful, fearless, detached; he wielded great influence on those who came near him; he had a deep intelligence and an extraordinary hold on spiritual matters.<sup>44</sup>

Their friendship, mutual influence and their joint collaboration on Tagore's Santiniketan school are all worthy of deeper study and reflection.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> C. Fonseca, *A Prophet Disowned*, 193.

<sup>44</sup> A Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1996): 21, 67, *The Blade*, 180.

<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, Upadhyay's written correspondence from Tagore perished in the 7 August 1907 fire in which Upadhyay's writings were burned to prevent the government from having a successful raid of the offices of the *Sandhya* to confiscate seditious material. See, *The Blade*, 168.

## 2. How Upadhyay's Work was Followed Up by Others

The most frequently cited theological contribution of Upadhyay has been his articulation of Christian theology in terms of Śāṅkara's *advaitism*. What is less known is that the theological lines along which Upadhyay began were taken up by a Catholic monthly entitled *Light of the East*, edited by G. Dandoy. Beginning in 1922 and continuing until 1934, a Jesuit stationed in Calcutta, P. Johannis, wrote monthly articles which appeared in the journal under the theme, "To Christ Through the Vedānta." These articles have now been compiled by Theo de Greeff and were published in 1996 by the United Theological College in two volumes.<sup>46</sup> The availability of this material now provides an opportunity to explore how Upadhyay's theological ideas were carried forward and also how they influenced later Catholic thinking regarding the relationship between Vedāntism and Christianity.

A second area of Upadhyay's work which was taken up later by others and advanced was his desire to establish a Catholic *maṭha* (monastery) where, in his own words, "there would not be the least trace of Europeanism in the mode of life and living," and Hindu Catholic monks could be trained and sent out "well versed in the Vedānta philosophy as well as the philosophy of St. Thomas."<sup>47</sup> His goal was to send out "a score of learned and zealous missionaries, holy men, of ascetic habits, and a metaphysical turn of mind issuing from a common centre of operations established in India."<sup>48</sup> The *maṭha* was founded on the banks of the Narmada in

---

<sup>46</sup> Theo de Greeff, ed., *The Writings of P. Johannis: To Christ Through the Vedānta*, vol. 1, vol. 2 (Bangalore: UTC, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, #5 (May, 1898): 79.

<sup>48</sup> *Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, #2 (Feb., 1897): 11.

Jubbulpore in January 1899, but was soon closed due to ecclesiastical opposition spearheaded by the Delegate Apostolic, Mgr. L. Zaleski.<sup>49</sup>

However, Upadhyay's idea was clearly ahead of his time because in 1950 "the French monks Jules Monchanin and Henri Le Saux (later known as Swami Abhishiktananda) established, with official permission, the now famous experimental Hindu-Catholic ashram at Shantivanam in South India, with Upadhyay's ideals expressly in mind."<sup>50</sup> Abhishiktananda, as well as his successor Bede Griffiths, wore the saffron robe and through their writings, practice, and emphasis on Hindu-Christian dialogue, have continued to promote ideas first initiated by Upadhyay. This connection deserves further study and reflection.

### 3. Official Catholic Opposition to Upadhyay

The collapse of Upadhyay's journalistic endeavors which explored theological themes as well as the proposed *matha* were all due to ecclesiastical opposition over a relatively short period from June 1898 to August 1901. The only known published record of the ecclesiastical correspondence during this period appears in *The Blade*, but only a partial record of the correspondence may be found there. Archival work in the Vatican libraries would be a fruitful avenue to discover the precise basis for the ecclesiastical opposition, as it is unclear whether opposition to the *matha* led to a wider scrutiny of his theological writings, or if there was already opposition that a Catholic layman would be writing about theological matters and the

---

<sup>49</sup> Mgr. Ladislaus Zaleski was the founder of the Papal Seminary in Kandy and was the Apostolic Delegate in India from 1892 until 1916. Upadhyay did gain the support of the Bishop of Nagpur to set up the *matha* in his diocese, but Nagpur was forced to change his mind after the opposition of Zaleski became public. Upadhyay made plans to go to Rome and argue his case personally. He secured the financial backing from a Catholic from Mysore, but abandoned the journey after falling ill in Bombay. See, *The Blade*, 80-82.

<sup>50</sup> J. Lipner, "A Case Study in 'Hindu-Catholicism,'" 45.

proposal for a *maṭha* forced them into more decisive action against Upadhyay. The official opposition to Upadhyay, as well as the support and collaboration he received from Father A. Heggin, the Swiss Jesuit, deserves more careful documentation.

#### 4. Upadhyay's role in the Indian Nationalistic Movement

The most important area for further research is a thorough examination of Upadhyay's contribution to India's drive towards independence. C. Fonseca has argued that Gandhi's national campaign for freedom is indebted to the *Svadeshi* movement in Bengal which conceived many of the aims, as well as methods, such as boycott and non-cooperation, which would provide inspiration and guidance to Gandhi decades later.<sup>51</sup>

After Upadhyay's return from Europe, he united with the *Svadeshi* movement in 1904 and founded the periodical which he would publish until his death entitled *Sandhyā*. The *Sandhyā*, written for the uneducated masses and popular appeal, began as a politically moderate paper, but became violently anti-British after the partition of Bengal in August 1905. Indeed, articles written by Upadhyay in this journal were the basis for his arrest and subsequent trial in which he faced charges of sedition against the British government. Many of these articles are only now being translated into English for further examination and analysis.<sup>52</sup> During the last year of his life, Upadhyay published, in addition to the *Sandhyā*, a weekly paper entitled *Svarāj*,

---

<sup>51</sup> C. Fonseca, S. J., "Upadhyaya Brahmabandav: The Political Years," *Indian Church History Review*, (April, 1981): 18-29.

<sup>52</sup> J. Lipner has translated a number of these articles for later publication, including the following articles from *Sandhyā*: "Mother Kālī of the Dance," "Three Enemies," "The Degeneration of the Hindu Race," and "The Etymology of the Word 'Phiringi.'"

meaning ‘self rule,’ and a bi-weekly entitled *Karālī*, both of which were written for the educated classes of Bengal.<sup>53</sup>

It was in the pages of the *Sandhyā* that Upadhyay became the first Indian to call for complete independence from Britain, not just home rule.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Upadhyay has a place in the history of India’s drive for independence which deserves further exploration and analysis. Indeed, a broader study of the connection between his theological writings and his political activities would be fruitful.

#### **D. Concluding Analysis of Upadhyay’s Place in the History of Indian Christian Theology**

Brahmabandhav Upadhyay remains a pivotal, if not controversial, figure in the history of Indian Christian theology. His place as an early pioneer in Indian Christian theology is assured because he is one of the first Indian Christians to engage in serious theological reflection, particularly since earlier figures such as Ram Mohun Roy (1774-1833) and Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) were not writing as Christians, but as Hindu reformers. His place is further assured because he is the first Indian *Christian* to move away from a negative, confrontational attitude towards Hinduism and enter into a positive dialogue with the Hindu philosophical traditions, especially *advaita*. His writings are markedly different in both scope and attitude than the earlier, more confrontational, writings of Indian Christian theologians such

---

<sup>53</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, 154. Twelve issues of the *Svarāj* appeared between March and July, 1907. *Karālī* is the name of one of the seven tongues of the Vedic sacrificial fire.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 136, 137. The lengthy passage from the pages of *Sandhyā* is quoted in *The Blade*. Upadhyay’s claim to be the first Indian to call for complete independence is also stated by C. Fonseca in “Upadhyaya Brahmabandav: The Political Years,” 25. Fonseca claims it occurred first on 20 September 1906 and is confirmed in a British sedition report entitled, “Confidential Report on Native News Papers, no. 40 of 1906,” see, fn. 36. Other figures, even the Extremists such as Tilak, were demanding full administrative control for India, but still advocated maintaining the central government in Britain. In contrast, Upadhyay declared in the *Sandhyā*, “We want complete independence. The country cannot prosper so long as the veriest shred of the Feringhi’s supremacy over it is left.” See, Fonseca, 26.

as Krishna Mohan Banerjea (1813-1885), Lal Behari Day (1824-1894) and Nehemiah Goreh (1825-1895). It is true that Banerjea, after his retirement, began to develop a more positive attitude towards Hinduism, developing an early form of fulfillment theology.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Upadhyay is the first to systematically attempt to re-state Christian theology using indigenous vocabulary and thought forms. It is for this reason that K. P. Aleaz has, perhaps generously, called Upadhyay “the Father of Indian theology.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed, C. F. Andrews, writing in 1912, says that the writings of Upadhyay “were the most striking instances he had come across up to that time of the use of Hindu terminology by Christians for the expression of Christian truth.”<sup>57</sup> Certainly, Upadhyay’s place among the pioneers is assured, and in terms of laying the foundation for a positive Hindu-Christian theological dialogue, he led the way. Indeed, the seven contributions noted in this chapter underscore both his significance as well as the ongoing relevance of his work in helping Indian Christians formulate their own theologies.

It would be a mistake to view Upadhyay, or any other single Indian theologian, as providing the theological key to a truly indigenous Indian Christian theology. For too long the literature has spoken of Indian Christian theology in the singular as if a single formulation has either emerged, or is desired. Instead, we are witnessing the emergence of a succession of theological formulations and several Indian Christian theologies. Upadhyay’s work plays an important part in this larger movement. One of the real difficulties in some of the more recent theological

---

<sup>55</sup> During these later years, he is most known for his identification of *Prajāpati* with Christ and, in general, his desire to promote a Vedic Christian theology.

<sup>56</sup> K. P. Aleaz, “The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya Re-Examined,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 28, #2 (April-June, 1979): 77.

<sup>57</sup> M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, 101, 102.

formulations in India, has been a tendency to ignore the theological and philosophical insights of the Sanskritic tradition and the theological work of 19<sup>th</sup> century high caste Christians. This has occurred, in part, because of the presupposition that the Sanskritic tradition has been used only to reinforce the dominance of Brahmins in India and, therefore, cannot aid in the formulation of a people's theology in India.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the wide diversity in contemporary Indian theology has helped to confirm that India will not produce a single theology, but an entire range of theologies which together reflect the multi-faceted faith and experience of Indian Christians. Upadhyay's work will be more significant in the formulation of some Indian theologies than others, but certainly his life and writings represent a clarion call for Indian Christians to be authentically Indian in their search to root Christianity in Indian soil. Largely due to his influence, no longer can the Indian Church be characterized today, as Upadhyay did in his day, as "standing in the corner, like an exotic stunted plant with poor foliage, showing little or no promise of blossom."<sup>59</sup> Today, Indian Christian theologies are blossoming in no small measure due to the role of the pioneers, like Upadhyay, who labored tirelessly for an indigenized Christian theology for India.

---

<sup>58</sup> This, in my view, is an unwarranted identification which cannot be defended historically. For a fuller treatment of my position in connection with Dalit theology, see my articles entitled, "Contextualizing the Sanskritic Tradition to Serve Dalit Theology," *Missiology*, vol. 25, #3 (July, 1997): 343-349 and "Ethnicity and the Sanskritic Tradition," *Vidyajyoti* 61, #3 (Mar., 1997): 179-186.

<sup>59</sup> B. Animananda, *The Blade*, Appendix I, i.

## Appendix One

Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn to the Incarnate Logos

## Verse One:

upacitaciracinmukurita  
pratibimbita brahmaparāt pavarūpa

## Refrain:

jaya deva (3x) narahare

## Verse Two:

kanakakumārī bālaka  
bhavacālaka nirguṇaguṇābhirāma

## Verse Three:

paṇḍitamaṇḍalamaṇḍana  
bhayakhaṇḍana daṇḍitabhaṇḍanabhūta

## Verse Four:

ādhivyādhivitāḍana<sup>2</sup>  
parasevana pāvanalīlākhela

## Verse Five:

viniveditanijavedana<sup>3</sup>  
balijīvana kṛtakilbiṣaviṣanāśa

## Verse Six:

lalitadayita-hṛdrañjana  
nayanāñjana sudalita-kālakarāla

<sup>1</sup> This transliteration is based on the original publications. Several slight variations may be found in later published copies of these hymns. I will only draw attention to the more significant differences.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch in *The Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay*, have printed this compound as beginning 'ādhitya' not, as in the original, 'ādhivyā.' Furthermore, they have placed a final 'dha' at the end of the compound which is not in the original.

<sup>3</sup> J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch record the final part of the compound as 'vadana' rather than 'vedana.' This error also appears in Gispert-Sauch's "The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay," *Religion and Society*, vol. 19, #4, (Dec., 1972): 76.

## Canticle to the Trinity

Refrain:

vande saccidanandam  
bhogilāñchita-yogivāñchita-caramapadam

Verse One:

paramapurāṇaparātparam  
purnam akhaṇḍam parāvaram  
trisaṅgaśuddham asaṅgabuddha-durvvedam

Verse Two:

pitṛsavitrparameśam ajam  
bhavavṛkṣavījam avījam<sup>4</sup>  
akhilakāraṇam ikṣaṇasṛjana-govindam

Verse Three:

anāhataśabdham anantam  
prasūtapuruṣasumahāntam  
pitṛsvarūpa-cinmayarūpa-sumukundam

Verse Four:

saccidor melanasaraṇam  
śubhaśvasitānandaghanam<sup>5</sup>  
pavanajavana-vāñivadana-jīvanadam

---

<sup>4</sup> Original has *vījam* and *avījam* for the Sanskrit *bījam* and *abījam* reflecting Bengali pronunciation.

<sup>5</sup> J. Lipner and Gispert-Sauch incorrectly print this compound with a 'dhā' after *śubha*, whereas in the original it is a 'śva.' At the end of the compound, Lipner/Gispert-Sauch have printed it as 'dhanam' (wealth) rather than 'ghanam' (mass/intense). The original copy in the archives of St. Xavier's College in Calcutta has an unfortunate wormhole right on the very line which distinguishes the Sanskrit 'dha' from a 'gha.' However, Upadhyay's own original footnote translates the phrase as "intense bliss" indicating that it should be 'ghanam' not 'dhanam.'

## Bibliography

### I. Unpublished Materials

- Lipner, J., tr. "Letter from a Sannyāsi Visiting England." Letters No. 1 and 2, unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-9, 10-18. Originally appeared in the Calcutta Bengali weekly, *Bangabasi* on 13 Nov. and 21 Nov., 1902, respectively.
- , tr. "Letter from a Sannyāsi Staying in England." Letters No. 3-9, unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 19-28, 29-36, 37-44, 45-51, 52-59, 60-66, 67-73. Originally appeared in the Calcutta Bengali weekly, *Bangabasi* on 2 Jan., 9 Jan., 16 Jan., 6 Mar., 24 Apr., 5 May, and 12 June, 1903, respectively.
- , tr. "Letter from a Sannyāsi who was Returned from England." Letter No. 10, unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 74-81. Originally appeared in the Calcutta Bengali weekly, *Bangabasi* on 7 Sept., 1903.
- , tr. "Mother *Kālī* of the Dance." (*Ma Nrtyakali*) Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1,2. Originally appeared in the *Sandhyā* between 1904-1907, exact date unknown.
- , tr. "My Deliverance of India." pt. 1 and 2. Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-14. The manuscript is incomplete.
- , tr. "The Bath Festival." Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-4. Originally published in *Svarāj* in 1907, probably May-June.
- , tr. "The Degeneration of the Hindu Race." Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 9-21. Original publication source unknown.
- , tr. "The Etymology of the word '*Phiringi*.'" Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-3. Originally appeared in the *Sandhyā* on 23 Nov., 1906.
- , tr. "The Traditional Code of Caste-Orders and Stages of Life." Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-29. Originally appeared in the journal, *Baṅgadarśan*, New Series (Bengali Era, Phalgun 1308; Feb.-Mar., 1902, C.E.): 534-547.
- tr. "The True Nature of Sri Krishna." Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-32. The lecture first appeared in print in the *Sāhitya Samhitā*, vol. 5, 6, 7 (B.E., 1311; 1904 C.E.): 321-341.
- , tr. "Three Enemies." Unpublished manuscript translated from Bengali, (1997): 1-9. Original publication source unknown.

Upādhyāy, B. Unpublished personal letters in English, archives of Goethal's library, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, including letters written in English back to India from Britain as well as letters to journals such as the *Bangabasi* and the *Bombay Catholic Examiner*. These letters have been bound by the archivalists at St. Xavier's into four volumes entitled *varia*.

## II. Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy Primary Sources<sup>1</sup>

### Bibliography of Works Cited

#### *Sophia Monthly*

##### 1894

*Sophia: A Monthly Catholic Journal*, vol. 1, 1 (Jan, 1894) Karachi: Printed at the "Phoenix" Press.

- Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 2 (Feb., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 3 (Mar., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 4 (April, 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 5 (May, 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 6 (June, 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 7 (July, 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 8 (Aug., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 9 (Sept., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 10 (Oct., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 11 (Nov., 1894).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 1, 12 (Dec., 1894).

##### 1895

- Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 1 (Jan., 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 2 (Feb., 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 3 (Mar., 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 4 (April, 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 5 (May, 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 6 (June, 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 7 (July, 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 9 (Sept., 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 10 (Oct., 1895).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 2, 11 (Nov., 1895).

##### 1896

- Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 1 (Jan., 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 2 (Feb., 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 3 (Mar., 1896).

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the *Sophia* articles are currently available only through the archives of Goethal's library, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. The British Library in London has a few issues of *The Twentieth Century*. The Lipner and Gispert-Sauch volume which was published in 1991 entitled, *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay* contains only about 40% of Upadhyay's *Sophia* and *Twentieth Century* writings.

*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 4 (April, 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 5 (May, 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 6 (June, 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 7 (July, 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 10 (Oct., 1896).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 3, 11 (Nov., 1896).

### 1897

*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 1 (Jan., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 2 (Feb., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 3 (Mar., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 4 (April, 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 5 (May, 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 6 (June, 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 7 (July, 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 8 (Aug., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 9 (Sept., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 10 (Oct., 1897).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 4, 12 (Dec., 1897).

### 1898

*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 1 (Jan., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 2 (Feb., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 3 (Mar., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 5 (May, 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 6 (June, 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 7 (July, 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 8 (Aug., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 10 (Oct., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 11 (Nov., 1898).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 5, 12 (Dec., 1898).

### 1899

*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, 1 (Jan., 1899).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, 2 (Feb., 1899).  
*Sophia Monthly*, vol. 6, 3 (Mar., 1899).<sup>2</sup>

## *Sophia Weekly*

### 1900

*Sophia: A Weekly Review of Politics, Sociology, Literature and Comparative Theology*, vol. 1, 1 New Series (16 June, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series, (June, 1900).<sup>3</sup>  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 2 New Series, (23 June, 1900).

<sup>2</sup> The March 1899 issue of *Sophia Monthly* is the last issue.

<sup>3</sup> Editions of *Sophia Weekly* which are not identified with a specific issue number are those issues which are cited in the Lipner and Gispert-Sauch edition which, unfortunately, do not specify the exact week.

- Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 3 New Series(30 June, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (July, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 4, New Series (7 July, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 5 New Series (14 July, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 6, New Series (21 July, 1900)  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 7 New Series (28 July, 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 8 New Series (4 Aug., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 9, New Series (11 Aug., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 10 New Series (18 Aug., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 11 New Series (25 Aug., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, New Series (Sept. 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 12, New Series, (1 Sept., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 13, New Series (8 Sept., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 14, New Series (15 Sept., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 16 New Series (29 Sept., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 18 New Series (27 Oct., 1900).<sup>4</sup>  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 19 New Series (3 Nov., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 20, New Series (10 Nov., 1900).  
*Sophia Weekly*, vol. 1, 23, New Series, (1 Dec., 1900).

## ***The Twentieth Century***

1901

- The Twentieth Century: A Monthly Review*, vol. 1, 1 (Jan, 1901). Calcutta: K. C. Nan, publisher.  
*The Twentieth Century: A Monthly Review*, vol. 1, 2 (Feb., 1901).  
*The Twentieth Century: A Monthly Review*, vol. 1, 5 (May, 1901).  
*The Twentieth Century: A Monthly Review*, vol. 1, 6 (June, 1901).  
*The Twentieth Century: A Monthly Review*, vol. 1, 8 (Aug., 1901).

## **Other Publications**

- Lipner, J., and G. Gispert-Sauch, eds. *The Writings of Brahmabāndhab Upādhyāy*, vol. 1. Bangalore: United Theological College, 1991.
- Lipner, J., tr. "The One-Centredness of the Hindu Race" by B. Upādhyāy, *Vidyajyoti*, vol. 45, 9 (Oct., 1981): 410-422.
- Upādhyāy, B. *Infinite and the Finite*, 3rd ed. Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918.
- Upādhyāy, B. *On Creation*, 3rd ed. Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918.
- Upādhyāy, B., tr. *Pañcadaśī*. N.p., 1902. (Located in St. Xavier's College, Goethal library archives, Calcutta). This is a partial translation and commentary on the *Pañcadaśī* by B. Upādhyāy.

<sup>4</sup> Beginning with the 20 October issue, the journal's name is simplified to, *Sophia: A Weekly Journal*.

### III. Published Sources

*A Christian Theological Approach to Hinduism*. Madras: CLS, 1956. Published by CLS for the Tamilnad Christian Council and Gurukul Theological College.

Agapura, J. G. "The Use of Indian Philosophical Traditions in Christian Thought." *Indian Journal of Theology* 29, 2 (April-June, 1980): 67-73.

Aleaz, K. P. *An Indian Jesus from Śaṅkara's Thought*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996.

———. "An Indian Jesus from Advaita Vedānta." *Indian Journal of Theology* 38, 2 (1996): 29-42.

———. "Gospel and Culture: Some Indian Reflections." *Indian Journal of Theology* 37, 2 (1994): 54-70.

———. "The Convergence of Dalit-Advaitic Theologies: An Exploration." *Indian Journal of Theology* 36, 1 (1994): 97-108.

———. "The Gospel in the Advaitic Culture of India: The Case of Neo-Vedāntic Christologies." *Indian Journal of Theology* 35, 2 (1993): 10-19.

———. "The Theological Writings of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāya Re-Examined." *Indian Journal of Theology* 28, 2 (April-June, 1979): 55-77.

Alston, A. J., ed. *Śaṅkara on Creation*. London: Shanti Sadan, 1980.

———, ed. *Śaṅkara on the Absolute*. London: Shanti Sadan, 1980.

———, ed. *Śaṅkara on the Soul*. London: Shanti Sadan, 1981.

Amaladoss, M., T. K. John, G. Gispert-Sauch, eds. *Theologizing in India*. Bangalore: CBCI, 1981. See, especially, R. Panikkar, "Indian theology: A Theological Mutation" (23-42), S. Grant, "Christian Theologizing and the Challenge of Advaita" (70-80), and J. Chethimattam, "Problems of an Indian Christian Theology" (195-207).

Amaladoss, M. "An Emerging Indian Theology, pt. 1." *Vidyajyoti* 58, 8 (Aug., 1994): 473-484.

———. "An Emerging Indian Theology, pt 2." *Vidyajyoti* 58, 9 (Sept., 1994): 559-572.

Andrews, C. F. *The Renaissance in India*. Edinburgh: Foreign Mission Committee, 1912.

Animananda, B. *Swami Upādhyāy Brahmabandhav: A Story of His Life*, Part I. Calcutta, 1908. The date 1908 is handwritten on the front by the librarians of Goethal's Indian library in Calcutta. There is some uncertainty as to the exact date of publication, but it was soon after the death of Upādhyāy in 1907.

———. *The Blade*. Calcutta: Roy and Son, n.d. (probably 1945).

Anthonsamy, A. "Christian Mission in the Context of Many Religions Today." *Indian Theological Studies* 30, 2 (June, 1993): 94-107.

Aquinas, T. *Summa contra Gentiles*, vol. 1-5. London: Burns, Oates and Wshbourne, ltd., 1923-1929. Translated into English from Latin by the Dominicans.

Arokiasamy, S. *Dharma, Hindu and Christian, according to Roberto de Nobili*. Rome: Editrice Pontificia, 1986.

Arulsamy, S. "Can the Hindu Scriptures Take the Place of the Old Testament?" *Indian Theological Studies* 21, 3,4 (Sept. - Dec., 1984): 309-321.

Arapura, J. G. "The Use of Indian Philosophical Traditions in Christian Thought." *Indian Journal of Theology* 29, 2 (April-June, 1980): 67-73.

Arles, S. "Mission in the Indian Cultural Context." *Indian Journal of Theology* 35, 2 (1993): 55-63.

Asirvatham, E. *Christianity in the Indian Crucible*. Calcutta: YMCA, 1957.

Athyal, S. "Towards an Asian Christian Theology." *Traci/ETS* 5 (May, 1976): 2-10.

Ayrookuzhiel, A. "The Dalits, Religions and Interfaith Dialogue." *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 7 (1994): 13-19.

Baago, K. *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*. Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969.

Ballhatchet, K. "Missionaries, Empire and Society: The Jesuit Mission in Calcutta, 1834-1846." *Journal of Imperial Commonwealth History* 7 (1978): 18-34.

———. "The East India Company and Roman Catholic Missionaries." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44, 2 (April, 1993): 273-288.

Banerjee, N. V. *The Spirit of Indian Philosophy*. London: Curzon Press, 1975.

Barr, J. *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Berkhof, L. *Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979.

- Betty, L. S. "A Death-Blow to Śaṅkara's Non-Dualism? A Dualist Refutation." *Religious Studies* 12 (1976): 281-290.
- Bhatia, S., ed. *The Ārya Samāj*. Delhi: Reliance Pub. House, 1991.
- Bloomfield, M. *The Religion of the Veda: The Ancient Religion of India*. Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972.
- Bobik, J. *Aquinas on Being and Essence*. Notre Dame University Press, 1965.
- Bose, A. C. *Hymns from the Vedas*. London: Asia Publishing House, 1966.
- Bose, S. *Some Aspects of British Rule in India*. Iowa City University, n.d.
- . *Studies in the Social Sciences*. Iowa City University Press, n.d.
- Bouquet, A. A. *Hinduism*. London: Hutchinson's University Library, n.d.
- Bowes, P. *The Hindu Religious Tradition*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- Boyd, R. *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Delhi: ISPCK, 1994.
- . *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Brockington, J. L. *Hinduism and Christianity*. London: MacMillan Press, 1992.
- . *The Sacred Thread*. University of Edinburgh Press, 1981, 1996.
- . "William Carey's Significance as an Indologist." Unpublished Manuscript, 1997.
- Brooks, R. "The Meaning of the 'Real' in Advaita Vedānta." *Philosophy East and West* 19 (1969): 395-398.
- Bürkle, H. and W. Roth, eds. *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debate*. Madras, Delhi: Lucknow Pub., ISPCK, CLS, 1975.
- Byrne, P. *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion*. London, New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Carman, J. *The Theology of Rāmānuja*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Carpenter, M., ed. *Last Days in England of Rammohun Roy*. London: Trübner and Co., 1866.

- Cave, S. *Christianity and Some Living Religions of the East*. London: Duckworth, 1929.
- Cenkner, W. *A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today*. London: Duckworth, 1929.
- Chand, T. *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2, 3. Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1967.
- Chandran, J. R., John, E. C., et al. *A Bibliography*. Madras: CLS, n.d.
- Chatterjee, S. and D. Datta. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1954.
- Chenchiah, P., Chakkarai, V., et al., eds. *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Madras: Hogarth Press, 1939.
- Clayton, A. *RigVeda and Vedic Religion*. London and Madras: CLS, 1913.
- Comte, A. *System of Positive Polity*, IV. London: Longman's Green, 1877.
- Coulson, M. *Sanskrit: An Introduction to the Classical Language*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, 1992.
- Coward, H., ed. *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- Cox, J. L. "Faith and Faiths: The Significance of A. G. Hogg's Missionary Thought for a Theology of Dialogue." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 32 (1979): 241-256.
- . "The Influence of A.G. Hogg over D. G. Moses: A Missionary Message for India." *Religion and Society* 27, 4 (Dec., 1980): 66-79.
- Cromartie, M., ed. *A Preserving Grace: Protestants, Catholics, and Natural Law*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Das, R. *Introduction to Shankara*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Das, S. K. *Towards a Systematic Study of the Vedānta*. Calcutta: Sri Gouranga Press, 1931.
- Davie, I. *Jesus Purusha*. West Stockbridge, Mass.: Lindisfarne Press, 1985.
- Davies, J. *Hindu Philosophy*. London: Trubner and Co., 1881.
- Daye, D. "Language and the Language of East-West Philosophy: An Introduction." *Philosophy East and West* 26, 2 (April, 1976): 113-115.

- de Greeff, T., ed. *The Writings of P. Johannis: To Christ Through the Vedānta*, vol. 1, vol. 2. Bangalore: UTC, 1996.
- Debary, W. T. *Sources of Indian Tradition*. New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- DeSmet, R. "Natural Law and the Dharma of Renascent Hinduism." *Indian Theological Studies* 18, 2 (June, 1981): 106-134.
- Deussen, P. *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906.
- Deutsch, E. and J. A. B. van Buitenen, eds. *A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta*. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1971.
- Devanandan, P. D. "The Christian Attitude and Approach to Non-Christian Religions." *International Review of Missions* 41, 162 (April, 1952): 178-184.
- Devaraja, N. K. *Hinduism and Christianity*. London: Asia Pub. House, 1969.
- Devdas, N. *Ānanda*. Madras: CLS, 1974.
- Dietrich, S. "Mission, Local Culture and the 'Catholic Ethnology' of Pater Schmidt." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 23, 2 (1992): 111-125.
- Doniger, W. and B. Smith. *The Laws of Manu*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Duff, A. *The Church of Scotland's India Mission (or A Brief Exposition of the Principles on which that Mission has been conducted in Calcutta)*. Edinburgh: John Waugh, printer to the Church of Scotland, 1835.
- Dutt, N. K. *The Vedānta: Its Place as a System of Metaphysics*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1931.
- Eek, S. *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Madras: Theosophical Society Publishing House, 1965, 1978.
- Elders, L., S. V. D. *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1990.
- Fairservis, W. *The Harappan Civilization and Its Writing*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992.
- Farquhar, J. N. *Modern Religious Movements*. New York, n.p., 1915.
- . *The Crown of Hinduism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1913.

- Feuerstein, G. "The One and the Many: A Fundamental Philosophical Problem in the Principal Upaniṣads." *Hinduism* 88 (Spring, 1980): 1-10.
- Feys, J. "Sanskrit-Derived Terminology in the Philosophy of God." *Indian Theological Studies* 27, 1 (Mar., 1990): 73-94.
- Fonseca, C. "A Prophet Disowned." *Vidyajyoti* (April 1980): 177-194.
- . "Upādhyāya Brahmābandav: The Political Years." *India Church History Review* 18 (April 1981): 18-29.
- Forest, J. *Praying with Icons*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1997.
- Forrester, D. *Caste and Christianity*. London: Curzon Press, 1979.
- . "Christian Theology in a Hindu Context." *South Asian Review* 8, 4 (July-Oct., 1975): 343-358.
- . "Indian Christian Attitudes to Caste in the Twentieth Century." *Indian Church History Review* 9, 1 (June, 1975): 3-22.
- Francis, T. D., ed. *The Christian Bhakti of A. J. Appasamy*. Madras: CLS, 1992.
- . *Sadhu Sundar Singh: The Lover of the Cross*. Madras: CLS, 1991.
- Frauwallner, E. *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1. Delhi, Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.
- Gambhirananda, S. *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarāchārya*. Delhi: Advaita Ashrama, 1993.
- Ghate, V. S., ed. *The Vedānta: A Study of the Brahma-Sūtras with the Bhāṣyas of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva and Vallabha*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1960.
- Gilby, Thomas, O.P., tr. *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 16. Cambridge: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., Blackfriars edition, 1969.
- Gispert-Sauch, G., S. J. "The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy." *Religion and Society* 19, 4 (Dec., 1972): 60-79.
- Gomez, Fausto, ed. *Asian Religious Traditions of Christianity*. Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 1983. See especially, chapter four entitled, "Hinduism and Christianity" by J. Kattackal.
- Goodspeed, Edgar J., tr. *The Apocrypha*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

- Goreh, N. *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems*. Madras: CLS, 1911. It also appeared under the title, *A Mirror of the Hindu Philosophical Traditions*.
- Greinacher, N. and N. Mette, eds. *Christianity and Cultures*. London: SCM Press, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994.
- Grimes, J. "Radhakrishnan and Śaṅkara's Māyā." *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 10 (Spring, 1989): 50-56.
- . "Two Paradigms of Religious Language." *Studies in Religion* 19, 3 (Summer, 1990): 331-338.
- Griffiths, B. *The Marriage of East and West*. London: Collins, 1982.
- Griswold, H. D. *Religion of the RigVeda*. London: Oxford University Press, 1923.
- Gupta, A. S. *A Critical Study of the Philosophy of Rāmānuja*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1967.
- Gupta, B. and W. Wilcox. "'tat tvam asi:' An Important Identity Statement or a Mere Tautology?" *Philosophy East and West* 34, 1 (Jan., 1984): 85-94.
- Hallbass, W. "India and the Comparative Method." *Philosophy East and West* 35, 1 (Jan., 1985): 3-15.
- . *Tradition and Reflection*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.
- Harder, V. H. "Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy (1861-1907) und die Befreiung von den Feringhees durch den varṇāśramadharmā: Gedanken eines fruhen Svadesi 'Revolutionars.'" *ZDMG* 46, 2 (1996): 492-506.
- Hardy, F., ed. *The Religions of Asia*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Hay, S., ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.
- Henry, C. *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 2. Waco: Word Books, 1976.
- Herman, A. L. *Hinduism*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1991.
- . "Indian Theodicy in Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on Brahma Sūtra II.1.32-36." *Philosophy East and West* 21 (1971): 36-52.
- Hick, J. *Arguments for the Existence of God*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

- Hiriyanna, M. *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1932.
- Holm, J., ed. *Attitudes to Nature*. London, New York: Pinter, 1994.
- Husain, S. *The National Culture of India*. Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1956, 1961.
- Indich, W. "Can the Advaita Vedānta Provide a Meaningful Definition of Absolute Consciousness?" *Philosophy East and West* 30, 4 (Oct., 1980): 481-493.
- Ingalls, D. "The Study of Śaṅkarāchārya." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 33 (1952): 1-14.
- Jacob, G. A. *Handful of Popular Maxims*. Bombay: Tukārām Jāvajī, 1907.
- Jathanna, O. V. "Indian Christian Theology: Methodological Reflections." *Bangalore Theological Forum* 18, 2,3 (April-Sept., 1986): 60-74.
- Jinarajadasa, C. *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*. Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Society Publishing House, 1925.
- Johanns, P. *To Christ Through the Vedānta*, vol. 1. Bangalore: UTC, 1996.
- Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. 4. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1953.
- Kanjumala, A. "Christianization as a Legitimate Alternative to Sanskritization." *Indian Missiological Review* 6, 4 (Oct., 1984): 307-331.
- Karokaran, A. "Raymond Panikkar's Theology of Religions: A Critique." *Vidyajyoti* 58, 10 (1994): 663-672.
- Kattackal, J. "Meditation in the Religious Philosophies of India." *Indian Theological Studies* 26, 3 (Sept., 1989): 284-297.
- Keay, F. E. *A History of the Syrian Church in India*. Delhi: SPCK, 1951.
- Keith, B. *The Karma-Mimāṃsā*. London: Oxford University Press, 1921.
- . *The Sāṃkhya System*. London: Oxford University Press, n.d.
- Killingley, D. H. *Rammohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Grevatt and Grevatt, 1993.
- . "Rammohun Roy on the Vedānta Sutras." *Religion* 11 (1981): 151-169.

- King, R. "Brahman and the World: Immanence and Transcendence in Advaita Vedānta." *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 12 (Aut., 1991): 107-126.
- Kinsley, D. *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1982, 1993.
- Kopf, D. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance, the Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773-1835*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
- Kotawani, N. F., ed. "Dedicated to the Memory of Four Great Men." *Jote* (October, 1946): 4-15.
- Kreeft, P. *Summa of the Summa*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1900.
- Kretzmann, N. and E. Stump, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Kuiper, F. B. J. *Ancient Indian Cosmogony*. Delhi: Vikas Pub., House, 1983.
- Kulandran, S. *Grace in Christianity and Hinduism*. London: Lutterworth, 1964.
- Kumar, J. C. "An Indian Christian Appreciation of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." *Indian Journal of Theology* 30, 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1981): 29-35.
- Kumarappa, B. *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*. London: Luzac and Co., 1934.
- Kukhopadhyay, U. "Upādhyāy Brahmabāndhav (1861-1907)." *The Hindustan Standard* (25 October, 1959).
- Laird, M. A. "William Carey and the Education of India." *Indian Journal of Theology* 10 (1961): 97-104.
- Lazarus, F. K. *Rāmānuja and Bowne*. Bombay: Chetane, Ltd., 1962.
- Leadbeater, C. W. *The Inner Life*. Vasanta Press, 1910.
- Lehman, A. *It Began at Tranquebar*. Madras: CLS, 1956.
- Lillingston, F. *The Brāhmo Samāj and Ārya Samāj*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1901.
- Lipner, J. "A Case Study in 'Hindu-Catholicism: Brahmabāndhab Upādhyāy (1861-1907)." *Zeitschrift Fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 1 (Jan., 1988): 33-54.

- . “A Modern Indian Christian Response.” In *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism*, H. Coward, ed. New York: SUNY, 1987.
- . *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . “On ‘Hindutva’ and a ‘Hindu-Catholic’ with a Moral for our Times.” *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 5 (1992): 1-8.
- . “The Christian and Vedāntic Theories of Originative Causality: A Study in Transcendence and Immanence.” *Philosophy East and West* 28 (1978): 1-16.
- . *The Face of Truth: A Study of Meaning and Metaphysics in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja*. Macmillan, 1986.
- . “The World as God’s ‘Body:’ In Pursuit of Dialogue with Rāmānuja.” *Religious Studies* 20 (Mar., 1984): 145-161.
- . and Gispert-Sauch, S.J. *The Writings of Brahmabāndhab Upādhyāy*, vol. 1. Bangalore: UTC, 1991.
- Lott, E. J. “Conceptual Dimensions of Bhakti in the Rāmānuja Tradition.” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 2, 1 (Spring, 1981): 97-114.
- . *God and the Universe in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja*. Madras: Rāmānuja Research Center, 1976.
- . *Vedāntic Approaches to God*. London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1980.
- Macdonell, A. A. *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press, 1954, 1969, 1991.
- , ed. *Hymns from the RigVeda*. Calcutta, London: Assoc. Press, 1922, 1969.
- Macnicol, N. *Indian Theism*. Oxford University Press, 1915.
- . “Some Hindrances to Theism in India.” *The Indian Interpreter* 7, 2 (July, 1912): 81-88.
- Madge, E. W. *Henry Derozio: The Eurasian Poet and Reformer*. Calcutta: Metropolitan Book Agency, 1967.
- Mahadevan, T. M. P. “The Advaita Conception of Man.” *Religion and Society* 7, 3, 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1960): 13-16.
- Malkovsky, B. “The Personhood of Śaṅkara’s Para Brahman.” *The Journal of Religion* 77, 4 (Oct., 1997): 541-562.

- Martindale, C. C. "Do We Think About India?" *The Clergy Review* (London)10, 2 (1935): 265-271.
- Martinson, P. V. *A Theology of World Religions: Interpreting God, Self and World in Semitic, Indian and Chinese Thought*. Minneapolis, MS: Augsburg, 1987.
- Massey, J. "Christian Dalits in India: An Analysis." *Religion and Society* 37, 3 (Sept. 1990): 40-53.
- Maw, M. *Visions of India*. Bern, New York: Verlag Peter Lang, 1990.
- May, P. "The Trinity and Saccidānanda." *Indian Journal of Theology* 7, 3 (July-Sept., 1958): 92-98.
- McGrath, A. *Christian Theology*. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.
- Metzler, J., O.M.I. "The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or the Propagation of the Faith: The Mission Center of the Catholic Church in Rome." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 5, 3 (July 1981): 127-128.
- Michael, S. M. "The Cultural Context of the Rise of Hindutva and Dalits Forces." *Vidyajyoti* 60, 5 (May, 1996): 294-310.
- Milburn, G. "Christian Vedāntism." *The Indian Interpreter* 7, 3 (Oct., 1912): 153-160.
- Mookenthottam, A. *Towards a Theology in the Indian Context*. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corp., 1980.
- Mookerjee, S. "God and the Absolute in the Philosophy of Radhakrishnan, ed." *Religion and Society* 7, 2 (Sept., 1960): 20-29.
- Moon, P. *The British Conquest and Dominion of India*. London: Duckworth, 1989.
- Moore, Charles, ed. *The Indian Mind*. University of Hawaii Press, 1967, 1978.
- Mukhopadhyaya, P. *Vedānta Philosophy*. Calcutta: Book Co., Ltd., 1928.
- Müller, M. *Natural Religion*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889.
- , ed. *The Laws of Manu, Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 25, G. Bühler, tr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964, 1967.
- . *The Vedānta Philosophy*. London: Longman, Green and Co., 1894.
- . *Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894.

- Murty, K. S. "Śaṅkara's Views on Religious Life." *Religion and Society* 7, 2 (Sept., 1960): 46-60.
- and R. Rao., eds. *Current Trends in Indian Philosophy*. Waltair: Andhra University Press and London: Asia Publishing House, 1972.
- Nandy, A. *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1996.
- Neill, S. *A History of Christian Missions*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954.
- . *A History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- . *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Neufeldt, R. "Christianity and 'Other Religions': Contributions from the Work of F. Max Müller." *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 5 (1992): 9-12.
- O'Flaherty, W. *Hindu Myths*. New York: Penguin Books, 1975
- . *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.
- Otto, R. *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted*. London: SCM, 1930.
- Paikada, M. "Kirche in Indien und Inkulturation." *Zeitschrift Für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 3 (July, 1987): 200-215.
- Pandey, B. N. *A Book of India*. Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1991.
- Pandit, Moti Lal. "Śaṅkara's Concept of Reality." *Indian Theological Studies* 17, 4 (Dec., 1980): 318-349.
- Panikkar, R. G. "Īśvara and Christ as a Philosophical Problem." *Religion and Society* 6. 3 (Oct., 1959): 8-16.
- . "The Brahman of the Upanishads and the God of the Philosophers." *Religion and Society* 7, 2 (Sept., 1960): 12-19.
- . *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977.
- . *The Vedic Experience: Mantramajari*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977.

- Pape, R. "Keshub Chunder Sen's Doctrine of Christ and the Trinity: A Rehabilitation." *Indian Journal of Theology* 25, 2 (April-June, 1976): 55-71.
- Parekh, M. C. *Rajarshi Ram Mohan Roy*. Rajkot, 1927.
- Parrinder, G. *Avatār and Incarnation*. London: Faber and Faber, 1970.
- . *The Significance of the Bhagavad-Gītā for Christian Theology*. Williams Trust, 1968.
- Pegis, A., ed. *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1. New York: Random House, 1945.
- Pereira, J. *Hindu Theology*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pub., 1976.
- Philip, T. V. "Krishna Mohan Banerjea and Arian Witness to Christ: Jesus Christ the True *Prajāpati*." *Indian Journal of Theology* 29, 2 (April-June, 1980): 74-80.
- Potts, D. *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837*. Cambridge: University Press, 1967.
- Quenot, M. *The Icon: Windows on the Kingdom*. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991.
- Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927.
- , ed. *The Brahma-Sūtra*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1960.
- , tr. *The Principal Upaniṣads*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1953.
- Rai, L. *A History of the Ārya Samāj*. Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1967.
- Rambachan, A. "The Nature and Authority of Scripture: Implications for Hindu-Christian Dialogue." *Hindu-Christian Studies Bulletin* 8 (1995): 20-27.
- Rashvihary D. *Introduction to Shankara*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Roberts, D. "Grace in Hindu Personal Theism as Culminating in Rāmānuja." *S. E. Asia Journal of Theology* 9, 1 (July, 1967): 30-40.
- Romus, D. J. "Karma and Bhakti ways of Salvation." *Indian Journal of Theology* 37, 1 (1995): 1-14.

- Rousseau, R., ed. *Christianity and the Religions of the East*. Scranton, PA: Ridge, 1982. See especially, F. Whaling's chapter entitled, "The Trinity and the Structure of Religious Life: An Indian Contribution to Wider Christian Theology."
- Saldanha, J. "Theological Inculturation as a Missiological Problem." *Indian Theological Studies*, (March, 1977): 333-348.
- Sambayya, E. "The Christian Message and Non-Christian Religions." *Indian Journal of Theology* 7, 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1958): 12-18.
- Sankaranarayanan, P. "Hindu Theism." *Religion and Society* 7, 2 (Sept. 1960): 5-11.
- Sanneh, L. *Translating the Message*. New York: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Santucci, J. A. *An Outline of Vedic Literature*. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976.
- Sarma, D. S. *The Renaissance of Hinduism*. Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1944.
- Schweinitz, K., Jr. *The Rise and Fall of British India: Imperialism and Inequality*. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Scott, D., ed. *Keshub Chunder Sen*. Madras: CLS, 1979.
- Schroeder, C. "Levels of Truth and Reality in the Philosophies of Descartes and Sankara." *Philosophy East and West* 35, 3 (July, 1985): 285-293.
- Sen, A. *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Sen Gupta, A. "The Meanings of 'That thou art.'" *Philosophy East and West* 12 (1962): 125-134.
- Seunarine, J. F. *Reconversion to Hinduism Through Śuddhi*. Bangalore: CISRS and Madras: CLS, 1977.
- Sharma, A. "A Note on the Doctrine of 'Grace' in the Upanishads." *Indian Journal of Theology* 27, 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1978): 28-31
- . "Can Christian Theology be Āstika?" *Indian Journal of Theology* 37, 2 (1994): 10-13.
- . "Can the Tanak, the Bible and the Qur'an be Regarded as Śruti?" *Indian Journal of Theology* 28, 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1979): 33-39.

- , ed. *Neo-Hindu Views of Christianity*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.
- . "The Eternality of the Vedas and the Qurān: A Comparative Study." *Philosophy East and West* 26, 3 (July, 1976): 269-279.
- . "The Nature of Salvation in the Upaniṣads." *Hinduism* 90 (Aut., 1980): 23-27.
- . "The Lost Veda and the Unknown Christ." *Indian Journal of Theology* 30, 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1981): 24-28.
- Sharma, B. N. K. *The Brahmasūtras and their Principal Commentaries*, vol. 1. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971.
- Sharpe, E. J. *Faith Meets Faith*. London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1977.
- . *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*. Uppsala: Gleerup, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1965.
- Sheldon, H. *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Robert Culley, n.d.
- Siegel, L. "Theism in Indian Thought." *Philosophy East and West* 28, 4 (Oct., 1978): 419-423.
- Sinha, D. "Human Embodiment: The Theme and Encounter in Vedāntic Phenomenology." *Philosophy East and West* 35, 3 (July, 1985): 239-247.
- Sinha, J. *Problems of Post-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta*. Calcutta: Sinha Pub., House, 1971.
- Sircar, M. *The System of Vedāntic Thought and Culture*. Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1925, 1975.
- Sivaraman, K., ed. *Hindu Spirituality: Vedas Through Vedānta*. New York, London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1989.
- Smart, N. "God's Body." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 37, 1, 2 (Fall/Winter, 1981-1982): 51-59.
- Spear, P. *A History of India, vol. 2*. London: Penguin Books, 1970.
- , ed. *The Oxford History of India*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1958.
- Srinivasachari, P. N. *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*. Madras: Adyar Library, Vasanta Press, 1946.

- Srinivasan, G. *Studies in East - West Philosophy*. Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Pub., 1980.
- Studdert-Kennedy, G. *British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Sugirtharajah, R. S. and C. Hargreaves, *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*. London: SPCK, 1993.
- Sukhtankar, V.A. "The Crown of Hinduism." *The Indian Interpreter* 8, 4 (Jan., 1914): 171-179.
- Swahananda, Swami, tr. *Pañcadaśī of Śrī Vidyaranya*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967.
- Swinburne, R. *The Coherence of Theism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Tennent, T. "Contextualizing the Sanskritic Tradition to Serve Dalit Theology." *Missiology* 25, 3 (July, 1997): 343-349.
- . "Ethnicity and the Sanskritic Tradition." *Vidyajyoti* 61, 3 (Mar., 1997): 179-186.
- Thibaut, G., tr. *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa with the Commentary by Śaṅkara*, pt. 1 and pt. 2, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 34, vol. 38. Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1890.
- Thomas, G. *Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1950*. Verlag: Peter D. Lang, 1979.
- Thomas, M. M. "Indian Christian Theology, The Church and The People." *Religion and Society* 30, 3, 4 (Sept.-Dec., 1983) 72-75.
- . *Man and the Universe of Faiths*. Madras: CISRS, 1975.
- . "Some Trends in Contemporary Indian Christian Theology." *Religion and Society* 24, 4 (Dec., 1977): 4-18.
- . *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*. London: SCM Press, 1969, Madras: CLS, 1991.
- Thomas, P.T. *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1954.
- . "Adaptation of Catholic Monasticism in India." *The Catholic Herald of India* (9 and 16 Feb., 1921) Calcutta: 112-113, 132-133.

- . *The Theology of Chakkari*. Madras: YMCA/CISRS, 1968.
- Thomas, T. J. "Book Review of *The Writings of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy*." *Indian Journal of Theology* 35, 2 (1993): 87-89.
- . "Interaction of the Gospel and Culture in Bengal, pt. 1." *Indian Journal of Theology* 36, 2 (1994): 38-53.
- . "Interaction of the Gospel and Culture in Bengal, pt. 2." *Indian Journal of Theology* 37, 2 (1995): 47-63.
- Thomas, V. P. "The Indian Christian Theology and Its Identity." *Religion and Society* 25, 3 (Sept., 1978): 26-33.
- Tull, H. W. *The Vedic Origins of Karma/Cosmos as Man in Ancient Indian Myth and Ritual*. New York: SUNY, 1989.
- Turmes, P., S. J. *A Teacher of Genius: B Animananda*. Calcutta: Xavier Publications, 1963.
- Upadhyaya, V. P. *Lights on Vedānta*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1959.
- Urquhart, W. S. *The Vedānta and Modern Thought*. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- van der Bent, A. J. "Christianity and Culture: An Analytical Survey of Some Theological Approaches." *The Ecumenical Review* 39 (1987): 222-227.
- Varghese, V. E. Review of Literature on Indian Christian Theology Published in India During the Past Twenty-Five Years. *Indian Journal of Theology* 25, 3 and 4 (July-Dec., 1976): 133-147.
- Vāth, A., S. J. *Im Kampfe mit der Zauberwelt des Hinduismus*. Berlin and Bonn: Ferd., Dummlers Verlag, 1928.
- Vidyaranya Swami, Sri. *Pañcadaśī*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967.
- Vikrant, S. "De Nobili's Missionary Method." *Indian Missiological Review* 1, 2 (April, 1979): 175-179.
- von Brück, M. "Advaita and Trinity." *Indian Theological Studies* 20, 1 (Mar., 1983): 37-60.
- Ward, K. *Religion and Creation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- . *Religion and Revelation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

- Warrier, A. G. *The Concept of Mukti in Advaita Vedānta*. Madras: University of Madras, 1961.
- Washington, P. *Madam Blavatsky's Baboon*. London: Secker and Walburg, 1993.
- Webb, C. *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1915.
- Whaling, F. *Christian Theology and World Religions: A Global Approach*. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986.
- White, D. "Proto Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta in the *Bhagavadgītā*." *Philosophy East and West* 29 (1979): 501-507.
- Wilfred, F. "World Religions and Christian Inculturation." *Indian Theological Studies* 25, 1 (Mar., 1988): 5-26.
- Wilson, A. *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*. New York: Paragon House, 1991.
- Wilson, J. G. "Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and the Function of Religious Language." *Religious Studies* 6 (1970): 57-68.
- Wilson, K. "Culture and Conversion: An Analytical Study." (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1972). Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1973.
- Winslow, J. *The Christian Approach to the Hindu*. London: Edinburgh House Press, 1958.
- Wolpert, S. *A New History of India*. Oxford University Press, 1993.
- World Missionary Conference, 1910. *The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*, vol. IV. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910.
- Wyschogrod, E. "The Concept of the World in Śaṅkara." *Philosophy East and West* 35, 3 (July, 1975): 301-308.
- Young, R. F. *Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India*. University of Vienna Press, 1981.
- Zaehner, R. C. *Hindu Scriptures*. London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1966.
- . *Hinduism*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962, 1966.

———, tr. *The Bhagavad Gitā in English and Sanskrit*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Zysk, K. *A. L. Basham on the Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990.