

CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO THE NATIONAL INTEGRATION OF INDIA

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By

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DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that the research for the thesis entitled **“Contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the National Integration of India”** being submitted to the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science was carried out entirely by me.

Place: Kottayam

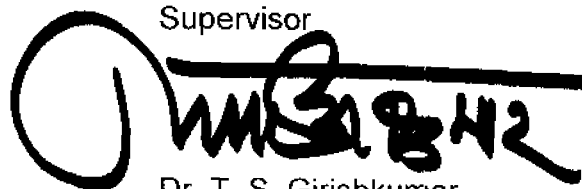
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Sivakumar M. V.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the dissertation titled "**Contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the National Integration of India**" submitted to the Mahatma Gandhi University is record of independent research work carried out by Sivakumar M. V. under my guidance and supervision. This has not been previously submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A question of an integrated nation is very significant not only for the present time but also for the years to come. This is not just a political question, it is a question pertaining to all other fields as well. Our experience amply demonstrates the shrinking of world into a Global village. In the world politics, economic, as well as in international relationship, strength of a nation assumes extreme importance. It is going to be something like survival of the mightiest, not just fittest. Powerful nations will dictate terms and conditions and weaker nations shall be compelled to humble. The real strength of a nation ought to come from within. It is wrong to believe that mere economic strength as the so called substructure can make nations mightier. What really counts is the oneness of citizens in a country. If the citizens of a country are united and together, then that shall be the strongest nation in the world. Together when they stand, all other aspect shall spontaneously develop. Thus an integrated Nationsociety becomes the prerequisite of a strong and powerful nation.

Somebody may ask the question that why should there be Nation state at all? Statelessness and one global society may be a romantic dream; but as on today this dream cannot be realized even through speculations and conjuctures into envisageable distance into future. This

has umpty number of reasons, an inventory shall be much space occupying. One's existence, identity, authenticity and ability to stake a legitimate claim solely depends on one's might in international relations as well as situations. I shall shun criticisms levelled against powerfulness of nations as trivial.

Accepting the view that strong nation is an existential imperative, it needs an analysis to understand the concept of strength. I already stated that real strength ought to come from within itself. Hence the need for national integration.

India is a Nation with many specialties. This had always been a land of diversities. Diverse languages, diverse food habits, diverse faith systems, diverse rituals and rites, diverse dress patterns, diverse music and art as well as diverse particular cultures. Apparently to an untrained mind India might look like a Pandora's Box with so much and so many multiplicities and pluralities. Yet experience from thousands of years of Indian culture reveals the oneness of this Nation through such diversities. Even when there were numerous princely states quarreling one another from time to time there was always the concept of *Akhanda Bhārata* as well as *Āsethuhimāchalaḥ*. In the vedic religion the person who performs *havana* or making an offering used to reveal his identity through speaking out his address. For example, if I am the person who performs the *havana*, the wording is "of *Jumbu Dvēpa*, of *Bhārata Varṣha*, of *Dakṣhina Patha*, *Śivakumāra Sharma*, Son of *Vāsudēva Sharma*, makes this offering". The

concept of *Bhārata Varṣha* is explicitly demonstrated through this. From this I would like to argue that the concept of *Bhārata Varṣha* is not just a political concept alone. It is a cultural concept. Political divisions of *Bhārat* into many princely states makes no difference at all to the cultural oneness of *Akhanada Bhārata*. It may be interesting to note that no matter how India was divided into many political units, the *Dharmaśāstrās*, *NītiŚāstrās*, *Dharma* as well as culture remained one transcending particular diversities. Indeed this constituted the concept of *Akhandā Bhārata*.

I would like to see this phenomenon with India as a fortune. It had been possible for this divergent nation to remain one through its cultural oneness. The concept of unity in diversity speaks nothing different; it is indeed cultural unity through diversities. The diversities are distinct but they are not differences. There is no principle of contradiction, conflict etc that makes the diversities different and contradictory to one another. The cultural unity lies beyond these varieties, transcending them.

It now becomes important to look into the principles of such cultural unity. In a word, everything could be included in the concept of *Dharma*. To make things easy to western categories and modern minds, let me call this 'Spirituality'. Indeed spirituality must be taken as an essential characteristic of India. Naturally; people the world over call India a Spiritual land.

For Indians spirituality is transcendental. It is the central point around which everything else is placed. Thus *Dharma* assumes a bearing up on everything. And the oneness of the Nation becomes spontaneous. Indeed India is naturally integrated into one unit. This is the case when the external factors do not create puckers and disturbances to the tranquility of oneness.

External factors did create puckers. Tranquility did get nearly destroyed. Invaders raided this land and later settled in as rulers. It lasted for long period and thus oneness of this country which was natural started to become alien. But then the land is indeed gifted to produce great minds from time to time to perform acts of spiritual and cultural resurgence. Isn't the *Gita* saying the same thing?

*“Paritrāṇāya Sadhōnaṁ Vināśāya Chaduṣhkṛutha Dharma
Samsthapanārthaya Sumbhavami Yugē yugē.”*

(When there is dharmic decadence there shall be *Avataras* to make reparations) Perhaps it is only through such great sons of India that this *Dharma*, culture and spirituality survived against all odds to this day.

India did survive the test of time but is still undergoing very difficult period. On the one hand we are becoming lesser and lesser aware of what we actually are and on the other hand we have to resist challenges from without. Politically we are struggling to put up with the powerful nations, economically we are struggling for self-reliance, and we have many

mouths to feed. With all these it is imperative that India must be a strong nation if we have to have any say in tomorrow's world.

This justifies the question of thinking in terms of national integration for today as well as for the future. We have to adopt a model and source to this end. It is evident that national integration in the context of India presupposes a cultural resurgence which in turn presupposes spiritual awakening. I chose Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda as a model, not forgetting personalities like Chanakya, Tilak etc. But Vivēkānaṅda indeed represents all of them. Moreover he had to face colonial India and depressed Indians. Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda had to face situation where he had to practically awaken Indian minds through strengthening their spirituality and culture. This indeed can develop into a new methodology for cultural resurgence and national integration.

Objectives of the Study

(1) To understand the need for powerful nation.

In the modern scenario only powerful nations can pursue their national interest according to their will. 'Might is right' is the rule. Independent existence in the international community depends on the force under the command of each and every nation. The downfall of Iraq and Afganistan and the survival of Israel are good examples in this regard. Whatever may be the differences and diversities, in order to be powerful a nation must be internally strong. This internal strength may be based on ideology, culture and tradition, religion or language. Whatever

may be the base, the requirement is that there should be internal cohesiveness. The disintegration of former USSR is an illustration of the lack of internal cohesiveness of the ideology they pursued. There was no unifying factor in former USSR. Thus internal integrity is necessary for the survival of the nation state.

2) To understand the source of power or strength in India:

The key to India's ancient civilization is to be found in the four fold goals of life (*Puruṣarthās*): (1) *Dharma* or absolute righteousness; (2) *Artha* or 'Material possession'; (3) *Kāma* or fulfilment of desires; (4) *Mokṣa* or release. *Dharma* according to *Mahābhāratha* is as follows.

"It is the divine and transcendental Justice, Truth and Law which upholds Universe, mind and people.²"

Thus *Dharma* or absolute righteousness is the cardinal principle of Indian civilization from time immemorial. This *Dharma* is the highest ethical principle governing the society and the individual. Duties of individuals and rulers are prescribed by the *Dharma*.

This divine and transcendental justice have universal application throughout the territory of India commanding obedience from the rulers and the ruled alike. Thus unlike in western countries, where political obligation was based on the force under the command of the state, in India the subject obeyed the *Rājan* because both the rulers and the ruled were under the supreme ethical law of *Dharma* and this law is absolutely

spiritualistic. The old inclusive terms for religion in India was *Ārya Dharma*. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities. *Ārya Dharma* would include all the faiths (Vēdic and non-Vēdic) that originated in India. It was used by Budhists and Jains as well as by those who accepted the *Vēdas*. Thus the main source of power and strength in India is the belief in *Dharma* which stands for the material, moral and spiritual well being of all.

3) **To understand the role of Spirituality and Culture in the National Integration of India.**

Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is a national individuality- each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. Pursuit of spiritualism constituted India's way of life. According to Swamiji, spirituality constituted India's individuality.

“As India was spiritual, he felt that its social and political institutions must be national and spiritual. It was for that he advocated India's spiritual nationalism”³

The religion Hinduism had a powerful unifying effect. Hinduism is something more and different than a religion. It is a mix of customs, traditions, social behavior, rituals, metaphysical speculations, cultural and value orientations. There is no duality of orthodoxy and heresy in Hinduism, because there is no defined and closed faith, no established church based on the foundations of a divine scripture revealed by a divine

being to divinely ordered prophet/prophets. Hinduism has a flexibility and resilience and a traditional base wide enough to cover the syndrome of Indian culture. That is why sometimes the revivalism of Hinduism take the form of revivalism of the ancient culture, symbols, values, idiom and traditional pattern of living. Hinduism's religious content has been generally referred to as Brāhminism, while the term Hindu (adopted from Sindhu, i.e., the inhabitants in, around and beyond to the east of the river Indus/ *Sindhu*), which was used by ancient Persians, Greeks, and later by Arabs and central Asian people, referred essentially the ethnic geographic identity of the inhabitants. In this sense, irrespective of belief and religion, language or culture, every Indian is considered Hindu by the Arabs, the Iranians and the Turks and most other foreigners. In the Words of Jawaharlal Nehru.

"The word 'Hindu' does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference to it in an Indian book is, I am told, is in a Tantrik work of the eighth century AD, where 'Hindu' means a people and not the followers of a particular religion. But it is clear that the word is a very old one as it occurs in the Avesta and in old Persian. It was used then and for thousand years or more later by the peoples of western and central Asia for India, or rather for the people living on the other side of the Indus river. The word is clearly derived from the word Sindhu, the old as well as present name for the Indus. From this Sindhu came the word Hindu and Hindustan as well as Indus and India. The famous Chinese pilgrim Itsing, who came to India in the seventh century A D writes in his record of travels that the 'northern tribes', that is the people of central Asia, called India Hindu (Hsin-tu) but, he adds, 'this is not at all a common name and to the most suitable name for India is Noble Land (Āryadēśh). The use of the word 'Hindu' in

connection with a particular religion is of very later occurrence. The old inclusive terms for religion in India was Ārya Dharma. Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together. It is the inmost constitutions of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities. Ārya Dharma would include all the faiths (Vēdic and non-Vēdic) that originated in India; it was used by Budhists and Jains as well as by those who accepted the Vēdas. Budha always called his way to salvation as the 'Ārya path'."4

Thus spiritualism and culture are the basis on which unity and integrity of India has been conceived from time immemorial. This unity is expressed in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as follows.

"Uttaraṁ Yatsarmudrasya Himādeśhchaiva dakṣhinaṁ Varṣamtād
Bharataṁ nāma Bhāratī Yatra Samatatiḥ."5

(The country bounded by the seas on the south and the Himalayas on the North is called *Bhāratam*. There live the progeny of *Bhārata*).

4) To understand the impact of foreign invasions on Indian culture:

Foreign aggressions on India started with Alexander and continued till 15th August 1947. They all shook Indian culture considerably and left long and deep impacts. The Muslims came to India as Plunderers and later as settlers. Then came the Europeans with nefarious ends. India had to take all these and for a long time, and yet: we remained.

Prithviraj Chauhan is the point of break where Indian culture and religion getting attacked from outside. Apart from the brutal cruelty

imposed on the Hindus by the early invaders, the Mughals, to some extent adopted a policy of 'give and take' in cultural matters. Ofcourse there was also rulers like Aurangzeb showing extreme intolerance to the other religions and following a policy of religious orthodoxy. Among the foreign conquerors, the Europeans inflicted the most severe damage on Indian culture. Portugal, France and Great Britain were the major European conquerors. Out of these, the British rule, the longest and severest, caused much disintegration and distortion to Indian culture. The main tools of cultural destruction are: **Āryan Invasion theory; Encouragement to refutation of Indian culture; Alienation of Brahmins and encouragement to Hindu Muslim rift and conversion to Christianity by education and translation.**

By Āryan Invasion theory the Europeans tried to wrest the cultural heritage of India by declaring that they were the forefathers of Hindu culture (Āryan culture) and therefore their right to rule is 'natural'. In the words of Paliakov.

"According to this new theory it (Āryan race) was not the whole human race but one particular race, a white race which subsequently became Christian which had descended from the mountains of Asia to colonize and populate the west"⁶.

The Britishers thought that Christianisation of India would really go a long way to maintain the colonial rule and they used all the available means for this purpose. Missionaries with their proselytizing interest were

happy to join the plot with the ruling authority. Apart from these, the Hindus and Muslims were divided into enemy camps. So Hindu Muslim rift, anti Brāhminism, near total freedom to Christian missionaries etc have their direct political links to British colonial rule over India.

The prestigious Boden Professorship of Saṅskrit at oxford University was endowed by Colnel Boden specifically to

“.... promote Saṅskrit learning among the English, so as to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian Religion”⁷

Macaulay (1800-1859) firmly believed that converting Indians to Christianity would make the colonial rule stranger. He adopted two ways to achieve the target – Euro centric Christian biased English education and translation of Indian ancient Scriptures into English in such a way that by reading these books, the Hindus will leave Hinduism to join Christianity. In 1836 Macualay very enthusiastically wrote to his father.

“It is our belief that if our Plans of education followed up there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence”⁸

Max Muller, the so called lover of India, whom Macualay entrusted the work of translating ancient Indian scriptures, wrote to his wife about the translation of *R̥g Vēda* in 1866 in the following words.

“..... this edition of mine and the translation of the Vēda, will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of Millions of

souls in that country. It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years"⁹

Macaulay's letter to his father and Max Muller's letter to his wife clearly indicate the purpose of their work, that is, conversion of Hindus to Christianity. Gospels were printed and given free to English learners. In Kerala, southern part of India, this went a step ahead by making church and School always together.

Thus the Europeans, especially the Britishers, provided the necessary infra-structure for the cultural destruction of India and the destruction process is ongoing still.

5) To analyse the philosophy of Swami Vivekenanda in the then existing socio-political context.

India before Swamiji was a land that had lost all erstwhile glory, it was a land ruled by aggressors from outside, and a bunch of spiritually confused people. Time had treated this great nation very badly. Colonial rule resulted in the pauperization of peasants and recurring famines. Christianization efforts of the missionaries and the government support to the process resulted in large scale conversion to Christianity. Above all the English educated Indians also blamed the Hindu religion for the existing social evils. According to Swamiji, colonial British rule must end for the progress (both spiritual and material) of the country and its religion. Indians must organize and push the invaders out from the mother land. If this has to happen, then each Indian must first realize his own

greatness through realizing the greatness, culture, religion, spirituality and even epistemology of this land. Spirituality had always been the strength of this nation, which is rather dormant due to Western begotary and influence. Vivekananda desired to kindle the dormant spiritual strength of Indians and fortify Indians to stand up to the British and ask them to quit.

Through his electrifying lectures, he raised his countrymen with an urgent sense of duty to the country and its religion.

“He exerted them to lead a life of dedication and sacrifice. He aroused in them a fiery sense of pride in Hinduism, to which he gave a timely interpretation and added a new dimension”¹⁰

To consolidate his and his followers activities Swamiji founded Sri Rāmakṛishṇa Math and Sri Rāmakṛishṇa Mission and placed the objective of ‘*Ātmano Mōkṣartham, Jagat Hithaya Cha*’ (for the salvation of the self and for the welfare of humanity) before the members of the Math and the Mission. Service to humanity, according to him, was to be considered equal to the worship of God. Thus he added a new dimension to the age-old institution of *Sanyāsa*.

The *Complete Works of Swāmi Vivēkānand* provide as the glimpses of his philosophical ideals. His philosophy is based on spiritualism. For example, he interpreted history in terms of spiritualism. His concept of freedom which is all inclusive is spiritualistic. His ideal of equality stands for gradual growth of individual, his philosophy of nationalism, his views on democracy, anarchism, internationalism are all

based on spiritualism. The philosophy of Swami Vivekananda was moulded to some extent by his social background, but mainly by India's spiritual lore. His social upbringing revealed to him the environmental weakness of India, like social authoritarianism and exclusiveness. In his opinion religious orthodoxy too had suffocated the growth of society. He was therefore determined to improve the social and political environment of India by liberally interpreting the Indian scriptural ideas.

6) To examine the contribution of Swamiji in the Nationalist movement and National integration of India.

The British colonial rule and their deliberate attempts to destroy Indian culture resulted in the degeneration of Hindu society. The wide spread economic poverty and ignorance of the masses moved him to tears. He was shocked to see that India was forgetting its national individuality, spiritualism, by imitating the west in a servile way without discrimination. Thus the problems he confronted in India were many and he bestowed his thought and activity in overcoming them by devising the ends and means of national reconstruction on spiritual and cultural basis. After the Chicago Parliament of Religions (1893) Vivēkānanda became confident of his spiritual mission and determined to reorganize society on the basis of Neo-Vēdānta. In his triumphant march from Colombo to Almora he spoke loudly of his social and political views on the Indian society and wake it up from long hibernation. The effort of Swāmiji was to strengthen the spiritual unity of India and to emancipate the individual from the diehard society and to a large extent he succeeded in his effort

Swāmiji was a unifying force in Indian spiritual renaissance and thereby the national revival.

“The eternity of the Vēdas, the strength of the Upaniṣhads, the compassion of the Budha and the spirit of equality of Islam found a sonorous echo in him in representing India’s renaissance”¹¹

In the words of Sardar K.M Panikkar,

“This new Śaṅkarāchārya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology. Travelling all over India he not only aroused a sense of Hindu feeling but taught the doctrine of Universal vedanta as the background of new Hindu reformation..... it is Vivēkānaṅda who first gave the Hindu movement its sense of Nationalism and provided most of the movement with a common all- India outlook.”¹²

Thus Vivēkānaṅda’s role in nation building is beyond any doubt. He was the soul behind the nationalist movement, particularly the extremist nationalist movement. The threat to Hinduism from missionaries and rulers like Macaulay were successfully prevented and defeated by him. At the same time his Vedantic humanistic ideas provides for social coherence and religions tolerance. In the words of Sri. C. Rājagōpālāchāry.

“Swāmy Vivēkānaṅda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him, we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda. May his faith, his courage and his wisdom ever inspire us so that we may keep safe the treasure we have received from him.”¹³

7) To understand the significance of Swamiji's philosophy in modern times.

The Philosophy of Swāmiji is significant in modern times too. Western materialism and individualism are still threatening the spiritual basis of our culture. Education without due recognition to the cultural tradition results in creating individuals interested only in amassment and enjoyment. Terrorist organizations in some parts of the country like Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern states are threatening the integrity and unity of India. Swamiji's concept of common religion is of much significance in the modern context. His concept of common religion incorporates the common principles of diverse religious sects. Swamiji is not opposed to religious sects. He conceded that religious sects may retain their identity but they should not threaten national unity. His concept of common religion is based on equality and coordination of faiths.

"Thus Vivēkānānda wanted to Strengthen the nation by infusing unity between the 'brain' of Brāhmin and the heart of Budhist, the Islamic body and Vedantic brain, and an European society with India's religion"¹⁴

In the words of VKR.Rao

"Secularism, socialism, mass uplift and mass power, women's liberation, abolition of untouchability, inclusion of social service as part of religious worship, Hindu-Muslim unity, universal literacy and informal education – all these constitute the contribution of Swāmi Vivēkānānda to the building of modern India."¹⁵

We must add that his ideas on all these issues are of immense significance in modern time.

Significance of the study

Only strong nations are heard by others. India must become stronger in order to meaningfully exist in the world. Strength of the nation comes from integration. In Indian context integration implies strengthening of spirituality and Indian culture. The methodology of Swamiji can be best used for this purpose for today as well as the future

Hypothesis of the study

Spiritual and cultural awakening is the prime source for national integration given Indian context. This has been proved by Swami Vivekananda and he had contributed significantly to the spiritual and cultural integration of India. The methodology adopted by Swamiji for spiritual and cultural integration of India is of immense relevance today as well as tomorrow. But the ideas of Swāmiji had not received the due academic attention it deserved.

Area of the study

The main area of study is the philosophy of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅḁa. Culture, religion and politics also comes under the study since most of the ideas of Swāmiji are a reaction to the then existing social, cultural, religions and political situation of India.

Limitations of the study

The philosophy of Vivēkānaṅḁa is mostly direct or indirect manifestation of many Indian schools of thought, mainly the *Vēdānta* school. It is always not possible to establish a one to one correspondence

with what Vivēkānaṅda says and what a particular school of thought holds. Mostly Vivēkānaṅda's thoughts are synthetic, blending the principles. Since the study is essentially conceptual, empirical data supporting arguments do not mean much. What is at the level of concept cannot be demonstrated empirically. Finally, Literature is in abundance with divergent interpretations that can confuse. It is difficult to always be consistent with what Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda ought to have said, if one attempts to make conjunctures.

Findings

Findings of the study are the following

1. There is absolutely no doubt that we should remain as a proud nation in the world.
2. The way to become strong in Indian context is through spiritual awakening and cultural resurgence as proved by Swami Vivēkānaṅda.
3. Although the philosophy of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda is of very much significance today, authorities are not giving due regard to it.
4. Salvation of India lies in following the spiritual path shown by Swāmiji. Undue materialism, westernization and individualism, as well as perception of differences instead of varieties are the major threats to the culture of our 'Noble Land'

5. We have to reorient ourselves not only in academic world but also in all walks of life in terms of strengthening ourselves on the basis of spirituality which is the 'Life blood of this nation'.

Chapterization

Chapter I

Introduction

In this chapter a general introduction to the study, purposes, hypothesis and limitations of the study are included.

Chapter II

Cultural India up to the period of Prithviraj Chauhan

This chapter deals with the basic concepts and characteristics of Indian culture before being conquered by the foreigners. Indian and alien meaning of the term '*Āryan*', cultural unity of India as mentioned in *Purāṇās* and cultural syncretism caused by early Muslim invasions are also included in this chapter.

Chapter III

Cultural India from Prithviraj Chauhan to Jawaharlal Nehru

This chapter deals with foreign invasions and their impact on Indian culture. Invasions by Muslims and Europeans and the instruments used by them to destroy and disintegrate Indian culture were examined in this chapter.

Chapter IV

Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda and His Philosophy

In this chapter the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is explained. His philosophical ideas having direct impact on national integration and national resurgence were analysed in detail. The formative influences that shaped Swamiji's philosophy were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter V

Contribution of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda to the National Integration of India

In this chapter the impact of Swami Vivekananda on Nationalist movement is analysed. His contribution to the unification of Hinduism and the influence of his philosophy on militant nationalists were also discussed in this chapter.

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CHAPTER II

CULTURAL INDIA UP TO THE PERIOD OF PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN

I wish to treat Prithviraj Chauhan as a milestone in the history of cultural India as well as Indian culture. For more than one reasons; in the strict sense of the term; Prithviraj Chauhan could be termed as the last Indian ruler of Delhi (India) before 15 August 1947. Though history treats Bahadur Shah Zafar as the last Indian King at Delhi; in the strict sense of the term Zafar is an outsider whose ancestors came to this Nation as invaders. Precisely for this reason I wish to treat ancient India up to the period of Prithviraj as one unit in my attempt to talk about cultural India. While speaking about cultural India one thing must be born in mind; it definitely is beyond the political boundaries of today's Indian Union. Ideally, cultural India includes many neighbouring countries of present day India; and this sometimes gets the popular name of *Greater India*.

India gets her very name India from the mighty river *Sindhu* (in Sanskrit) which is now in today's Pakistan. One could say that the Sindhu Valley is the very womb of Indian Civilisation. The early *Āryan* (the concept is disputed) settlers called the river Sindhu, which means a huge sheet of water. Sometimes the word Sindhu is also used as a synonym for ocean. The region is also known as *Āryāvarta*- to mean the area or

dwelling region of Aryans. The idea of *Sindhu* civilization gets disputed with the knowledge of the river *Sarasvati*. With the river *Sindhu* we find civilization only to the south and not to the north, which remained a puzzle. But with *Sarasvati*, we find the civilization evenly spread on either side and the entire length. So the view that *Sārasvatha* culture ought to be the name gets stronger.

It must be noted that the term *Āryan* ought to be used connotatively meaning the one with a given set of qualities. Some people treat it as a racial concept, or to identify a group of people speaking Aryan languages etc. To me it is more of a quality concept; that stands to mean group of people with given qualities.

The term "*Āryan*" needs some serious clarification at this point. This is one term that had been much misinterpreted and misrepresented. Western Historians like Max Muller etc. treats *Āryan* as a racial identity. Right through their writings of history, they treat the term Aryan to stand for race. The French thinker Michael Danino contradicts the theory of Max Muller in his book, '*The Invasion That Never Was*'. From Max Muller it was a deliberate lie to treat Aryan as a race; because through such theories the Europeans could intellectually legitimise their colony rule in the east, particularly in India. Such attempts to intellectually legitimise domination is nothing new to history and Sir Francis Bacon speaks best about this in his book "*Novum Organon...*". Bacon speaks about very calculated ideological deception that craftily deceives people into

accepting the illegitimate domination of the dominator. Bacon identifies four idols as the agent of and for deception; and they are (1) idols of the cave (2) idols of the theatre (3) idols of the market place and (4) idols of the tribe. Later, we call such deceptions as 'ideology' 'hegemony' etc. In short, Max Muller's "Āryan race" theory was nothing more than yet another European pattern of deceiving the public to intellectually legitimise social domination. Max Muller's terming the term Aryan as a race is also such attempt to legitimise the domination of the Europeans over Asia, particularly India. A huge narration of this can be found in the autobiography of Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kempf*. The theory in nut shell is this: 'Aryans are a superior race, gifted with great abilities to create culture and civilisation. The more pure is their blood and race, the greater is their capacity to create culture and civilisation. All great civilisation and culture in the entire world is created by Āryan race'.

However or whatever was such persons obsessions with their superiority, of race etc., they had to, they certainly couldn't help it, recognise the amazing greatness of the Indian culture and civilisation. And now they are out to establish that this culture and civilisation is a creation of the Aryans who had culturally invaded and conquered India. On the first place the Europeans claim that they are Aryans as they have blue eyes, golden hair etc. So it was their ancestors who came to the Indus valley in batches and settled, to create the mighty Indian culture and civilisation etc. But slowly the Aryans got mingled with the aborigins,

lost the purity of their blood, and became degenerated. Now again the Europeans are coming and making colonies. Naturally they are the only eligible ones to rule; so their domination is just a historical necessity. The popularisation of this theory was so effective that not only it convinced the Europeans, but also it convinced Indians to desperate helplessness. There were many Indians who were very sure that only the British are equipped with, as well as capable to rule India. To them, "home rule" was the biggest joke. Mahārāja Ranjēēt Singh of Jamnagar is one such example, to speak of just one among many. Thus intellectual legitimisation of social domination was perfectly carried out, and even today, it continues. Let us make a small attempt to revisit the concept of Ārya or Āryan (more discussions on the Arian theory shall be carried later in the next chapter). Undoubtedly, it is originally a Sanskrit expression and term. Thus etymologically, the term Āryan originated in India and in Sanskrit language. So, if Āryan is a race, and they were coming in batches to India, that group came without any name; or such people became Aryan only after their reaching India. And who might have called them so? If they called themselves Āryans to distance themselves from the aborigines then they had done it so only after their learning Sanskrit so well. Now why should they adopt so precious a name in a newly learned foreign language? It could have been only natural for them to use an expression from their own language, about which, if they had any, we know nothing of.

Another argument could be that the Āryans came, settled, and then only the Sanskrit language had evolved. If this is so, then the aborigines active participation can't be ruled out at all. If the original Aryan language is in any way responsible for creation of Sanskrit language then it would not have been so different from other European languages. Further, given their own theory, the original Āryans would have been ceased to be Āryans as they had already lost their racial purity by mixing with aborigines. In all, the Āryan invasion theory and the Aryan race theory is nothing other than a semblance of contradictions and tall tales.

Let us now see, what the term Ārya really means in Sanskrit. The term Ārya, Āryan could mean refined person, eminent person, perfect person, respected person etc. The term "Śrēṣṭha" could be a synonym for the term Aryan. As a corollary example to this let us see the meaning of the term Sanskrit itself. Sanskrit simply means refined, perfect etc. Sanskrit, Sanskara and the like terms are all offshoots from the basic concept of bettering, refining, perfecting etc.

We know that the language Sanskrit, was used only by the learned ones. It was not the language of and for common folks. Only refined, perfected people-Aryans- used the Sanskrit language. In short Sanskrit was a language for the people with definite qualities.

The term 'Āryan' is just a quality concept. Any person with ideal sets of qualities gets called an Āryan. We know that the Sanskrit language is full

of such quality concepts. Unfortunately, some quality concepts degenerated and lost the connotation of qualities, they rather became denotative. Obviously they caused much social problems as well.

The “*Varna*” concepts are a real good example for quality concepts. The four *Varṇās*, “*Brāhmaṇa*”, “*Kṣatriya*”, “*Vaiśya*” and “*Sūdra*” are nearly quality concepts. The society is classified into four *varṇas*, depending on the qualities of individual members. Sanskrit texts very clearly say who could be called a *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya*, *Sūdra* etc. It is also stated in indubitable terms that nobody is born *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Brāhmaṇhood* is only acquired or achieved by individuals. According to the abilities and capabilities of individuals, they find themselves fitting into one or the other forms of *Varna*. Isn't this true of all societies, at all times? According to the abilities, capabilities and opportunities, a person becomes what he becomes.

The Caste System

When the Āryans (improperly so called) settled in India, there were different races under different stages of civilisation. The Āryan (improperly so called) attempt was to adjust and integrate the different elements of society. Perfect equality and perfect democracy were out of question at that time of human civilisation. In the context of heterogeneity of blood, colour and language, of custom and belief, the achievement of a homogenous social and political entity seemed almost impossible. The institution of caste was devised initially as the basis of division of labour and functions; but subsequently it degenerated and classified into a rigid

system. The fact that along with the inclusion of Drāvidian gods into the Āryan Pantheon, Drāvidian (linguistic identify) priests were also accepted as Brāhmins in Hindu society is testimony to the elasticity of the system as well as the spirit of accommodation and adjustment.

The European colonisers in the eighteenth century were faced with similar problems in America, Australia and Africa. The Europeans solved the problem of racial diversity by exterminating the indigenous populations or enslaving them. On the other hand, the Āryans, (improperly so called) who settled on the soil solved the problem of racial diversity by the institution of the caste. Nobody would justify the undemocratic nature of the caste system prevalent of late, but it would be potently unfair to carry the scales of abstract justice to the remotest past in order to enforce democratic rights. From the point of view of historical perspective, there are considerations in favour of a system which sought to integrate different types of people into one social whole and find room for different stages of civilisation within one cultural unity. At least in origin the institution of caste was a device for social harmony.

As the present Hindus are the inheritors of the Āryan (connotative use) culture the question which naturally arises first when dealing with the structure of Āryan (connotative use) society is whether the caste system, which is the most prominent feature of the present day Hindu society, existed in any shape or from among the Vēdic Āryans or not.

The common notion that the Hindu society was originally divided into four '*Varṇās*' is extremely erroneous. The *Puruṣha Sūkta*, one of the latest of *R̥g Vēdic* hymns, no doubt mentions, *Brūhmaṇs*, *Rājanyās*, *Vaiśyās* and *Śūdras*¹ but it does not say that there were four *Varṇās*. Perhaps this classification of society into *Varṇās* may be better interpreted as grading of society into broad groups on the basis of broad spectrum qualities. Individuals with high qualities were graded higher and those with lesser qualities low. Later this had become set heriditoried, and changed into so called caste system. There is no legitimacy in calling caste as heriditory, given this view such division of society into groups of people according qualities are only a natural functional regeneration of any society. The Indian society began to comprise two varnas. The *Āryan* people came to constitute the *Ārya Varṇa*,² and the *Dāsās* similarly constituted the *Dāsavarṇa*.³ The *R̥g Vēda* not only mentions the terms *Ārya Varṇa* and *Dāsa Varṇa* but at one place actually speaks of the great *Āryan R̥ṣi Agastya* as protecting both the *Varṇās*.⁴ This leaves no room for doubt that in the *Rg Vedic* period there were only two *varṇās* in the Indian society the *Ārya* and the *Dāsa*.

"The non-*Āryan* *Dāsās*, when admitted into *Āryan* colonies, began to serve the *Āryas*, and the word *Dāsa*, therefore, acquired the meaning of servant or slave, just as 'slave' in the Teutonic language, was originally slave. Probably as a result of this meaning being given to the word, the non-*Āryans* gave up this name and began to be called *Śūdras*".⁵

Except for this change in the nomenclature of the *Dāsās*, the condition of the Indian society in the later vedic period was not much different from that of the end of Rgvedic period. In the later vedic literature we here of *Āryās* and *Śūdrās* as still forming the two sections of the Indian society.

The question naturally arises as to what sort of relations existed between the *Āryās* and *Śūdrās* in the later vedic period, when they have settled peacefully side by side. In sacred matters the distinction between *Āryas* and *Śūdras* was quite marked. It is not amazing that the *Āryas* of the *Rgvēdic* period condemned the *Dasās* for being '*Anyāvarta*' (observing strange religious practices), in the later Vēdic period the *Āryas* themselves discouraged the *Śūdras* from adopting the vēdic faith. The *śūdra* was prohibited from milking the cow for the milk required at the '*Agnihōtra*' and was excluded from a share in the *soma* draught. But though marriage between *Ārya* and *Śūdra* was not approved, in other aspects the *Śūdras* appear to have enjoyed a better position in society at this period than at any later period. There was not even a semblance of untouchability which disfigured the Hindu society of the later ages.⁶ The *Maitrayaṇi Samhita* proves that some *Śūdras* were quite rich.⁷ Sin against *Ārya* and *Śūdra* has been shown as causing equal remorse.⁸

"So far as the *Āryan* society of the Vēdic age is concerned there is absolutely no trace of anything even approaching caste system."⁹

The common *Āryas* were called *vis*, which simply meant people.¹⁰ The *vis* included men of all professions or ranks except the nobility and priest hood.

Above the common *Ārya* were two privileged orders. One of these orders comprised the rulers or *Kṣatriyās*, a word formed from *Kṣātra* meaning dominion. Again the word *Kṣatriya*, like the word *vis*, did not mean any caste. Thus the great gods *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* are called *Kṣatriyas* i.e. rulers.¹¹ No doubt *Āryan* (connotative use) kinship was hereditary and therefore the members of royal families were hereditary *Kṣatriyas*. But any *Ārya* not belonging to a royal family could be ennobled on becoming a ruler. Thus *Purūravas* was the son of the ṛṣi or priest, but as he became a King he was recognised as a *Kṣatriya* and some of the most famous *Kṣatriya* families descended from him. The Priest *Vidāthin Bharadwāja* became a *Kṣatriya* as soon as he was adopted by King *Bharata*, and his descendants were well-known *Bharata-Kṣatriyas*.

The most privileged class comprised the *Brāhmins* or priests. Vēdic priesthood had as little to do with caste system as nobility. It was open to every *Ārya* to enter the priestly order. The younger brothers of kings often entered the priestly order, and sometimes even a king would renounce his kingdom and become a *Ṛṣi*. The most noted example of a king who renounced his kingdom to enter the spiritual order is of course *Viśwāmitra*. If *Viśwāmitra* had lived when caste system had become established, he need not have renounced his kingdom to become a

Brāhmaṇ, because, being a *Bharata* and thus a descendant of *Vidāthin* *ha* *Bradvāja*, he would have been recognised a *Brāhmaṇa* by his very birth. But in the casteless Vedic society his descent from *Vidāthin Bharadvāja* did not make him a *Brāhmaṇ*. He had to renounce his kingdom and lead a spiritual life in order to become a *Brāhmaṇ*. His family specialised in priesthood in the same way as other priestly families had done and thus gained the same status as enjoyed by them. The *vis* or commoner similarly could become a *Brāhmaṇ* if he possessed sufficient spiritual merit. Thus *Nabhanēdistha* and his son and grandson *Bālanañda* and *Vatsapri* who were *vis* or *Vaisyas* became *Brāhmaṇs* and were admitted into the *Gāviṣṭhira* family of the *Ātrēyas*.

The foregoing review thus clearly shows that the *Āryan* society of the *Vēdic* age had no caste system but was divided into three classes of priests, rulers and commoners. This division was exactly identical with the three estates of European society, and even the order of precedence was same. Thus in England the three estates are clergy, barons and commons, those who prey, those who fight and those who work¹² The Iranian society also constituted the commoners and the two classes *Athravās* and *Rathaēsthus*; priests and warriors.

With the passing of time, however, this classification became more and more rigid and the class division began to be regarded as something in the nature of divine dispensation.

Basham says:

“Culturally the period of later vedic literature saw Indian life and thought take the direction which it has followed ever since. The end of this shadowy age, with its kings growing in power, its priests arrogating to themselves even greater privileges, and its religious outlook rapidly changing, marks the beginning of the great period of India's cultures in which the pattern of her society, religion, literature and art gradually assumed something of its present shape”.¹³

The very words *Brāhmaṇa* (descendant of *Brāhman* or priest), *Rājanya* (descendant of *Rājan* or king), and *Vaiśya* (descendant of *vis* or commoner) show that these classes tended to become absolutely hereditary by the end of the vedic age. In Europe also this tendency was clearly visible even as late as the time of French revolution as the following quotation from Haye's 'Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe' shows.

“Every individual was stillborn to a particular 'class' or as the current phrase went, to 'the station to which God had called him, and the questioning of the fundamental divine nature of class distinctions, if allowable to Rausseau or some other advanced intellectual, seemed a silly or downright blasphemous occupation for common people.”¹⁴

But in India the development in post-vedic times was absolutely different. The Hindu society was divided into hundreds of castes. It is certain that the three classes of Aryan (connotative use) society could not develop into so many castes, so different from one another at different places. The conclusion is therefore irresistible that the caste system was

a gift from the non-Aryan people to the Hindu society. In all probability the Dravidian (linguistic identify) people were divided into a number of vocational castes as well as endogamous tribes even in the earliest times. This had its influence on the Āryas also. Thus the *Brāhmaṇas* became divided into ten main castes according to the part of the country they inhabited. As for nobility, the terms *Rājanya* and *Kṣatriya* by which it was known seem to have acquired in later times the meanings of royal and non-royal nobles respectively. This distinction resulted in the breaking up of the nobility also at least into two castes now known as *Rājputs* (Rajaputrās or Rajanyās) and *Khatris* (Kṣatriyās). The *Vysyās* or *Āryan* (connotative use) commoners were naturally most influenced by the non-Aryan caste system, and they seem to have divided into vocational castes such as merchants, clerks and artisans practising the more respectable arts. New castes were also formed by invading tribes such as Gurjaras. Certain castes may also have been formed as a result of *varṇasaṅkara* caused by marriage between Aryas and non-Aryas.¹⁵ In this way the Hindus became a 'community of communities'.¹⁶

Just as the concept of *Varṇa*, the concept of *Āryan* is also a quality concept. By the term *Āryan* it is meant that he is a person with such and such sets of qualities. Unfortunately Max Muller and Company had mutilated it. Hitler took it to his head and warred to establish the "legitimate rights" of the Aryans, which is to conquer and rule the world.

What was more, Hitler was thoroughly convinced that the Germans are the purest blooded Āryan race, especially the Nordic Āryans as he says

The Persian emperor Darius conquered the Sindhu region in 518 B.C. In Frasi language Sindhu got pronounced as Hind (Daria Hind or *Sindhu Nadi* in Sanskrit). The land beyond river Hind and the *Sārasvatha culture* gradually came to be known as 'Hindustan' and the people living there, their religion etc. as Hindus, Hinduism etc. With Alexander the Greek Invader, Sindhu river gets another name. They called *Sindhu Nadi* the River Indus. Thus India gets the name 'India'. The Greeks were the beginners of European civilisation. Most of the western world borrowed much from Greek culture and civilisation. The name India also got carried into western languages and this name became more popular. Since then most foreigners have referred to the entire landscape from Himalayas to Kanyakumari as India.

However within the sub-continent, the landscape was called '*Bhārata Varṣha*'. The name *Bhārata* came from the name *Bharata*, a famous king mentioned in early *purāṇās*. It is told that *Bharata* was not satisfied with his sons and therefore selected one among his subjects to be the next ruler. This incident amply supports the view that the king need not be necessarily son of the previous king. Any citizen who is fit can be made a king. *Bharata Varṣha* is supposed to be the part of an island continent known as *Jambudwīpu* (couldn't this be the one great land mass before the great continental drift?).

Political and Legal Institutions

According to some western writers and their eastern supporters democratisation of the world is the 'white mans burden'. These writers argue that social and political developments in Afro-Asian countries owe much to the colonial rule of the European nations. Naturally, in the case of India also these writers are of the view that the development of political and legal institutions in India is the result of the colonial rule of the West, particularly the English.

However, in the case of India, her legal and political institutions are the product of the wisdom of the people who lived here thousands of years ago. The *Ṛgveda* and later *Samhitas* throw considerable light on the political and legal institutions of the Vedic age. They make it clear that the region occupied by the Āryan (connotative use) people was divided into a number of Kingdoms (*Rashtra*) each of which was ruled by a king (*Rājan*). The kingdoms were usually small in extent but the terms *Samrāj*,¹⁷ *Ekrāj*¹⁸ and *Adhirāj*¹⁹ found in the *Ṛgveda* and later *Samhitas* suggest that sometimes a king carved out a fairly large kingdom and assumed grandiloquent titles showing his superiority over other kings.

The lines of kingly succession found in the *Ṛgveda* and later literature show that kingship was hereditary and the law of primogeniture was normally followed. On the other hand a verse of the *Ṛgveda*²⁰ clearly says that the king was elected by the people (*visah*). A song blessing the king at the time of his coronation occurs both in the *Ṛgveda* and *Atharvaveda* with slight variations.²¹

The last verse of this song as found in the *Atharvavēda* where it consists of two hymns seems to suggest that the election of the king took place in the *samiti*. These statements, however, are not really inconsistent with hereditary succession, for as Glonder holds.

“The election by the people was in reality only their formal sanction of a fait accompli. However, even this formal sanction shows that the voice of the people carried weight in the matter of succession to the royal throne.”²²

Another essential feature of the government which provided the people with some measure of check on the king was the existence of two popular assemblies known as *Sabha* and *Samiti*. The *Sabha* is often mentioned in the *Ṛgvēda*²³ and denotes both an Assembly of the people and the hall where the people assembled. The *samiti* too is mentioned frequently in *Ṛgvēda*²⁴ and the later vedic works. According to Ludwig²⁵ the *Sabha* was an assembly not of all people but of the *Brāhmaṇs* and *Māghavans* (rich patrons) while *samiti* included all the people (*visah*). The view of Ludwig is supported by the fact that to be a *Sabhēya* (a member of Sabha) was considered a coveted honour.²⁶ The king was expected to be present in the sessions of the *samiti* as the more representative body²⁷ and probably presided over its deliberations. Although the functions of the *Sabha* and *Samiti* cannot be precisely defined, the passages referring to them clearly indicate that both these bodies exercised considerable authority. A famous hymn occurring both in the *Ṛgvēda* and *Atharvavēda* lays great stress on the spirit of co-operation and unity in this national

assembly. The words of this hymn which have resounded through the ages are as follows.

“Assemble, speak in harmony, Let your minds be one accord; As your glorious ancestors enjoyed their due shares with full accord. May your aim be common, your assembly common, common your mind, united your thoughts. A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your common oblation.”²⁸

The importance of these two assemblies in public affairs is indicated by the fact that they in the *Atharvavēda* are called the twin daughters of the *Prajāpati*, the creator.²⁹ The *Maitrayāni Samhita* informs us that women did not attend the *Sabha*³⁰ which is but natural when we remember that women did not take part in political activity. The same *Samhita* mentions *Sabha* in the sense of the court of the village judge, the *Grāmyavādin*.³¹ The *Vajasaṇeyi Samhita* mentions *sabhaçāra* as one who is dedicated to *dharma* and *justice*.³² From this it appears that he was a member of the *Sabha* as a law court. It is thus certain that *Sabha* met not only for political discussions but also for the administration of justice.

Unity in Diversity

“Historically India has been one of the greatest confluences of cultural strands, a laboratory of racial intermixing, of cross fertilisation of religious ideas and secular thought, of coexistence of languages and dialects, indeed a veritable microcosm of the globe”³³

India comprises myriad streams of cultures, about 16 major languages, between 250 to 2000 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, 7

religious communities fragmented into many sects, castes and sub-castes, that inhabit its 68 socio-cultural sub-regions, which, within the frame work of 7 natural geographic regions. exhibit distinct internal homogeneity and external identity.

Within India's micro-continental spread is thus subsumed, regionally varied but specific social formations, economic relations, cultural patterns and value structures, that give an impression of a vivid and vibrant scheme of unity in diversity. India's ongoing socio-cultural federalism is thus sui-generis. Its continental dimension, survival and continuity for more than 3000 years of recorded history (and possibly 1000 to 2000 years of prehistory), together with social complexity and diversities, makes it the world's oldest, largest and most tenacious plural society, the like of which human history has seldom known.

It is interesting to note that even in the hoary past India's federal social-cultural pattern was recorded with amazing clarity in *Vāyu Purāṇa*. However, today little is known about the *janapadās* of *Bhāratavarṣha*-the territorial communities identified by an admixture of ethnicity, dialect, social customs geographical location and political characteristics. The *Puraṇās* (particularly *Viṣṇu* and *Vāyu*) throw light on this primordial mosaic of our socio-cultural diversity. *Bhārata Varṣha* (covering the territory today comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afganistan etc.) is reputed to have had in its fold 165 *janapadās* of which probably 120 may have been located within the confines of the present day Republic of India.

In the words of Rabindranat Tagore

“Here the Āryans, the non-Āryans, the Drāvidians, and the Chinese, the tribes of Scythians and Huns, the Afghans and the Mughals have all merged into one body”.³⁴

Our culture is like a mighty river fed with many tributaries, and the main stream flows on and on. The Hindustani expression for fusion, ‘*Ganga-Jamuni*’ comes from this concept of unity. Our culture is also compared to a great cauldron to which different ingredients have been added from time to time to produce a lustrous compound; above all, the seething cauldron has never cooled and is always ready to accept new ideas without losing its pristine identity.

There are scholars who are of the opinion that the civilisation of Egypt and Babylonia are the oldest. Bal Gangadhar Tilak brought evidence to show that the *Vedas* of the Hindus existed in the present form at least 5000 years before the Christian era.³⁵ The key to India’s ancient civilisation is to be found in the four fold goals of life: (*Puruṣhārthas*) (1) *Dharma* or absolute righteousness; (2) *Artha* or ‘Material possession; (3) *Kāma* or fulfilment of desires; (4) *Mokṣa* or liberation. *Dharma* is expressed in *Mahābhārata* as that which protects or preserves.

“It is the divine and transcendental Justice, Truth and Law which upholds Universe, mind and people”³⁶

The arts of India, like here philosophy in general, and sculpture in particular, also show a mythical and metaphysical order. Reference may

be made to the Indus valley seals from Kisa (2700 BC) Pottery jar with Sumero-Babylonian inscription from Harappa and Mohenjodaro (2500 BC) and rock-cut caves at Elephanta (Eight century A.D). The art and culture of ancient India indicate a continuous loyalty to certain universal norms that have come down from time immemorial. It is this loyalty which is the secret of India's dynamic power to unify diversity. This power to unite diversity is an index of Indian civilisation.

This extraordinary characteristics of Indian thought and culture is spelt out in the great classics, the *Upanishads*, the epics *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, including *Bhagavat Gītā* and the teachings of historic personalities like Mahāvīra, Budha and Ashoka and so on.

Despite the tremendous popularity of Buddhism in and outside India, Vedic culture was not materially affected in as much as the teachings of Buddha were not hostile to the essence of *Dharma* of the Vedic Religion. Budha wanted to establish *Saṅgha*, a casteless unified society on the basis of ethical principles such as non-violence, truthfulness, abstinence, forgiveness, compassion, goodwill etc. Buddhism did not accept the rigidity of the brahminical rituals or animal slaughter or *varṇasrama*. The influence of Buddhism and Jainism had a natural impact on the prevailing Indian thought, but such influence only enriched the traditional Indian culture, instead of destroying or destabilising, which indeed speaks much about the nature of Indians and Indianness.

As far as one can make out, a near uniformity in material culture was achieved in various parts of the country by the middle of the first millennium BC. It is in this millennium that we find the first emergence of a unified India under Ashoka in the third century B. C. From about third century BC to about the fifth century AD several waves of people from the north-west invaded the Indian sub continent. The Greeks, the Scythians, the Kushans the Huns etc. were some among them. However in course of time they all lost their individuality in the vast cultural ocean that was in existence in India at that time. During what is known as the medieval period of Indian History the position was slightly different. The incomers tried to retain their identity, yet they gave and took in ample measure to and from the earlier inhabitants. However, since the newcomers did not look back to their native countries as evergreen sources of inspiration, but adopted the new country as their own, a new cultural ethos developed which became an ethos of unity in diversity.

Of late, the notion of unity in diversity is much in the limelight. The general feeling is that, inspite of apparent differences, India is quite united. There are many reasons for this attitude. In this context India is also called '*The Epitome of the World*'.

In the words of Jawarhal Nehru

"In the North-West Frontier province there is already the breath of Central Asia, and many a custom there as in Kashmir, reminds one of the countries on the other side of the Himalayas. Pathan popular dances are

singularly like Cossak dancing. Yet with all these differences there is no mistaking the impress of India on the Pathans as this is obvious on the Tamil”³⁷

It must be repeatedly pointed out that almost all writers of the past and even of present treat Aryan concept as a race. Naturally Jawaharlal Nehru also was no exception to this. Pathans are a language group; similarly the Tamils too are a language group. In reality it will not be proper to read the racial connotation into such language groupings. Unfortunately the term 'race' gets easily passed for everything and anything.

First of all, all major religions of the world co-exist in India in amazing harmony. It must be noted that different religious people differ only in so far as their differences in religion, religious faith as well as the religious practices. We must understand religions as a carrier of culture. Religion carries culture and transmits it from generation to generation. But then culture is really not essential to religion in the sense that, it always carry the culture of its place of origin. A religion originated in another country shuns the culture of the land when it enters into a different country, different society to pick up culture of the new land. This way, religions becomes localised, because the people who receive new religion are locals. Thereby all religions that came to India from foreign countries are no more foreign religions. They are all Indian religions culturally. Culture belong to the people, society and land. No matter what are the differences in faith, practice and religion, they

all became culturally Indian religions. Thus it is the invincible strength of Indian culture that transcends all so called differences in the religion race or language.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore,

“Throughout her history one notices an attempt above all else, to establish unity in diversity, to approach truth by different paths and to realise in complete faith the one in the many as the inmost reality-not destroying superficial differences but discovering their underlying correspondence..... The alliance which European civilisation have achieved are based on negotiation; the oneness on which Indian civilisation is based is a sense of harmony..... The discovery of identity, the achievement of Unity and the creation of stability and peace in society conducive to spiritual fulfilment and liberation, that was India's ideal”³⁸

According to Sir, Herbert Risley,

“Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Capcamorine. There is in fact, an Indian character, a general Indian personality, which we cannot resolve into its component elements”.³⁹

The ideal of unity

Despite the above mentioned diversities, India has never lost the ideal of unity. It is wrong to suppose that the unity of India is the gift of the British rule. Culturally India was always one. The golden thread of Indian culture that runs through and through every Indian is a formidable force of unity and it is this golden thread that still keeps and would always keep

India as one formidable nation of integrity. It must be specifically noted that what keeps India as one is not its political unity or the strength of the ruling power; even without any such artificial unifying force, the nation can't be anything but a unified whole so long as the culture remains strong. Hence the requirement of upholding culture needs hardly an emphasise.

The religion Hinduism, which is often called "*Sanātana Dharma*" had a powerful unifying effect. Hinduism is no religion in the Semitic sense of the term; that is, if the paradigm of West Asian belief systems, the Judaic-Christian-Islamic combine is acknowledged as the normative form. Hinduism is something more and different than religion. It is a mix of customs, traditions, social behaviour, rituals, metaphysical speculations, cultural and value orientations. There is no duality of orthodoxy and heresy in Hinduism, because there is no defined and closed faith, no established church based on the foundations of a divine scripture revealed by a divine being to divinely ordained prophet/prophets. Hinduism has a flexibility and resilience and a traditional base wide enough to cover the syndrome of Indian culture. That is why sometimes the revivalism of Hinduism takes the form of revivalism of ancient culture, symbols, values, idiom and traditional pattern of living. It does not take the particular form of the revival of a faith because there is no such ordained, integral and defined faith to be revived. Hinduism's religious content has been generally referred to as *Brāhminism*, while term Hindu (adopted from

Sindhu, i.e., the inhabitants in, around and beyond to the east of the river Indus/Sindhu), which was used by ancient Persians, Greeks, and later by Arabs and central Asian People, referred essentially to the ethnic geographic identity of the inhabitants. In this sense, irrespective of belief and religion, language or culture, every Indian is considered Hindu by the Arabs, the Iranians and the Turks and most other foreigners even now.

'An apt quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru will throw light on this aspect. In the 'Discovery of India' he writes

"The Word 'Hindu' does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference to it in an Indian book is, I am told, is in a Tāntrik work of the eighth century AD, where 'Hindu' means a people and not the followers of a particular religions. But it is clear that the word is a very old one as it occurs in the Avesta and in old Persian. It was used then and for thousand years or more later by the peoples of western and central Asia for India, or rather for the people living on the other side of the Indus river. The word is clearly derived from the word Sindhu, the old as well as the present Indian name for the Indus. From this Sindhu came the word Hindu and Hindustan as well as Indos and India. The famous Chinese pilgrim Itsing, who came to India in the seventh century AD writes in his record of travels that the 'northern tribes', that is the people of Central Asia, called India Hindu (Hsin-tu) but, he adds, 'this is not at all a common name..... and the most suitable name for India is the Noble Land (Āryadēsh). The use of the word 'Hindu' in connection with a particular religion is of very later occurrence. The old inclusive terms for religion in India was Arya Dharma. Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together. It is the inmost constitutions of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities. Ārya Dharma would include all the faiths (vedic and non-vedic) that originated in India; it was used by Budhists and Jains as

well as by those who accepted the vedas. Budha always called his way to salvation as the 'Ārya Path'.⁴⁰

According to some scholars like S. Radhakrishnan and Tara Chand, the philosophy of Hinduism has developed in the last 4000 years, in six well-known recognized periods of time, (i) 2500 to 600 BC- the Vedic Period; (ii) 600/500 BC to AD 200-the Epic Period; (iii) AD 200 to 800—the Sutra Period; (iv) AD 800 to 1300-the Scholastic Period; (v) AD 1300 to 1700-the period of Great Bhakti Saints, and (vi) AD 1800 to 1950-the period of Reform Movements and Philosophical Revivalism.⁴¹ However, at present the age of Vedic period suggested by European Indologists like Max Muller are challenged by Indian Indologists and scholars.

Ours is perhaps the oldest civilisation of the world with an uninterrupted history (with the possible exception of China). Most of the civilisations are dead and gone. We have not only survived the vicissitudes of time but maintained, developed and enriched a continuous culture. "In the words of Iqbal,

*"Yunan-O-Misc-O-Roma, sab mit gaye jehan se Ab tak magar hai baqi nam-O-nishan hamara."*⁴²

[Greece, Egypt, Rome all have vanished from the world/But our name and symbol still exist]. Further Iqbal says, there is 'something' which precludes our existence from getting effaced"

*"Kuch bat hai ke hasti, mit-ti nahin hamari."*⁴³

This something is everything. This is the secret of our vitality and wisdom. The history of Indian civilisation and culture is a story of unity and synthesis, of adaptation and development, of fusion of old traditions with new values.

It must be emphasized that Hinduism is both a way of life and a highly organized social and religious system, and it is quite free from any dogmatic assertions concerning the nature of God. The core of religion is never left to depend on the existence or non-existence of God, or on whether there is one God or many. It is perfectly possible to be a good Hindu whether one's personal view incline towards monotheism or polytheism or even atheism. The classical Hindus did not think of religious truth in dogmatic terms: dogmas cannot be eternal but only transitory, the truth transcends dogmas and all verbal definitions. The unity of religious outlook in India is based on a philosophic spirit which recognises the value of both form and spirit, of outward ritual and inner essence. Al-beruni who came to India in the eleventh century observed.

"On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics amongst themselves (the Hindus); at the most, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or property on religious controversy."⁴⁴

Absence of religious persecution is the inevitable concomitant to the absence of dogma in classical Hinduism. The doctrine of transmigration of soul or rebirth is the central core of the Hindu religion

and practically all sects and philosophical systems. All accept this, not so much as a revealed but as a self-evident fact of existence. The doctrine itself presupposes the further doctrine that the condition into which the individual soul is reborn is itself the result of good or bad actions performed in former lives. This leads to the law of *karma* as well as the caste system of ancient India.

Unlike all other religions in the history of mankind, the Hindu religion has an amalgamating character, all encompassing character. The Hindu religion itself is a plurality of faith. We saw other religions disintegrating into various sects: take the example of various forms of Christianity, Shia, Sunni, Ahmediya etc. among Muslims, Swēthambaras and Digambaras among Jains, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna among Budhists etc. Quite contrary to this, the Hindu religion behaved in an exact opposite way. Predominantly there are three primary forms of worship in India, namely, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktheism. Apart from these, there were also many other forms of worship of natural forces or local folk deities. As time went by, all these became amalgamated under one umbrella of what is called today, 'The Hindu Religion'. All different sects also came to accept the authority of *Vēdās*, which is the identifying factor of Hindu religion. It is also precisely for this reason that we find it difficult to call Hinduism a religion in the same sense of the term as we call other religions religion. By unifying various sects and forms of worship into the unity of Hinduism, the religion had actually unified the sub-continent. Vaishnavism of the North,

Saivism of the South and Saktism of the East became one, and thereby, North, South, East as well as west of India were also made one, namely *Bhārata Varṣha*. Unfortunately, this great contribution of Vēdic Hinduism is little understood, or even miserably overlooked. It will not be out of place to say that *Bhārata Varṣha* is a contribution of the Hindu religion.

Yet another aspect of unity was law. India followed one kind of law or ordinances throughout. Apart from these, there were various factors such as *Śruties* and *Smṛities* regulating the duties of citizens of different strata. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru,

“Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilisation. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardisation of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged”.⁴⁵

Thus, it was wrong to suppose that the unity of India is the gift of the British rule. The British had brought India under one political administration, but they disintegrated India through their divide and rule policy. They created differences among different religions. They also created differences among different castes among Hindus. They alienated brahmins from others, divided castes etc.

According to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,

“Uttaram Yatsamudrasya

Himādeschaiva dakshinaṁ

Varṣamtad Bhāratam nama

Bharatī Yatra Santatih”⁴⁶

(The country bounded by the seas on the south and the Himalayas on the North is called Bharatam. There live the progeny of Bharata)

What more is further required to understand that right from time immemorial India was seen as a complete whole?

The great epics also played very important role in building a common heritage for all Indians. They stand for truth, wisdom, right and wrong as well as *Dharma* which is common for all Indians.

The Sanskrit language also fostered the unity of the country. The very meaning of the term ‘*Sanskrit*’ implies refinement as against for example, “Prakrit” which means “crude” “raw” or unrefined. Sanskrit was a language of the refined people as well as cultured and educated. Sanskrit then was like English today, the language of the educated. Prakrit, Pali, etc. were languages spoken by common folks. This led to a classification throughout the nation as intellectuals and commoners and the intellectuals spoke the common language Sanskrit throughout the nation. Common people spoke varieties of languages, varying regionally. Sanskrit was the language of the educated people throughout the nation. It was only natural

for the intellectuals to interact with one another and knowledge became enriched. Sanskrit was the lingua franca of ancient India, cutting across all regional barriers. In short, educated Indian was the same person whether in Gandhara, Simhapura (Singapore) or in Kanyakumari. *Saṁskāra* (culture) and Sanskrit language had such tremendous unifying effect on the sub-continent. Sanskrit was the language in which the sacred hymns and invocations to deities were composed. These hymns were sung and chanted all over India. The classical texts of medicine, metallurgy, architecture, astronomy, mathematics, diplomacy, erotics and poetics were composed in Sanskrit language. These were the source materials for master-craftsmen, professionals, priests and others all over India. Buddhism in its early phase preferred 'Pali' to Sanskrit. But with the emergence of Mahayana, the Buddhist scholars and teachers switched back to Sanskrit from Pali. Jainism also followed the same pattern. The earliest Jaina texts were in the *Ardhamagadhi* dialect. But most of the important philosophical and religious texts of the Jains were later written in Sanskrit. It is erroneous to assume, as many western writers have done, that Sanskrit became a dead language after the emergence of regional languages. Regional languages/dialects were always there, and Sanskrit- was the scholar's language. It continued to be a cementing and unifying force, and has retained its vitality even in modern times. It was no longer the primary medium of expression for poets and story tellers but it continued to be the main language of the religious study and ritual. Further, Sanskrit is regarded as the mother of modern Indian languages. 60 to 70 percent of

words in many Indian languages are originally Sanskrit words. Sanskrit Grammar (Paniniyam by Panini) is one of the most ancient grammar. Most Indian languages follow this as their root text.

Mythology also played an important role in the cultural unification of India.

“In the west, just as Latin lost its position of pre-eminence at the end of the middle ages, so also did mythology as it ceased to have a living relationship with the actual process of living. In India, on the contrary, mythology has always been close to the life of the people. It has served as a bridge between the abstract ideas and values of the philosopher and the moralist and the concrete application of these concepts and values in practice. Indian mythology reflects in a very interesting manner the two principles of continuity in the midst of change and unity underlying diversity.”⁴⁷

The basic ideas and symbols of Indian mythology have retained their continuity across the centuries. The churning of the ocean of milk (*Kṣhērabdhi* or *Kṣhērasagar*) in search of the nectar of immortality; the descent of the holy river Ganga from heaven to earth; the struggle between Budha and Māra; the cycles of evolution and dissolution of the universe (*Srīṣṭi* and *Pralaya*); the wars between gods and demons; the attempts of celestial nymphs to tempt renowned sages and disturb their meditation: these and other myths as well as episodes from the ‘*Rāmāyaṇa*’ and ‘*Mahābhārata*’ have retained their basic forms and have continued to influence the minds and hearts of the Indian people inspite of the social and political upheavals.

Mythology has contributed, sometimes in subtle and unobstructive ways, to the cultural unity of India. Myths, about gods and goddesses, heroes and sages and devotees, have brought people close to each other, emotionally and spiritually, inspite of differences of language, vocation, life-style, spiritual affiliations and regional traditions. This closeness is demonstrated vividly when people from different parts of India come together at places of pilgrimage, or at fairs and festivals such as Kumbh Mela at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna at Prayag every twelve years, the Ramlila which is celebrated throughout North India, and the festival of Krishna Janmashtami which draws thousands of people to Vrindavan on the bank of the Yamuna river.

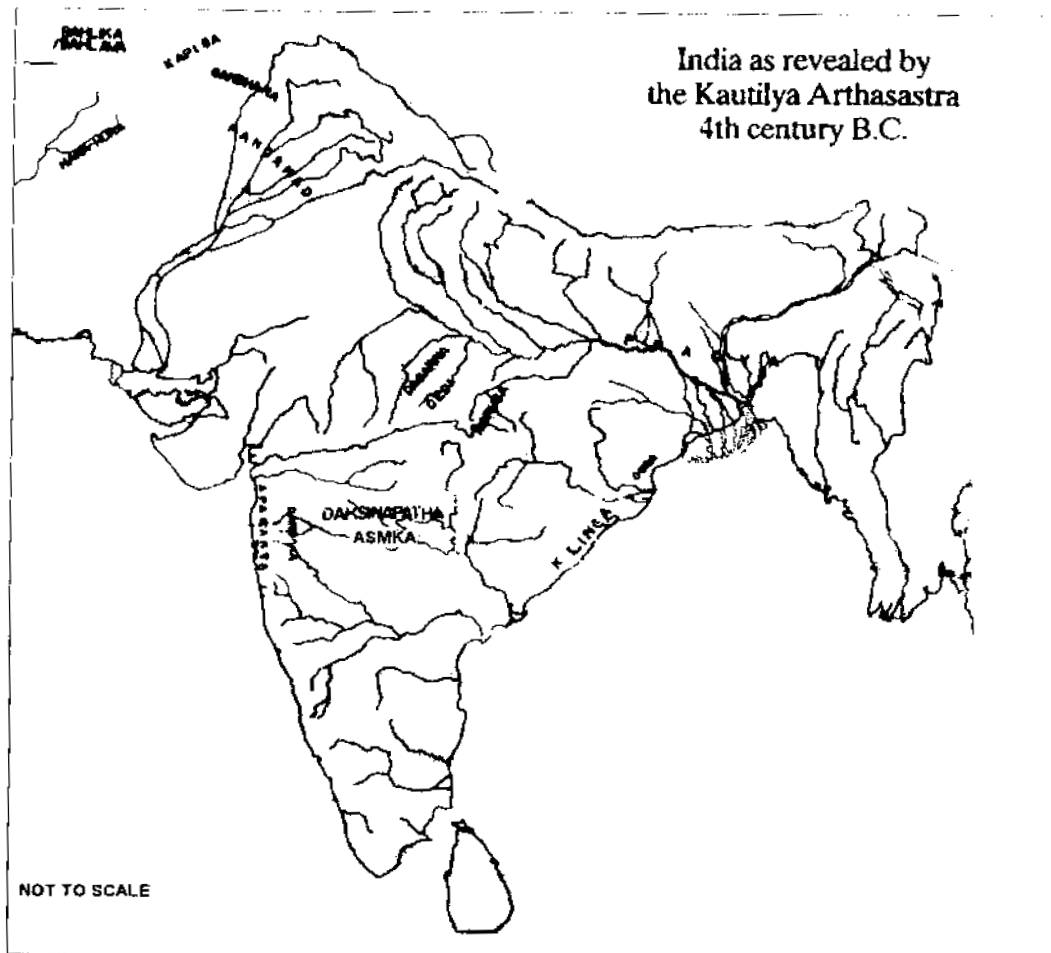
At the same time, this unity has not been achieved at the expenses of diversity. Through music, dance, poetry and ritual, the same myth is commemorated in infinitely varied ways. Festivals connected with the same diety are celebrated in different ways in different regions. Even the names of diety vary. For instance the, the monkey-hero who plays such an important part in *Rāmāyana* is known as Hanuman in Northern India but is usually referred to as Maruti in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The God who is popularly known as Kārtikeya or Skand in Northern India is usually addressed as Subrahmanya or Muruka in Southern India. There are distinct traditions regarding the worship of Saraswati and Durga in Bengal, of Lakshmi and Ganēśha in Maharashtra and Lord Jagannath in Orissa.

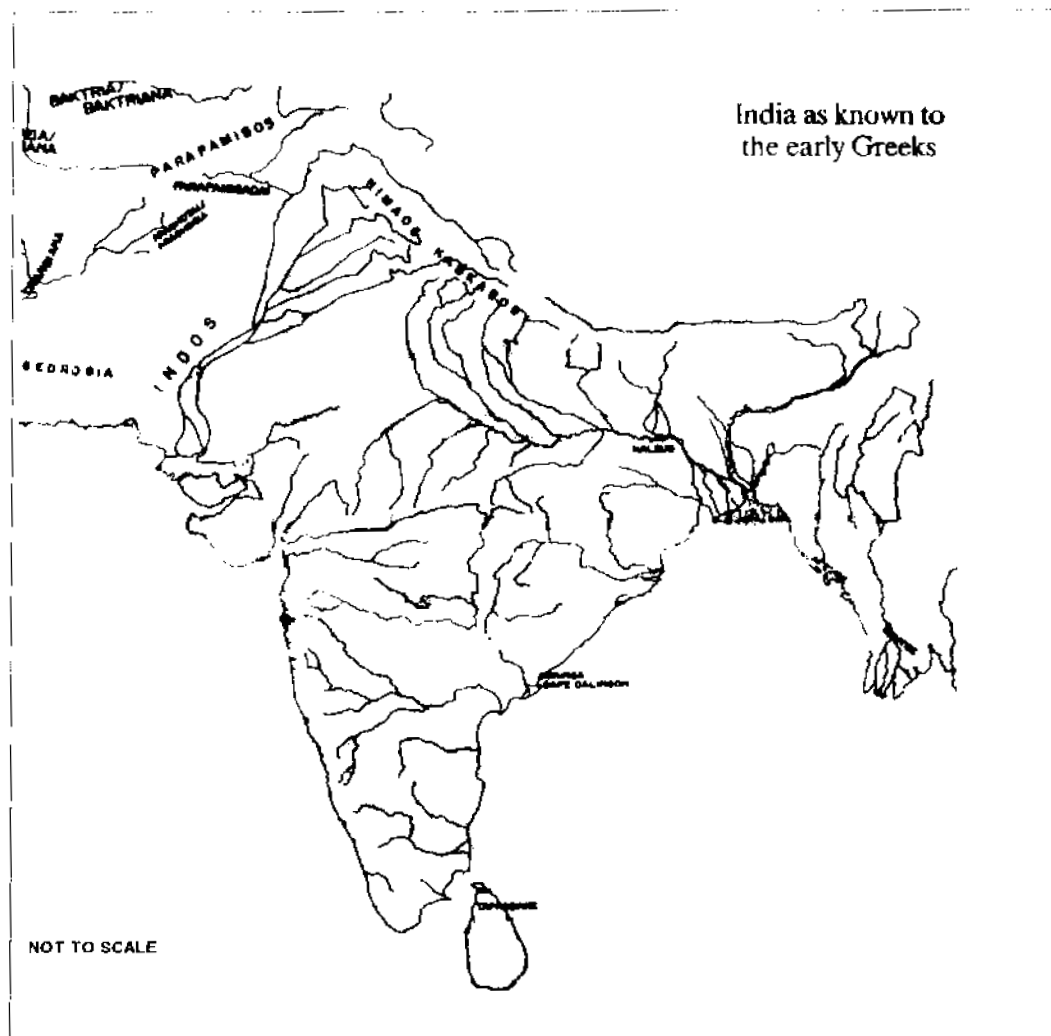
The myth makers of ancient India seem to have been unusually farsighted and were evidently aware of the important part which mythology can play in promoting national integration and in preventing unity shrinking into uniformity. Two examples of their foresight may be sighted here. In the descriptions of gods and goddesses in the *Purānās*, one is struck by the fact that the gods are usually praised for their dark complexion while most of the goddesses are fair, especially if they are spouses of dark skinned Gods. Thus Rama is dark while Sita is fair, Shiva is dark while his spouse, Pārvathī, is also known as Gaurī, the 'Fair One', Vishṇu is described as 'Meghavarṇam', 'dark as a cloud', while his wife, Lakṣhmi is fair. This is a wonderfully effective way of appealing to the sentiments of the dark skinned as well as fair-complexioned people.

Another example of the wisdom displayed by ancient myth-makers is the manner in which sacredness was attributed to places scattered all over the vast Indian sub continent-places associated with particular deities, saints, heroes or episodes from mythical stories. Worshipers of Siva, for instance, if they are to perform a complete pilgrimage are required to visit places on the eastern and western sea coast, in the upper Himalayas, and at the southern most tip of India. They must thus necessarily pass through regions vastly different from each other in life, culture, landscape, art-styles. While the purpose is to take the pilgrim through the various stages of a traditional ritual, the incidental result is that the traveller become familiar

through first hand experience, with the immense diversity of India and the subtle thread of unity which runs through that diversity.

The maps of India as revealed by "Kautilya's Arthashastra" and as known to early Greeks' have clearly demonstrated that even without being politically consolidated, there was hardly any ambiguity or doubt about the identity or boundaries of India.⁴⁸





According to Radha Kamal Mukherjee,

“The fundamental unity of Bhāratavaṣha is installed in the Indian mind by the ancient Purāṇās, Dharmasāstrās, temples, pageants and pilgrimages. This Bhāratavaṣha is not a mere geographical integration. She is a historic cultural synthesis”⁴⁹

Thus, it had been amply demonstrated through varying records of both history and tradition that ancient India was much integrated and unified.

The many number of princely states, the many languages, the differences in appearances, geography, food, dress, local customs etc had only strengthened the unity and integrity of India by adding much variety to the mainstream of Indianness. The Western writers of history and their eastern counterparts usually treat unity as political unity. So the politically many states, within India, confused them when it came to unity and integrity. What they failed to notice was the unifying and integrating aspect of India, which was Indian culture.

Till such time outsiders came to India to rule, the integrity and unity of India was a most natural and spontaneous phenomenon. Alexander, son of Philip of Macedonia invaded India, but did not stay here to rule. In all respects, the Greeks could be called as the most noble among those who came here with army.

The rise and spread of Islam by the first quarter of the seventh century AD is much connected to the series of invasions that India had to face for a long time, that ultimately resulted in the long Muslim rule over India. After the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D, the task of spreading Islam by all means and any means became the work of Khalifas. From 632 to 749 A.D, the Omayyads were at the helm of affairs, but from 749 to 1256 A.D the Abbasids were the holders of Khalifat. The Abbasids changed their capital from Damascus to Baghdad and thus the Arab element was punched to the background. In the beginning of 8th century A.D, Muslim invaders began to attack our country. They succeeded in

conquering Sindh and Multan, but could not penetrate deeper into India. At the first quarter of 8th century A.D, Mohammad-bin-Quasim conquered Sindh and Multan. He conquered Debal defeating King Dahir, captured the towns of Nureau, Sehemem and Sisam. On 20th June 712 A.D, King Dahir was killed in the battle of Rawar. Ravi Bhai, Dahir's widow resisted the siege of the fort of Rawar, but finally she along with other women performed the traditional *Jauhar or Sati*. Dahir's son, Jai Singh fought the Arabs at Brahmanabad, but lost the battle and Mohammed-bin-Quasim occupied Brahmanabad. At Aloar, the capital of Sindh, Fugi, the son of Dahir was defeated. Thus the conquest of Sindh was complete. In 713 A.D, Quasim won an easily victory over Multan by cutting off the water supply to Multan. Further, when he was preparing to attack Kanuj, Quasim died, and this put a full stop to the Arab invasion.

Once in rule, Quasim divided Sindh into number of divisions under Arab officials. The Arabs forced conversion into Islam upon the Hindus and those who resisted this were either killed or treated miserably. They further illtreated the low class people, thus widening the gap between different sects among Hindus. There were no law and order, the Arab's words were law.

After the Arabs, the Muslim Turks carried on the Mulsim Indian invasion. The rulers of Ghazni, both Alaptgin (962-63) and Sabuktgin (977-97) started Indian invasion. Jaipal was the king of Hindushahi; Sabuktgin defeated Jaipal at Langhan. Jaipal's life was spared on

condition that he would pay annual ransom. When Jaipal returned to Lahore, he refused to pay ransom. Sabuktgin attacked Jaipal and conquered Hindushahi. At Peshawar (*Purushapurain*), he appointed one Muslim Turkish Governor to look after things.

In 998 A.D, Sabuktgin died. He had nominated his younger son Ismail to the throne. But Sabuktgin's elder son, Mahmood of Ghazni killed his younger brother Ismail and became the ruler. He invaded India seventeen times. Here is the list

- 1) **First invasion** (1000 A.D). He captured frontier forts and Khyber pass.
- 2) **Second invasion** (1001-2 A.D). He defeated Jaipal, the ruler of Hindushahi kingdom. Jaipal jumped into a funeral pyre and committed suicide to save the honour of the Hindus.
- 3) **Third Invasion** (1003 AD). He defeated Bijai Rai, the Bhatiya King. Before falling in the hands of the enemy, he stabbed himself and committed suicide.
- 4) **Fourth invasion** (1006 A.D). He defeated the ruler of Multan, Dand, who was an Arab. Dand was (Abul-Fateh-Dand) a Karmithrion, and Mahmood was a Sunni Muslim.
- 5) **Fifth Invasion**, (1007 A.D). After conquering Multan, he appointed Nawsa Shah as the Governor and returned to Ghazni. But Nawsa

Shah renounced Islam religion and proclaimed independence. Mahmood returned and defeated him.

- 6) **Sixth Invasion** (1008-9 A.D). He defeated Ananth Pal and allies at the battle of Wabrid.
- 7) **Seventh Invasion** (1009 AD) He conquered Nagarkot and looted vast amount of riches.
- 8, 9, 10, 11) **Eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh Invasions** (1009-18). Conquered Kashmir and Thaneshwar.
- 12) **Twelfth Invasion** (1018-19). He defeated Rajyapal of Kanuj. He destroyed Mathura, Brindavan, and reached Kanauj. Enroute, he destroyed many temples.
- 13) **Thirteenth Invasion** (1070 A.D). Defeated the Chandela King of Kalinjar.
- 14, 15) **Fourteenth and Fifteenth Invasion** (1021-23). These were against Gwalior and Kalinjar.
- 16) **Sixteenth Invasion** (1025). Attacked Somanatha Temple. At Annhilmara he defeated the King Raja Bhim Dev in January 1025. Then he reached Sōmanath and destroyed the diety and temple. More than 50000 Hindus were slaughtered.
- 17) **Seventeenth and last Invasion** (1020-27). He attacked Jats and put many of them to death.

Mahmood of Ghazni died in 1030 A.D. After the death of Mahmood his two sons quarrelled for power. Masaud and Mohammad quarrelled, and Masaud blinded Mohammad and jailed. Masaud also continued invasions on India and captured Hansi and Sonapat.

After the fall of the Ghasnavides, Meniz-Ud-Din, Mohammad-bin's Son, popularly known as Shahab-ud-Din Mohammad Ghori established his own rule in Ghazni. After establishing himself, he started invading India. It shall be proper to call him the true and real founder of Muslim rule in India.

In 1175-6A.D. Ghori conquered Multan and Ucch. In 1178 A.D he attacked Annhilwara, but was miserably defeated by Bhim Dev. For another twenty years Ghori did not dare attack Gujrat again. In 1179 to 86 A.D, he captured Peshawar. In 1185, he occupied Sialkot. In 1192, he cheated Khushro Malik and killed him. Then he captured Sirhind and Bhatinda. In the first battle of Tarin in 1191 A.D, Ghori was defeated by Prithviraj Chauhan (Raja Pethura)) of Delhi. But in the second battle of Tarin, in 1192, Mohammad Ghori defeated Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi. After the victory Ghori appointed Qutab-Ud-Din-Aibak as his Viceroy at Delhi. Aibak captured Bulandshahar from Dev Rajputs by cheating. He also conquered Meerut and Koli (Aligarh). Thus Qutab established a formidable Muslim rule in India. Then came the Slave Dynasty from 1206 A.D to 1290 A.D. Further came the Khilji Dynasty from 1290 to 1320 A.D. In 1320 A.D, Ghazi Malik murdered Khusro Khan and assumed power in

the name of Gias-Ud-Din-Tuglak. For about one hundred years, the Tuglaks ruled Delhi. Towards the end of the 14th century, Amir Timur, who had conquered the bulk of central Asia undertook the invasion of India. Then the Tuglak dynasty came to an end, and Timur's deputy, Khizr Khan established his own Sayyid dynasty. In forty years of time, the Lodis became the rulers. The last Lodi, Ibrahim was defeated by Babur, who established the Mughal empire in India. Thus came to an end the Delhi Sultanate, which ruled us for over three hundred years. From the Mughals India went into the hands of the Europeans, primarily the British.

Thus, from 8th century A.D to the 20th century, India was constantly invaded by outsiders in various ways. Sindh, Multan, Peshwar, Afganistan, Baluchistan etc. had totally become Muslim states. Punjab and Bengal got divided by the British as Hindus and Muslims in the long run.

The rise and spread of Islam, their adherence to violent means, their opposition to idol worship, their strong missionary zeal to spread Islam even forcibly, the greed of invaders towards India's wealth, the lack of co-operation of Indian Princesses etc. caused series of invasions and plunder of India by first Arab Muslims and then by Turkish Muslims. Four hundred years later, when Prithviraj Chauhan became defeated, the series of Muslim invasion came to the inevitable state, that they became the rulers of India. Their assuming power was by no way spontaneous, and the rule itself was filled with upheavals of infighting for power, as well

as fights among various tribes and sects among Muslims themselves. The slave dynasty get replaced by the Khiljis which became replaced by the Tuglaks, then the Sayyids, the Lodis and finally the Mughals, till India became a colony of Britain.

The long 1200 years of foreign element in India had devastated the nation in all respects. It had created serious cultural alienation to the people, even for those who remained staunch Hindus. An examination of simple social life of an average Indian before and after Prithviraj Chauhan can amply demonstrate this. On the economic front, India became a pauper literally. Education was lost. Hindu religion and spirituality went in hiding. Temples were destroyed. Women were pushed back into the harem, and they simply became luxuries as commodities. Lawlessness prevailed. In a word, Indian's were alienated from their essence and denatured, estranged. Naturally, all high offices were in the hands of foreigners, and even their language became official. The Muslims ruled India with their Kinsman and the Hindus were only second grade citizens, desperately side lined.

In the hands of the British, India continued to suffer. In their greed to exploit the Nation to the maximum, they adopted the famous theory of 'divide and rule'. Hindus and Muslims were made enemies-which was easy for them. Further they turned the history to suit their convenience. During the age of Swami Vivekananda, this was the India in front of him. The objective and effort of Swami Vivekananda, if could be summed up in

one sentence, was to “de-alienate Indians”. It was to restore the essence of being an Indian to every Indian. That is why he called Indians to “rise and awake...”, the famous preaching of “*Uttishṭatha jāgrata prāpyavarāṇi-bōdhita*” from Swamiji. Indians were alienated, denatured and estranged from their real essence of existence, which is Indianess.

Some people wrongly think that to attempt to restore estranged glory is an attempt to go back in time. This is a very mundane view of things. Swāmi Vivēkānanda or any autoctone of culture is not wishing for a reversal of history; we are not deliberately wanting to go back in time to suffer obseletion; and it is certainly not the case that one is adopting rusted and out dated or useless categories.

Quiet the contrary to this, the path shown by great Indians like Swami Vivekananda is a very authentic effort to re-discover the true Indian in each one of us. Our real selves and true nature are not revealed to us; and this makes us suffer obseletion through great chaos and confusions within. Such confusions take away our vitality in our “Struggle for existence”, and in the “Natural Selection” of things, we become obsolete in the arising new world order of things.

An authentic Indian can't be anything other than cultural Indian. It is this Indianness that constituted real India. This can only be achieved through a rigerous dealination of each Indian and then the whole of Indian Nation. This only can vitalize us and give us strength. Any attempt to

this, which is sincere and fruit bearing shall only be the most righteous one. Swami Vivekananda's was only such an attempt; and greatly he succeeded, though the real success shall be only when we carry on his work from generation to generation.

Reference

1. *R̥g Vēda* X, 90,12.
2. RV, III, 34, 9.
3. RV II, 12, 4.
4. RV I, 176, 6.
5. Bhārgava P.L, *India in the Vēdic Age*, S. Chand and Company Limited, New Delhi, 1970, p.237.
6. Even as late as the Sūtra period the Śūdrās used to cook food for Brāhmiṇās and other Āryas as one passage of the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra clearly shows. According to this passage, either Āryas, having become pure by bathing etc; should cook for the Vaisvadēva sacrifice or Śūdras should be the cooks under the supervision of the Āryas. (Āpastamba Dharmasūtra II, 3, 1-4).
7. *Maitrayaṇi Samhita* IV, 2, 7, 10.
8. *Kathaka Samhita* XXX VIII, *Taittiriya Samhita*, 8, 3, 1 *Vājasaney Samhita* XX, 17
9. Bhārgava, P.L, *India in the Vedic Age*, p. 238.
10. e.g, RV I, 25, 1.
11. RV VIII, 25, 8. In VIII, 67, 1 the Adityās are called Kṣatriyās.
12. Maitland, *Constitutional History of England*, p. 75.

13. Basham A.L, *THE Wonder That Was India*, Groves Press, New York, 1959, p.43.
14. Haye's, *Political and cultural History of Modern Europe*, Chapter XII, p-578
15. The Smṛitīs, such as that of Yājñavalkya 1,4 mention the rise of castes even as a result of marriages between Āryas of different classes, but these castes are absolutely theoretical.
16. Wells H.G., *Short History of World*, Chapter 28.
17. RV III, 55, 7, etc.
18. RV VIII, 37, 3; AV III, 4,1.
19. RV X, 128, 9; AV VI, 98, 1; IX, 10, 24.
20. RV X, 124, 8.
21. RV X 173; AV VI, 87-88.
22. Quoted by Bhargava P.L from *Vēdische Studies. India in the Vēdic Age*, p. 257.
23. RV VI, 28,6; VIII, 4, 9; X, 34, 6.
24. RV IX, 92, 6; X, 97, 6.
25. Translation of the Ṛg Vēda, 3, 253-256.
26. RV I, 91, 20; II, 24, 13.
27. RV IX, 92, 6; X, 97, 6.
28. RV X, 191, AV, VI, 64, 1.
29. AV VII, 12, 1.
30. *Maitrayāni Samhita* IV, 7, 4.
31. *Maitrayāni Samhita* II, 2, 1; *Taittiriya Samhita* II, 3, 1; *Kathaka Samhita* XI, 4.

32. *Vajasaṇeyī Samhita* XXX, 6.
33. Khan Rasheeduddin, 'The Heritage of Composite Culture as an Input in the Process of Building a New National Identity', *Composite Culture of India and National Integration*, ed. By Rasheeduddin Khan, Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Association with Allied Publishers, Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi – 1987, p.31.
34. Quoted by M. Mohiuddin, 'The Elements of Composite Culture', *Composite Culture of India and National Integration* ed. By. Rasheeduddin Khan, p-102.
35. *Complete Works of Swāmi Vivekānānda*, Advaita Ashram, Culcutta, Vol. 7, p.336
36. *Mahābhārat*, Udyōga, Parva 137-9.
37. Nehru Jawaharlal, *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 1982, p.61.
38. *Introduction of Tagore*, Edited Volume, Viswabharati, 1983, pp 6-7.
39. Risley Herbert, *People of India*, p. 299.
40. Nehru Jawaharlal, *The Discovery of India*, p 74.
41. See. S. Radhakrishnan, *Hindu View of Life*, 8th impression (London 1949) pp. 22-3 and Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Allahabad 1954) p.18.
42. Quoted by Mohiuddin. M, 'The Elements of Composite Culture', *Composite Culture of India and National Integration*, ed. By Rasheeduddin Khan, p. 84.
43. *Ibid*, p. 84.
44. *Ibid*, p. 90.
45. Nehru Jawaharlal, *The Discovery of India*, p.62.
46. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, II, 3.

47. Naravane. V.S, *A Cultural History of Modern India*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, p. 9.
48. Danda K Ajit., 'Ethno Cultural Diversities of India' *Composite Culture of India and National Integration* ed. By Rasheeduddin Khan p. 207 (Maps taken by the author from Maps Published by Joseph Schwartzberg, 1978).
49. Mukerjee Radha Kamal, ed. *The Culture and Art of India* Calcutta, 1959, p.382.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL INDIA FROM PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Let us now deal with the impact of foreign invasions and aggressions on cultural India. Cultural India had always been a reality, a long time tested truth. Let us reflect upon how India was and is taken as "*Akhand Bhārat*" inspite of many separate princely states, kingdoms, languages, regional variations etc. The oneness of India is corollary to the presence of Indian culture: that tremendous force of philosophy, spirituality, *Dharmasastras* etc., that keeps us one. The strength of Indian culture is such that it has long before become the "*Sanātana*" culture, and did survive the worst tests that any culture could ever stand.

Foreign aggressions on India started with Alexander and continued till 15th August 1947. They all shook Indian culture considerably and left long and deep impacts. The impact of aggressions of Muhammad bin Quasim was such that it had gone to this present day, to the extent of the creation of Taliban and the destruction of *Bāmian Buddhas*. The Muslims came to India as plunderates, and later as settlers. Then came the white man with nefarious ends. India had to take all these and for a long time, and yet: we remained.

I am sure that it irritates some academics when I speak of Indian culture as one; Indian nation as a unified whole etc. Minds which are set through modernism, post-modernism, structuralism etc. supports a

philosophy of “differences” Their exclusive western theoretical training that often enables them into thinking of being in the “contemporary” “up to date” and “current” goes about exhausting particulars and “context specificities”. They analyze by breaking a whole into parts to know “cognitively”; but have hardly any training to synthesize the whole they destroy. The over emphasis on particulars thus makes such minds think that particulars are real, and the general is only a construct. Such post-modern situation is akin to the debate among western linguistic philosophers, as to whether sentences have meaning or words have meaning, which, incidentally, Prabhākara, the *Mīmāṃsā* philosopher had solved before the west ever thought of language or linguistic philosophy.

Indian minds and thoughts had indeed understood the importance and significance of particulars; but they were also capable of experiencing the unity that transcends the differences of such particulars. This may become easy for exclusively western trained minds if I say that one may try drawing parallel here with immanuel Kant's concept of “synthetic Unity of Apperception”. I would sum up Western theories as partial, negative, analysis without synthesis, and “Naturally insufficient” to understand India, where knowledge is affective rather than being merely cognitive. I am not going in to the details of knowledge-wisdom, *Vidya*, *Parāvidya*, *Vijñāna* *Jñāna* differences.

For me, Prithviraj Chauhan is the point of break where Indian Culture and religion started getting invaded from outside. Though

Alexander, son of Philip of Macedonia was the first alien invader to India, the efforts of Vishnu Gupta or Chanakya, the son of Chanaka and Alexander's own problems thwarted the Greek invasion and could not make long lasting impacts. But it was the fall of Prithviraj from where India's real sufferings began. From then on, aliens started ruling India first partly, and then entirely.

In this chapter we are dealing with the cultural impact of foreign invasions on Indian soil. Several Muslim rulers invaded India and ruled the country. Apart from these Muslim invasions, Western powers like France, Portugal and England come to the sub-continent, initially as traders and then became masters of the soil with the help of their superior military and naval power.

Among the Muslim invaders, the Mughal rule caused much cultural syncretism. Apart from the brutal cruelty imposed on the Hindus by the early invaders, the Mughals, to some extent adopted a policy of 'give and take' in cultural matters. Ofcourse, there were also rulers like Aurangazeb showing extreme intolerance to the other religions and following a policy of religious orthodoxy. The Mughal emperors were universal symbols of power and affluence, of tenderness and cruelty, of ferocity and sensitivity; luxury living, licentious, sentimental, brutal and poetic, they were the embodiment of all those extremes characteristic of the Indian life-style known as Mughal.

Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, each in his own way epitomized some aspects of the complex cultural syncretism within which they lived and over which they presided. The courts they maintained, the courtiers they chose, reflected a new syncretic pattern of civilization that was a blend of Indian, Persian and Central Asian manners and mores.

Jahangir's Rajput mother can hardly be credited with having trained her son to Hindu ways, but his remarkable Persian wife, whom he renamed Nur Jahan after marrying her in 1611, firmly entrenched Persian culture at Agra's court. The combination of beauty, brilliance and ambition that allowed first to capture Jahangir's heart and soon virtually to usurp his throne, may not be uniquely Persian, but following her ascent to power, Persian (Farsi) was no longer simply the language of Agra's court, it set the tone and direction of the North Indian administration and cultural life at both provincial and imperial capitals.

In a sense the historic significance of the Great Mughal Persian impact may be said to have been that it helped to Indianize Muslim culture, (delinking the Arab connotation) which is in part why the rule of the Great Mughals prove so stable a unifying force over some two centuries. In the words of Stanley Wolpert.

"Agra's impoverished masses must have at least derived some vicarious pleasure from seeing and hearing how richly their royal neighbours lived. They could even forget that these rulers were foreign conquerors, for as any casual observer of Mughal miniature portraits may note, there was no sharp distinction in either dress or appearance between the Great Mughal

Emperors and princes and their leading Rajput nobles or other contemporary Hindu Chiefs.”

The period from Aurangaseb's death in 1707 to Peshawa's exile in 1818 saw rapid decline of Mughal Empire. In the words of Dr. Motilal Bhargava,

“Although its last flicker continued till the upheaval of 1857, the Mughal empire then was nothing more than an empty shell and the emperor at Delhi no more than a figure head”²

This had an interlude too, which has been termed by some of the modern historiographers as the Peshwa period. It affords the bridge between the two eras i.e. medieval and modern. The 1857 war draws the dividing line. On the one hand it symbolizes the end of medievalism, whereas on the other it marks the beginning of modern era in Indian history. As pointed out by Jayakar.

“It is now practically admitted that it (the upheaval of 1857) was an effort to obtain freedom for India and not only a muting of the sepays”³

During the time of Aurangazeb, Shivaji, the Great Maratha ruler was the symbol of national resistance against Muslim rulers. His main aim was to create an independent state in Maharashtra, free from all control of the foreign Mughals and their foreign empire in India. Hence its name ‘*Swarajya*’ became wide spread. Shivaji succeeded in freeing his territory from political, social, religious and economic bondage of foreign rule which was ‘disastrous morally and detrimental culturally’.⁴

“Establishment of such a state was an example in liberation and nationalism to other parts of the country and no doubt became a beacon light to the millions of subjugated people.”

Among the foreign conquerors, Europeans inflicted the most severe damage on Indian culture. The major European conquerors were the Portugal, France and the Great Britain.

Don Affonso d' Albuquerque, Viceroy of Portugal in the East from 1509 to 1515, was the master architect of Portugal's Indian empire. Albuquerque decided upon centrally situated Goa as the best Malabar base for his headquarters and in 1510 seized control of it, which was to become Portugal's capital on Indian soil. Portuguese power was quickly and securely established in Goa. The main aim of Albuquerque was to capture the wealth of India. With Goa Albuquerque wrote to his king, Dam Manoel.

“I do not believe that in all Christendom there will be so rich a king as your Highness, and therefore, do I urge you, Senhore, to strenuously support this affair of India with men and arms, and strengthen your hold in her, and securely establish your dealings and your factories; and wrest the wealth of India and business from the hands of the moors.”⁶

Albuquerque urges his master to support his affair in India with men and arms to 'wrestle the wealth out of India'. All his European followers followed this policy. Albuquerque dreamed of diverting Nile in order to dry up Egypt and of stealing the remains of the prophet from Mecca, so fierce was his hatred of Islam. No Muslim was permitted to

hold any office, no matter how humble, in Albuquerque's imperial regime, though Hindu 'police' (Sipahi and Later Sepoy) were readily employed.

"Western Europeans learned long before the British arrived how best to exploit the communal conflicts and social divisions within India's fragmented, pluralistic society"⁷

Before his death in 1515, Albuquerque also secured Malacca, Ormuz, Diu and Socotra, keeping his promise to his king, who was fast becoming the wealthiest monarch in Europe.

As Portugal's wealth and power in Asia grew, however, Jesuits back home feared that the mire of "Eastern sin" might undermine the empire built in such great measure by the zealous spirit of Christian crusading. In 1542 the first Jesuit missionaries arrived in Goa, zealously seeking to convert India's "heathen" population to Catholicism, but in 1548 Francis Xavier wrote to Ignatius Loyola to report pessimistically that.

"All these Indian Nations are very barbarians, vicious, and without inclination to virtue, no constancy of character no frankness"⁸

It was to be a familiar lament of westerners during the centuries ahead, by no means unique to the Portuguese, nor to the Jesuit fathers. Xavier himself soon abandoned India for Japan, finding Hindu converts less interested in biblical instruction and "spiritual food" than free rice. There were enough converts, nonetheless, combined with the offsprings of officially encouraged intermarriages (Luso-Indians), most of whom become Catholics. The Portuguese trade and power began to decline

rapidly after the terrible defeat of Vijayanagar, the Mighty Hindu Kingdom of South India and a supporter of Portuguese power, at the battle of Talikot in 1565. Though the Sultans did not drive the Portuguese from India, Philip II of Spain took possession of all Portuguese domains after 1580, personally unifying Iberia under his rule and closing the port of Lisbon to Dutch merchants. The immediate aftermath of that hostile Spanish policy was to intensify Protestant European competition in its search for alternate direct passages to India.

Intrepid English sea captains like Duke and Cavendish defied the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly by voyaging around the world, looting, shooting and pirating their way to knighthood and historic fame. The third voyage launched by merchants of London left in March 1607, three ships commanded by Captain William Hawkins, whose flagship, Hector, dropped anchor off Surat at the mouth of the river Tapti on August 24, 1608. It was the English East India Company's first visit to India. Surat was the Mughal Empire's principal port; after 1619 it became the site of England's first factory in India and remained the west coast headquarters for John Company (East India Company) until that key role would be taken over by Bombay in 1687.

Hawkins was first ignored, next humiliated, then robbed by Mughal officials (His ship and most of his crew were captured by Portuguese pirates while he was ashore at Surat). But on November 29, 1612, British stock rose swiftly in the minds of the Indians (those of Surat at least),

when they watch captain Best's proud ship Red Dragon sail into and disperse with well-armed cannon fire no fewer than four Portuguese galleons and "a whole fleet of frigates".

Best's victory at sea shifted the balance of Anglo-Portuguese power in Indian ocean and effectively neutralized the influence of Portuguese Jesuits at Agra's court. When king Jame's Ambassador, Sir. Thomas Roe, visited Jehangir in 1616 to present his gifts and credentials there was a new mood, a more cordial reception, awaiting him. Mighty as the Mughal army was, Jahangir had no fleet, and the Mughal had come to depend on Portuguese frigates for the costly protection of their annual pilgrim ship to Mecca; they now looked instead towards the more seaworthy, less bigoted British for this religiously vital service. Though it took some two years and nine months of haggling he managed to win a permission in 1619 for the English East India Company to build a factory at Surat.

In 1654 Cromwell's treaty with Portugal gave English ships full rights of trade in any Portuguese possession in Asia, finally shattering the de jure monopoly Portugal had held since the Treaty of Tordesillas. Though Cromwell's charter was burned by Royalists after the Restoration, its commitment was honoured by Charles II, whose era become a true golden age for the reinvitalised East India company. New royal charters granted the company rights it had never previously possessed, including permission to coin money, to exercise full jurisdiction over all English

subjects residing at its factories or forts, and to make war or peace with "non-Christian powers" in India.

Ever since the battle of Plassey in 1757 events in Bengal had moved faster and the British had transformed their position from mere tradesman to conqueror. Clive himself said in 1765

".....it is scarcely hyperbole to say that the whole Mughal Empire is in our hands"⁹

The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam-II had sold of his independence for a paltry sum; and thus opened an ignominious way for his naibs, vazirs and stooges to do the likewise. In Clive's own words '*Nothing remains to him but the name and shadow of authority*'. Thereafter the British held the Divani rights in Bengal. The emperor continued to enjoy his titles as before; and the etiquette of the court was maintained. Inside this golden prison Shah Alam was still a sovereign but for all worldly purposes, he was just a prisoner and a stooge of the foreigners. Wellesley's double faced policy triumphed; and in actuality '*the Mughal empire virtually ceased to exist*'¹⁰. In the Deccan, Arthur Wellesley destroyed the forces of the Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye and Argaon respectively and then captured the fortress of Gawilgarh. By the treaties of Deogaon and Sarji-Arjangaon, Bhonsle and Sindhia signed away their independence. Thus vanished Shivajis dream of *Hindu Pad Padshahi*.

The Rise of Princely States

The origin of most of the Indian States, later merged into bigger states of the Indian Union after the attainment of independence dates back to the years of the decline of the Mughal Empire following 1707. In Gujarat, Central India, Orissa and various other tracts such local chiefs rose by hundreds, so much so that some of them ruled even without assumption of the title of king. In the words of Pannikar 'it was an age of camouflaged royalty.' Whilst the Peshwas and the Nizam asserted independence openly, the Nawabs of Awadh, Bengal and Karnatak did so hesitatingly, and the rest intermittently.

With the collapse of Mughal power at the center the various Rajput state all over India, threw off allegiance to the Emperor. When the Marathas rose to power, the Rajputs had very little resistance to offer against them. The former exacted *Chauth* and *Sardeshmuhi* from the Rajput state freely. Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur agreed to fall in line. By 1735 most of the princely states agreed to pay *Chauth* to *Shahu*. In Punjab various Sikh Clans gradually built up their military strength.

In spite of successive invasions of the Afghans under Abdali (between 1749 and 1761) the Sikhs continued to strengthen their position.

In addition to these important Rajput and Sikh states, hundred of smaller principalities all over the Northern Border, cis-Sutlej area,

Sarhind, Punjab, Himalayas, Kumaun, Nepal, Sikhim, Bhutan etc. arose during the era of chaos and confusion.

“After the third battle of Panipat, people began to feel a vacuum in the Indian polity specially in North India. Such Rajs and princeling further got an excellent opportunity for consolidation when the Marathas and the English East India Company entered into a period of intermittent warfare. Whilst these great powers clashed, and the Mughal Emperor found solace in a paltry pension, the petty states conveniently assumed sovereign powers”¹¹

East India Company and the Princely States

The keynote of the East India Company's policy towards the Princely States from 1757 up to Lord Minto's rule as Governor General in 1813 was one of non-intervention or limited liability. Four important transactions form conspicuous landmarks in the period.

(i) Treaty of Allahabad

Treaty of Allahabad was concluded after the battle of Buxar in 1764. By the treaty company was granted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the Mughal Emperor contended himself with an ignominious pension of 26 lakhs of rupees in return.

“This was the first barter with the foreign tradesman and opened floodgates of ambitious inroads into the sovereignty of Indian states”¹²

The Mughal emperor received the districts of Kara and Allahabad consequent to rearrangement of Awadh territories. Clive thus gained virtual powers for the company by this treaty.

(ii) Triple Alliance

In South India, apart from the rivalry of the French in the Karnataka, the rulers of Mysore confronted the greatest problem to the East India Company. The mere fact of Tipu's association and sympathies with the French, goaded the Britishers to abandon the policy of non-interference-into one of active participation. The Nizam always fell an easy pray to their machinations. In order to humble down Tipu the British concluded a Triple Alliance between the Nizam, the Marathas and the company and succeeded in their effort.

(iii) The Treaty of Bassein

The death of Nana Fadnavis, the strong man of Maratha Samrajya gave the company an occasion for active interference in Maratha affairs. Internal squabbles ensued and with the murder of Jaswant Rao Kalkar's brother at Poona and the latter's on slaughter in October 1802, Sindhyas was routed and Peshwa Bajji Rao II was forced to take shelter at Bassein. The Britishers under colonel Collins at once proceeded to negotiate with him and concluded the treaty in 1803. Wellesley welcomed this opportunity and recorded on December 24, 1802 his view in these words.

"This crisis of affairs appeared to me to afford the most favourable opportunity for the complete establishment of the interests of the British power in the Maratha Empire without the hazard of involving us in a contest with any party"¹³

The Mughal emperor had already been tied down by the Treaty of Allahabad in 1765, and forced to accept a pension. His capital was

occupied by Lake in 1803 and the very same year the titular head of the Maratha confederacy, the Peshwa was bound down at Bassein. He was now 'a cipher, without a particle of power'.

(iv) The Treaty of Lahore

The North and the South having been subjugated, the East India Company authorities ventured to challenge even the newly created Sikh State. But the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh was wiser and received Metcalfe's embassy with courtesy. Seeing that the cis-Sutlej Sikh States of Nabha, Jhind, Faridkot and Patiala had already fallen under the influence of the Britishers, Ranjit Singh thought it expedient to compromise rather than face a showdown. The East India Company thus scored a victory in 1809 by extending their sphere of influence over the North Western region as well. The supremacy of the East India Company was fully established in the North as well as in the South.

The whole of India was now prostrate before the foreigners. Internal dissensions rent it assunder. Unity was thing of the past. Strength was more fictitious than real. Most of the rulers were addicted to wine and debauchery rather than to their duties of Kingship. The mass of people was dormant and fell an easy prey to the machinations of the political adventurers. The soldiery degenerated into vast mercenary hordes and for a time one of the blackest chapters of Indian history began.

Cultural Impact

Now we may look in to the cultural impact of this period. In this blackest period, British colonialist rulers ruled the country as they like. The proud of India became a thing of the past. This period witnessed harmonious co-operation between British colonial interest and Christian missionary work. Colonial masters wanted to keep India as a British colony. Christian missionaries tried to convert Hindus into Christianity. The aim of the colonial masters and the Christian missionaries may be different-one for politico-economical and the other religious-but the means they adopted had more or less the same impact on Indian society and the basic idea of their tactics were the same. Both of them wanted to make divisions on Indian society and to destroy Indian culture and they used all the means to achieve this heinous aim. The main tools of cultural destructions are (1) **Āryan Invasion Theory**, (2) **Encouragement to refutation of Indian Culture**, (3) **Alienation of Brāhmins and encouragement to Hindu Muslims rift** (4) **Conversion into Christianity by education and translation.**

Āryan Invasion Theory

For the small nation of Britain, India was the most precious colony for well accounted reasons. With many princely states with differences; trading and commerce of the East India Company, and of course with gun powder and fire, it wasn't very difficult for them to turn India into a British Colony.

What was difficult for them was to get Indians accept their domination through accepting the superiority and supremacy of the British.

Indeed, this wasn't an easy task at all. How could the British do away or overlook the supremacy of thousands of years of Indian civilization and culture? The Vedic religions? The philosophy? The literature? The dances? The music? Over and above, the theories in all walks of life? Any thinking English must surely have become overwhelmed by the experience of all these.

Generally Indians are not very well versed in the art of 'intellectual legitimization of social domination'. In simple terms, of deceiving people ofcourse! Take the case of Machiavelli. He seems to have understood the nature of state and its power. Machiavelli asserts that there is hardly a case of humble men acquiring power.

"simply by the force of open and undisguised force", because getting power "can quite well be done by using only fraud"¹⁴

To procure power, to be in power, a ruler literally uses fraud, and it is only through such means one gets powerful. Further he says that a ruler or prince need not have any qualities but he must make people believe that he has such qualities. A capable ruler knows very well how to keep people deceived.

Such things are not very familiar to the Indian minds. The colonial rulers did come with such background, and it was only natural for them to

try and device a new ideology in colonial India to maintain hegemony, so that the people of India shall consider the Western man as superior, and master. And this was the theory of Aryan invasion to India. To make these points further clear, let us go into some details.

Origin of the term “Ārya”

It is known to us that the Aryan invasion theory is rooted in 18th and 19th century European ideas of race, origin of civilization etc. We must say in categorical terms that this theory of Aryan invasion received absolutely no support from any Indian sources; right from *Rg Veda* down.

As for the original meaning of the term “Ārya” the meaning is very clear and there is no ambiguity at all.

“*Amarakōśa*” is a lexicon from 500 A.D. *Amarakōśa* is the most authoritative source for classical Sanskrit words. According to *Amarakōśa*, the term *Ārya* means “*Mahākula-kulīnarya-sabhya-sajjana-sādhana*”. This simply means, *Ārya* is any one of noble origin, that is to say that the one who acquired Aryan qualities from his ancestors, the qualities such as gentle behaviour and demeanor, good nature, righteousness etc. Any human being who possess these qualities is an *Arya*, race or nationality does no matter at all.

Maharṣhi Manu makes it very explicit that the people of the world over (of all nationalities) becomes *Āryan* or *non-Āryan*, depending on his

culture, conduct and qualities. Manu is very explicit and categorical. He says that:

".....in consequences of the omission of sacred rites, and of their not heeding the sages, the following people of the noble class (Āryas) have gradually sunk to the state of servants-the Paundrakās, Chōlas, Drāvidas, Kambōjās, Yavanās, Shakkās, Paradas, Pahlavas, Chinas, and Dāradas"¹⁵

Here two points are very clear. Irrespective of birth, place and nationality, any one who loses the qualities of Āryan ceases to be Aryan. Without stipulated Aryan qualities, there is no Āryan. Secondly Manu directly refers to some social and national groupings such as Chinese (China), Persians (Pahlvas) North-East Afghan's (Kambojas) Greeks or North-West-Afghans (Yavanas) and South, South-West Indians (Dravidas). From this it is very clear that Manu uses the term Arya only as a quality concept, that transcends all national, racial and ancestral connotations.

In classical Sanskrit the term Ārya was very widely used as honorific. To address a man as Arya is as good as addressing one 'Sir' in English and 'Monsieur' in French. The term is used with respect, an indication that the person possess refined qualities. The *Ṛg vēda* explicitly uses the term **Ārya** as an adjective, connotatively, as a quality concept. We find the expression.

'..... *praja ārya jyothiragrah*'¹⁶

which means the Ārya fold seek and are led by 'jyōthi'. Here the term jyoti-light-is to be taken in spiritual sense, light meaning enlightenment. Even Budha who reacts against Vēdic Orthodoxy calls his teachings as '**Ārya Dharma**'. Budha says that: "one who destroys life is never an Ārya, and one who desists from taking life is an Ārya".

The poet, Rishi Vātmiki describes Rāma as an Ārya and also says who could be called Ārya.

"Āryaḥ Sarva-samskarina sādāiva priyadarśanaḥ"¹⁷

Ārya is the one who cares for the equality (who cares every one equally) of all, and who is equally dear to everyone.

To sum up the term Ārya is of Indian origin; it is found in **Rg Vēda** down. The Indians consistently uses the term Ārya connotatively as a quality concept. There is no ambiguity or confusion regarding the term Ārya. The term Ārya was never used to mean, nationality, race etc. Race concept is alien to Āryan concept as coltar to water.

Alien Meaning to Āryan Concepts

Though these are the facts with the term Āryan, alien meaning had been synthesized into Āryan concept by Europeans to create many theories. Unlike the translational mistake of 'Parthenogenesis' in Septuagint Greek Bible, the Aryan race science was no mistake. It was calculated and deliberate, arbitrarily done at all points of mutilation of the Aryan concepts.

Researches by L. Paliakov and others reveal a great deal of interesting information regarding this. 18th century European Christians were rather uncomfortable or disturbed by their Jewish ancestry. Anti-semiticism was all appealing to them, but they had no redemption from the Old Testament and Genesis. Nonetheless, they longed for an identity of their own, detached from that of the Jews.

To free themselves from the Jewish heritage, the Christian Europe of the 18th Century enlightenment looked towards East, naturally to find India. That Europe was full of 'humanist movement' (now known as European Renaissance) and great voyages of discoveries of 16th and 17th century preceded it. They had already learned that there are very different and very advanced cultures, literature, music, dances, philosophies and sciences elsewhere other than that of their own. They realised the folly in thinking that Europe is the world. In short, they became aware of the richness, antiquity and complexities of Indian history and culture. According to Jim Shaffer.

"Many scholars such as Kant and Herder, began to draw analogies between the myth and philosophies of ancient India and the West. In their attempt to separate Western European culture from its Judaic heritage, many scholars were convinced that the origin of Western culture was to be found in India rather than in the ancient Near East."¹⁸

It is from this era that the perversion and mutilisation of the term 'Aryan' started; which indeed has nothing at all to do with the original Sanskrit terms. The most infamous mutilation of Aryan concept was by

Hitler and the Nazis, he had adopted the Hindu auspicious symbol of '**Swastika**' as the 'Hitlerian' Āryan symbol as well. (It is another story how the Jews 'borrowed' their 'star of David' from Vēdic Hinduism).

The Āryan race theory duly selected the white race as Aryan, Paliakov says:

"According to this new theory it was not the whole human race but one particular race—a white race which subsequently became Christian—which had descended from the mountains of Asia to colonise and populate the West."¹⁹

This indeed is truly amazing. The Aryan invasion theory of India is preceded by an Aryan Invasion Theory of Europe; which is hardly known to most people. In short a great deal went into the creation of Aryan invasion, at times very imaginative and interesting things.

One thing must be noted here as very important. 'Aryan' was conceived as a race, which is distinct and totally different from the Semitic. One can understand this, given the European context. Christian Europe desperately wanted to de-link themselves from Judaic heritage: their Judaic ancestry was indeed suffocating, given their attitude to the Jews. From Shakespeare to Sylvia Plath this is much evident; one of Shakespeare's famous villains is Shylock the Jew; and the villain is more so because of his being the Jew. The final punishment Shakespeare gives to Shylock is that by forcing him to convert into Christianity. Shylock's daughter Jessica eloping with a Christian boy precedes the

final punishment to Shylock is also important. This ancient hatred to Jews manifests in Sylvia Plath in modern times by her calling- "daddy daddy, you are a Jew". Perhaps it was natural for the Christian Europe to "some how" do away with their Judaic heritage, of which they must have been much ashamed. The prototype Aryan invasion of Europe indeed was their only escape.

This lie, the deliberate lie that arise from deep despair was further viciated by European linguists when they found similarity between European and Indian languages. They packed this theory into academic language and presented it as the result of scientific research. Unfortunately the incarnation of this theory is presented as authentic in history books in India as well. As a result the origin and spread of Indo-European languages becomes a problem of much historical importance; but this problem gets entangled with this spurious scientific theory. One ought to unambiguously disentangle these two. The real problem is simply "Chronology of Vedic India and spread of Indo-European languages".

The Āryan invasion theory only adds confusion to both: in short, the racist spurious scientific exercise was turned into a scientific theory through a semantic shift of emphasis from race to language.

Further on a later stage this theory gets modified that Europeans and Indo-Aryans were different branches of one stock of people known as

Indo-Europeans, whose original homeland is somewhere in Central Asia or Europe. Even today many people hold this view. Interestingly, they want to place the home land of Aryans anywhere from Chinese Turkestan to Lithuania, except India itself!

We cannot refrain ourself from calling this very cunning, since through such a theory, many of the achievements of Indian civilization becomes attributed not to the Indians, but to their supposed ancestors prior to their arrival in India. Thus the Indian achievements of Astronomy and Mathematics became attributed to the Greeks. According to this theory, the ancestors of Vedic people invaded India, and the language which they brought with them later became Sanskrit. After their language's becoming Sanskrit, they composed the '*Vēdās*'. It is only the extension of this theory is what, if not this theory itself, we find in most of the history books.

The colonial rulers extensively used this theory in all possible ways to legitimize and continue British rule over India. Indeed they pressed this spurious history into service of religion and politics. In short the British did create sufficient infra structure to destroy Hindu India, Indian culture, tradition and even values. Above all they willfully created spurious theories and history that helps them, to their convenience.

One could very well say that *Āryan* Invasion theory was created by Germans and was used by British. Right from the very beginning, two political factors were playing in the torturous course of the *Aryan* Invasion

Theory. One political factor was that of German nationalism and the other was British colonial interests. These two aspects can't be separated at all from the Aryan invasion theory.

And then there was the Max Muller, a German living in England, who gave such twists and turns to the theory that had far fetching consequences: perceptions on Indian and even world history became perverted; it also gave rise to a Hitler and Second World War.

Max Muller and Āryan as a Race

We saw earlier that the term Āryan has not a single racial connotation, whatsoever, in original Sanskrit language. But Max Muller was more responsible than any one to give Aryan a racial meaning. However, Max Muller later shifts position to say Aryan is not a racial concept but a linguistic one. This shift must have been done under various compulsions, but indeed he did use Aryan as a racial concept. See his introduction to the *R̥g Vēda* translation for example.

“.....As long as man takes an interest in the history of his race, and as long as he collect in libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long raw of books which contain the records of the Aryan branch of mankind will belong for ever to the Rg Veda”²⁰

Unlike many other German romantics and nationalists, Max Muller knew too well that the term Aryan had nothing to do with its original meaning in Sanskrit. Yet, he was appealing to the *Vēdas* for legitimizing his use of the term Aryan as race; knowing fully well that such legitimization is impossibility.

In all probability, he was up to some kind of gimmick and eye wash. One must remember that this was deliberate and not out of ignorance; and to this extent, Max Muller can't be excused at all.

But then during post 1871 era Max Muller himself was in a political trap; he had to disown the Aryan race theory that he had been carrying for twenty years. He changed position to say that \bar{A} ryan is not a race, it is only a linguistic grouping or identity.

Indeed it is very interesting to note what made him to change positions so rapidly and so suddenly. By 1871, Max Muller was comfortably settled in England and was working through "the Sacred Books of the East". He was about fifty years of age, and was having fame and name in England. The Germans counted him as just another romantic and outdated; he was not much respected in Germany. Till the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, France was a formidable enemy to England, but the defeat of France by Russia and Unification of Germany changed the scene. German Nationalism has become formidable, Germany was emerging as real threat to British ambitions and interests. The Aryan race theory had indeed gone deep into German Nationalism and Max Muller had no control over the devil he had unleashed. Imagine Max Muller seen as the sufficient cause of German Nationalism, living in Victorian England! His sponsors were after all the British Government in India, who were now becoming frightened of the rise of Germany.

And it was a question of existence to Max Muller; he had to reverse his positions. He had to discard the Aryan race theory that he had been advocating for the past twenty years. For the next thirty years of his life, he consistently maintained that $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$ is not a race but only a linguistic grouping.

Max Muller went all out to defend himself: he had to prove it to his British masters that he had not contributed to German nationalism by way of his $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$ race theory. It must have been out of sheer desperation of this sort that Max Muller went to the "Lions den" itself to speak about his new theory that $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$ is only a linguistic grouping and not a race. After the Franco-Prussian war of 1871, in 1872 itself, that is the very next year Max Muller gave out his new theory in a University at Stratsbourg through lecturers. There he presented that Aryan is a linguistic grouping that includes Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Avestan etc. and could never apply to race. Though for the next thirty years he continuously maintains this position, it was indeed of no avail; the Aryan race theory had gone deep into people thoughts and for some people like Hitler, it had indeed got on their nerves. Max Muller had unleashed the devil, but the devil now started swallowing Max Muller himself. He must have been extremely desperate with anger to assert.

"I have declared again and again that if I say $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$, I mean neither blood nor bones, nor skull nor hair, I mean simply those who speak $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$ languages.... To me an ethnologist who speaks of $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$ blood, $\bar{\text{Aryan}}$

race, Āryan eyes and hair is as great a sinner as a linguist who speaks of a dolichocephalic dictionary or of brachycephalic Grammar"²¹

Julian Huxley comments in this regard.

"He introduced a proposition which was demonstrately false. He spoke not only of a definite Āryan language and its descendants, but also of a corresponding Āryan race. The idea was rapidly taken up both in Germany and in England"²².

Interestingly, Germans took up the Āryan race theory to build up nationalism, but the English took it up to build internationalism. The English used it over Indian colony to demonstrate that they are the real inheritors of Indian culture, tradition and even *Vēdic Brāhminism*.

On a final analysis, the following few points need to be highlighted, may be for a second time. One, the Aryan invasion theory of India was preceded by an Āryan invasion theory of Europe, totally fabricated by intellectuals who desperately wanted to delink themselves from the Judaic heritage of Christianity. This theory of Āryan invasion of Europe must have paved the foundation of the Āryan invasion theory of India, to meet the requirement of Macaulay to poise English superiority over Indian colony. Macaulay's project was also aimed at eliminating the 'sense of guilt' or feeling of inferiority on part of at least a few thinking English men who were sent to rule India. Secondly, the Bismarkian German unification and the emergence of new German Nationalism compelled Max Muller to completely reverse his otherwise comfortable theory of Aryan race.

Max Muller had replaced race with language, and evidences show that this had been done quickly and in haste. We had already explained some of Max Muller's compulsions and indeed he had to yield to pressures both from within and without. Max Muller was indeed desperate to disassociate himself from Aryan race theory and German Nationalism. In this hurry, he had created much contradictions, normally not likely for scholar like him.

Speaking about linguistic Aryans, he says that originally they are from Sogdiana, in Trans Oxus region in central Asia, North of Kashmir. One branch of them migrated to South East into Iran, Afghanistan and India to become the Indo-Iranians. The second branch migrated South West and become the Greeks and Europeans. To support this theory, Max Muller claimed that the original Aryans were land locked, did not have any idea of sea and did not even have a word for fish in their language. Here Max Muller commits some blunders. Both Iran and Afghanistan lie not to the South East of Sogdiana but to the South West. Moreover, Afghanistan had always been culturally and linguistically an extension of India. He had also failed to realize that several popular species of fishes are plenty available in Sogdiana.

To escape from Aryan race theory and German Nationalism Max Muller commits some real blunders in his Aryan language group theory. He says that Aryans of central Asia were so immobile that they did not know about ocean which is only few hundred kilometers away, and also

about fish which was found even closer. The original Aryans were immobile so that they did not know of sea, how then did those immobile ones spread over a vast stretch from Ireland to the East Coast of India that too keeping away from waters? Obviously, evidence, logic and scholarship did give way to political requirements and rationalizing rhetoric. He was playing an imperial game, according to rules set by others. First it was only Macaulay but later it become the British itself.

Encouragement to Refutation of Indian Culture

The Britishers thought that Christianisation of India would really go a long way to maintain the colonial rule and they used all the available means for this purpose. Missionaries with their proselytizing interests were happy to join the plot with the ruling authority. Apart from these, the Hindus and Muslims were divided into enemy camps. So Hindu Muslim rift, anti Brahminism, near total freedom to Christian Missionaries etc. have their direct political links to British colonial rule over India.

The prestigious Boden Professorship of Sanskrit at Oxford University was endowed by Colnel Boden specifically to

“....promote Sanskrit learning among the English, so as to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian Religion”²³

Prizes were also offered to literary works which would be undermining Indian tradition. The first holder of the Boden Professorship

was Horace Hayman Wilson (1784-1860). Writing about a series of lectures he gave, Wilson himself noted.

"These lectures were written to help candidates for a prize of £ 200 given by John Mur..... For the best refutation of Hindu religious systems"²⁴.

Alienation of Brāhmins and Encouragement to Hindu Muslim Rift

By late 18th century, the British became more dominating, and to make administration effective, they had to acquaint themselves more with Indian tradition, culture and heritage. They had to study Sanskrit therefore. Sir William Johnes was one of the first to study Sanskrit, who later went on to establish Royal Asiatic Society. Sir William Johnes, his assistant Sir Henry Thomas, Cole Brooke, Filippo Sassetti etc. found striking resemblance between Sanskrit and European languages. The British attachment to India was purely commercial and economical, but the German interest was emotional and romantic. The German infatuation with India did contribute much to German Nationalism also. Germany then was divided into small ruling states and they had to take heavy punishments from big nations. At such a stage of things, not surprisingly, the German intellectuals seemed to have sought solace in an ancient and exotic land and its culture. Even Hegel, the very strong German Nationalist was found of saying that all Germans were direct disciples of Indian philosophy and culture. All of these must have been amusing to the British at first, but started causing alarm with the emergence of Prussia. They thought that it was German contact with India that gave rise to

German Nationalism. Sir Henry Maine, the then Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University exclaimed.

“.....a nation has been born out of Sanskrit”²⁵

The British was still reeling under the shock of 1857 revolt by Indian soldiers against colonial rule. They knew very well that they will stand no chance at all, if the Indians were to unite under some cause. Just as the French sought to keep Germany divided, the British also wanted to keep a divided India. Thus to divide and rule, the British sought for all possibilities to cut across the Indian society, to create different groups who are antagonistic to one another in the name of religion, caste, language, race and what not. India really does not have any uniform caste system, castes vary regionally. The only caste that is uniformly present in India is the Brahmins, and they commanded respect from all over India. Though the Brahmins themselves were not free from mistakes, they did a great work by preserving and protecting Indian culture and tradition, the values and the Hindu religion itself. The British counted the Brāhmins as their potential enemy and did all that to alienate Brāhmins from the subaltern castes in particular, so that the lower castes atleast shall not listen to Brahmins. The British filled the minds of lower caste Indians with poison against Brahmins. They also tried to aggregate Hindu- Muslim rift and encouraged the proselytizing efforts of Christian Missionaries. In short the British did create sufficient infra structure to destroy Hindu India.

Conversion into Christianity by Education and Translation

Lord Macaulay (1800-1859) firmly believed that converting Indians to Christianity would make the colonial rule stronger. He found education the finest media to this end, and he introduced both English language and a Euro centricism with Christian bias into Indian Education system. There are still fact even in present days; such were the lasting nature of his introducing both. Macaulay was Chairman of the Education Board and he was the real instrument behind establishing a chain of English school in India. Which indeed became a network of English Education and Westernization. The most important goal of English education was to convert Hindus into Christian religion. Gospels were printed and given free to the English learners. In Kerala, Sothern part of India, this went a step ahead by making church and school always together. However, the Indians readily took to English education, and Macaulay mistook this Indian intellectual curiosity as a landmark of success in his Christianizing exercise. In 1836 Macaulay very enthusiastically wrote to his father.

“Our English Schools are flourishing wonderfully. The effect of this education on the Hindus is prodigious.... It is our belief that if our plans of education are followed up there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any effort to proselytize, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, by natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartly rejoice in the project”¹²⁶.

The project in which Macaulay heartly rejoice is one of making the Hindus to give up Hinduism in favour of Christianity. And this he

plots to take place through the novel technique of “knowledge and reflection” by the Hindus as he cunningly plots them to know and reflect. He designs the education precisely for this: persistently taking care of every minute details.

Macaulay cherished yet another secret desire. He wanted the English educated Indian to read Hindu scriptures in English language instead of original Sanskrit language. This could be easy, since knowledge of Sanskrit language was indeed limited to few. Thus Macaulay wanted the Sanskrit texts to be translated into English in such a manner that by reading them one must shun Hindu religion in favour of Christianity.

Through this “knowledge and reflection”, he wished to uproot the Hindu tradition. From then on., Macaulay started looking for a man who would translate the Hindu scriptures into English in such a manner. Indeed Macaulay was naïve enough to believe in the success of this nefarious plan.

Macaulay approached Professor Horace Hyman Wilson, the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. Wilson knew India, he had spent several years in India translating *R̥g Vēda* and *Purāṇas*. He must certainly have seen the futility of Macaulay’s project, and refused to do such a work. Wilson wanted no part in Macaulay’s heinous begotery project.

But Wilson knew the man who would do Macaulay’s job. A very devout protestant with ardent missionary zeal, a Sanskrit Scholar who

wanted to bring out a critical edition of *R̥g Vēda* with the commentary of *Sāyana*. And what was more, this person desperately needed funds to accomplish his wishes of translating Sanskrit texts-Wilson knew this also. Fredrick Max Muller (1823-1901) is regarded as one of the greatest Indologists of that time and a great Vedic and Sanskrit scholar. People also regarded him as a great lover of India. His interpretation of *R̥g Vēda* was also much respected atleast during those days. In reality Max Muller was none of these; he could neither speak nor understand Sanskrit; he could only read. The so called lover of India never visited India inspite of the fact that India was then a British colony. He was completely wrong about history and chronology and Max Muller's ignorance led him to interpretations which can only be regarded folklore. The Germans regarded Max Muller only as a romantic and we must add: a bookworm of no much significance too. His chronology of the Vedic period is indeed absurd: he dates *R̥g Vēda* to BC 1200. When faced with pressure from critics Max Muller later admits 'whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000, 1500, 2000 or 3000 BC, no power on earth will ever determine'²⁷.

It shall be worthwhile to go into the personality of Max Muller a little. Max Muller was a mixture of a German romantic as well as a narrow protestant missionary, though he was never a missionary in practical life. But one can explicitly see the missionary spirit in his writings. In 1868 the then acting secretary of India, the Duke of Arggle received a letter from Max Muller:

“The ancient religion of India is doomed, and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault it will be?”²⁸

Max Muller and many of his contemporaries were products of the late 18th century European context. Moreover, that was an age, where academic freedom in the modern sense did not exist. Such theories victimized later generations, but these people themselves were victims of later 18th century context, particularly Germany.

And then came Max Muller from Germany; in December 1854, the German Ambassador, namely Christian Karl Hosia Baron Van Bunsen who went to Oxford to see Macaulay brought the 31 year old Max Muller to him.

Macaulay organized funds from East India company, they agreed to pay a sum of £ 10000 (then a large sum) to Max Muller to translate *Rg Veda* into English in such a way that by reading that a **Hindu must throw away his religion²⁹**. The translation must be such that it **must destroy the Hindu faith**.

Max Muller was a German Nationalist undoubtedly. Given the German nationalism, Max Muller ought to have refused this offer, but for the sake of Christianity and the handsome monetary benefit, Max Muller joined Macaulay in the nefarious operation of mutilating Indian culture, religion and tradition, just to serve the British political interests. This was the genesis of Max Muller and the great enterprise of translating Sanskrit

texts into English. "Sacred Books of the East" then became a reality and Max Muller came to be regarded as a great Sanskrit scholar both by the West and the East.

Max Muller's Motives

Max Muller was a German Nationalist living and working for Victorian England. His position must have been extremely delicate; indeed there was the prudential requirement of being very careful and of concealing his motives. Even while translating Sanskrit scriptures into English with the secret intention of destroying the Hindu religion and Indian culture and tradition (though the British wanted precisely this), Max Muller was very careful to conceal his true motives and intentions. He had also been shifting position from time to time avoiding chances of controversy.

Above all, he really had to walk the tight rope to make his patrons happy. Though Macaulay got the East India company to promise £10000 for Max Muller, they never payed the entire amount. Max Muller had to continuously and repeatedly ask for the promised money; his obsessions with translating *R̥g Vēda* did not let him quit the job, and finally East India Company agreed to pay a sum "Which shall not exceed of £ 3000"³⁰. With the revolt of 1857 the East Company was no more and then Max Muller had to start all over again. To get funds he had to have patience, persuasion and diplomatic skill of high order. Indeed, Max Muller wanted his scholarship as a medium to a great mission of converting India into

Christianity. In 1866, he wrote to his wife about *Rg Veda* in the following manner.

“.....this edition of mine and the translation of the Veda, will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years”³¹

The letter to Duke of Argyle and this clearly demonstrates Max Muller's motives and intentions. Like his contemporary **Richard Burton and Lawrance of Arabia** of later time, though Max Muller was a scholar, was also a paid British agent to promote colonial interests. These, however is not to underestimate the monumental contributions of Max Muller. Our suggestion is only a simple one, while reading Max Muller's translations of Sanskrit texts, his genesis, motives and the Victorian context must be born in mind by any modern students.

Max Muller is widely seen as a great Sanskrit Scholar atleast of his time, particularly by the West. We must suggest that merely revealing a personality of the old as great scholar shall not be called scholarship. With all the serious mistakes with particular context in Max Muller it becomes inevitable to rethink about the much acclaimed Sanskrit scholarship of Max Muller.

Firstly Max Muller never visited India, and his scholarship of Sanskrit was restricted to grammar, translation and editing of manuscripts.

It may sound very strange, but in reality, Max Muller had absolutely no idea about how Sanskrit language shall sound! See how Nirad Chandhary narrates an episode:

“One day in 1854 Max Muller was sitting in his room at Oxford copying his MSS, when an Indian dressed in long black coat was shown in and he addressed Muller in a language of which he did not understand a single word. Muller replied in English and asked the visitor in what language he was speaking. The visitor was surprised: “Do you not understand Sanskrit?” Max Muller replied “No I have never heard it spoke”³².

One can't stop wondering about Max Muller's Sanskrit Scholarship. He could read and understand Sanskrit language, he spent his life translating Sanskrit texts into English, but why there was no initiative on his part to speak Sanskrit by associating himself with Sanskrit speakers? Why Max Muller never visited India inspite of the fact India was their colony? Why was he confined to Oxford and contained? In Max Muller's situation it is a natural human curiosity to “actually use” a language that one learns and actually see areas connected with it. We simply don't understand Max Muller's this phenomenal attitude. Was he really not a lover of Sanskrit? Was he simply an agent to British political interests in India? Has Max Muller only instrumental value? To find answers, is more than what we could imagine.

Thus from the time of Prithviraj Chauhan till Indian independence, India was first ruled by the Muslims and then by the Europeans. Both

Muslims and the European Christians left no stone unturned in destroying the unity, integrity and cultural oneness of Indian nation.

The Muslims carried explicit religious fanaticism with them and they blundly gave the choice between Islam and death to Hindus. They took great pride in destroying Hindu temples and laying the idols of Hindu Temples on the footsteps of mosques so that Muslims can walk on them when they go for prayers. The Muslims were blund, their fundamentalism was explicit, and they forced religious conversion brutally and en-mass. Indeed they were much more successfull in religious conversions than the European Christians.

Unlike the Muslims, the Europeans were very crafty, callous, and had intelligently planned their 'methodology' before putting them into "Praxis". Like some of today's modern intellectuals, they first theorized their objectives and carried out "praxis intervention of deconstruction to distrust", built stipulated methodologies. Macaulay and MaxMuller are already spelt out. They used rhetoric language, pretended sincerity and love, disguised themselves as great lovers of mankind, showed apathy, provided material comforts and much promises, employed Christian converts and raised their social status, and carried out religious conversion on the one hand and did all they could do to destroy the Hindu religion. Had Hinduism been not "*Sanātana Dharma*" and yet another religion as any other religion, with all these, there would not have been a Hindu today.

The Europeans identified Hindu 'religion' as the unifying factor of Indian nation and it would be just easy for them to rule India if Hindu religion could be scrapped off. So political leadership gave all support to any effort to christianisation.

They also tried to create as many differences as possible among the Indians to weaken and disintegrate Indian society, and one can see today Pakistan paying the price for it by their overwhelming differences among various sects of Muslims, different language groups, tribes and the like. The British adopted the broad spectrum "divide and rule" theory and started creating differences among Hindus-Muslims, Upper castes-lower castes, any caste to any caste, different language groups, different geographical groups and the like.

Differences in Europe between different sects of Christianity, languages, geographical variations etc. are so foolishly important to the White man, that they hardly stopped killing each other till today. Britons with the quarrel between Irish Scottish-English cousins and Catholics and Protestants naturally considered India a real gold mine of differences where they can easily thrive through their theory of "divide and rule" They were ever convinced that India is at the very verge of disintegration, and at any time it would fragment. The British foolishly believed that they "United" India, and what keeps the Nation one is the coloneal British rule. So much so, while leaving India in 1947 and after creating a Pakistan from India, they confidently predicted that the "Union" of India shall not

last just ten years. But then, we know how wrong they were. Both Muslim rulers and Europeans did all they could, consciously as well as unconsciously to disintegrate India and Indian culture, in short, what we call today Indianess. Indeed this was a very long period of intense attack which was continuous and on going on this Nation. If any other Nation was subject to similar circumstances, to what extent they would survive remains to be seen.

But, we are still the Indian Union. Our constitution is not coercive, there is no iron rule that keeps the Indian Union as one integrated Unit, as it was in the case of former USSR. The unity and integrity of Indian Nation is not merely a political one as the British had understood it to be. Had it been merely political, India would have disintegrated long before as the British had predicted.

The oneness of Indian nation comes from yet another source; the source that is Indian culture, a culture with spiritual basis and moorings. Where selflessness and sacrifice is the prime phenomena, selfishness and egocentricism of individualism that naturally takes minds to differences and disintegration can't get much foot hold.

The real reason for the unity of India is Indian Culture, and the real strength of Indian Culture comes from Indian spirituality and heritage, which has perhaps the widest perceptive and world view among all world cultures. This widest perspective indeed is what is unique to it.

Right from time immemorial this land of spirituality kept producing powerful minds who functioned as cultural autoctones. Indeed it will be near impossible to make an inventory of such cultural autoctones

Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda was one such Cultural Autoctone. He particularly aimed at liberating Indian minds from their subjugation, and fight to win freedom from British colonial rule. Coloneal India gave rise to many cultural autoctones who filled Indian minds with inspiration. Some such names are Maharṣhi Aurabindō, Ramaṅa maharṣhi, Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda and the like.

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CHAPTER IV

SWĀMY VIVĒKĀNĀṂDA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

Very naturally, the philosophy of Swāmi Vivēkānaṁda is not an isolated phenomenon. The philosophy what we call of the Swamiji's is an expression of his *anubhava* and *jñāna*, as it is the case of Indian wisdom where knowledge is ultimately experiential and this "*anubhava/ jñāna*" of the Swāmi is directly based on Indian philosophy, spirituality, knowledge etc is through the three fold stages of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nidhidhyāsana*. To this count, we must know something about the life of this great master.

SWĀMI VIVĒKĀNĀṂDA

Swāmi Vivēkānaṁda's name in *pūrvāśrama* was Narendranath. He was born in Calcutta as the second son of Viswanath Dutta, a successful lawyer, and Bhuwanseswari Devi, a highly religious woman and a devotee of lord Śiva. They had in all ten Children-four sons and six daughters-five of whom died prematurely.

Naren's boyhood was largely like that of any high-spirited vigorous and healthy young boy, but unlike other boys of his age however he was interested in meditation, which gave him a prodigious memory. His inborn quest for truth led him to almost all learned men of Calcutta, to whom he made earnest enquiries about God. This took him to Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa. At that time Ramakrishna was a priest in the Temple of Dakshineswar. Naren asked the usual question to Sri. Ramakrishna, "Sir, have you seen God?" The reply was a surprise to the Naren: "Yes, I see him, just as I see you, only in a much more intense sense". This really impressed Naren, for, at long last he had found a man, who could say with surety that God exists and can be seen. Naren's first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna took place in 1881, when he was an 18 year old college student. Naren found a kind of magnetism in Ramakrishna but it was after years of questioning and testing, which went on till the Guru's last days that Naren finally became convinced of his Guru's greatness. He became an initiated disciple, to whom Sri Ramakrishna imparted his spiritual realization and who he declared his heir.

There was a band of young men, mostly college students, who were attracted by the magnetic spell of Sri, Ramakrishna's personality and Naren was the leader among them. After the passing away of the master, they all accepted '*sanyas*' as directed by him and decided to carry on the mission entrusted to them by their master.

The India before Swāmiji was a land that had lost all erstwhile glory, it was a land ruled by aggressors from outside and a bunch of spiritually confused people. Time had treated this great nation very badly. Colonial British rule must end. Indians must organize and push the invaders out from the mother land. If this has to happen, then each Indian must first realize his own greatness through realizing the

Greatness, Culture, Religion Spirituality and even Epistemology of this land Spirituality had always been the strength of this nation, which is rather dormant due to western begotary and influence. Vivekananda desired to kindle the dormant spiritual strength of Indians and fortify Indians to stand up to the British and ask them to quit. Further, one day not very far in the future, the entire world is going to look at India for spiritual solace and strength. We must have full potential to meet the demand from the world, then.

Deeply conscious of the mission he has to fulfill, Naren started on a pilgrimage. Without money or acquaintances, to see for himself the grand nation and its people, whom he was to serve. This led him all over India, from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari and brought him into close contact with people in every walk of life. In the words of Padmasri.P. Parameswaran.

"He was deeply moved by the distress and degeneration that was prevalent all around, but history brought him memories of a great past, which now lay shattered".

At last he reached Kanyakumari, where he spent three days and nights sitting on the now famous rock, the last piece of Indian land, wholly absorbed in one thought-that of his mission.

"With the vision of a seer, he understood why India had been thrown from the pinnacle of glory to the depths of degradation. Where only wind and surf were to be heard, he reflected on the purpose and achievements of the Indian world. He thought not of Bengal, or of Maharashtra, nor of the

Punjab but of India and the life of Indians. The centuries were laid out before him. He perceived the realities and potentialities of Indian culture. He saw India organically and synthetically as a master-builder might visualize in the concrete an architect's plan. He saw religion to be the life blood of India's mission. 'India', he realized, in the silence of his heart, 'shall rise only through a renewal and restoration of that highest spiritual consciousness, that has made her, at all times, the cradle of nations and cradle of faith. He saw her greatness; he saw her weakness as well, the central one of which was that the nation had lost its individuality. To his mind, the only hope lay in a re-statement of the culture of rishis. Religion was not the cause of India's downfall; but the fact is that true religion was no where followed; for religion, when lived, was the most potent of all forces,"²

It was during the course of his '*Parivrajaka*' life that he heard of Parliament of Religions to be held at Chicago and decided to go there. The intention of the organizers of the Parliament was to establish the superiority of the Christianity before the world. But the presence of Swamiji spoiled their attempt. In the words of Padmasri P. Parameswaran,

"They wanted it to be an occasion at which it would be proclaimed to the whole world that Christianity was the only true religion and humanity's salvation lay in the Christian path. But the providential appearance of Vivekananda opened the closed minds of many Westerners to the light from the 'land of the heathen', which had the potential to lead the world to a harmony of religions, and not to the exclusive superiority of any one"³.

In the Parliament of Religions, Vivēkānaṅda emerged as the most distinguished and popular speaker. The famous "Chicago Address" enshrined the essence of his message to the world. The "Chicago

address" gave him the opening, which the Swāmiji wanted. He became a world figure. But success did not dazzle him. It made him painfully aware of the great misery in which the people of India lived, compared with the freedom and affluence in the West. He traveled extensively in America and also undertook a tour of England.

Through Vivēkānaṅda, for the first time many Europeans got a different spiritual experience. Many wanted to convert into Hindu religion but he forbid them, and asked them to be good Christians. Many Europeans shamed themselves in the foolishness of sending Christian missionaries to a land like India. They saw a Hindu and so an Indian.

After spending nearly four years in the west he has decided to return to India. The desire to return to India in his own words is:

"India I loved before I came away; now the very dust of India has become holy to me; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Theertha"⁴

Swāmiji landed in Colombo on 5th January, 1897. The story of his success in the West had reached India much earlier. A hero's welcome awaited him all over India. Everywhere vast crowds, comprising mostly youth, thronged to see and hear him. Through his electrifying lectures, he raised his countrymen with an urgent sense of duty to the country and its religion.

"He exerted them to lead a life of dedication and sacrifice. He aroused in them a fiery sense of pride in Hinduism, to which he gave a timely interpretation and added a new dimension."⁵

The impact was miraculous. To consolidate his and his followers' activities, Vivēkānaṅda founded Sri Ramakrishna Math and Sri Ramakrishna Mission. The objectives he placed before the two organizations was characteristic of him. Till then *sanyāsīs* had only one role to play: pursue the path of God and teach people how to do the same; in accordance with their station in life. Vivekananda realized that this was not enough for the present age. He placed the objective of '**Ātmāno Mōkṣharthaṁ, Jagat Hithaya cha**' (for the salvation of the self and for the welfare of Humanity). Service to humanity, according to him was to be considered equal to the worship of God. Thus he added a new dimension to the age-old institution of *Sanyāsa*. Vivēkānaṅda also established two journals to spread the message of Neo-vēdāntism- ***Prabudha Bhārath*** in English and ***Udbōdhan*** in Bengali. After setting his work in India in order, he once again toured the West and satisfied himself that the movement was taking strong roots.

By this time he become ill due to the continuous hard work and at the early age of 39 he quietly passed away in the mission headquarters at Belur, on 4th July, 1902, meditating, as *Yogis* do. A few hours before his *samādhi*, he was heard saying to himself.

"If there were another Vivēkānaṅda, he would have known what Vivēkānaṅda has done. And yet how many more Vivēkānaṅdas shall be born in time."⁶

To the common man Swāmiji is first and foremost an exponent of *Vēdānta* and nothing else. But he should not be regarded exclusively as a religious prophet. His individuality and thought are too complex to be measured by any classification. The chief occupation of his life was religion. But he made significant observations on every aspect of life. As a neo-vedantin he did not differentiate the sacred life from the secular affairs and he did give equal importance to the secular matters also. Sister Nivēdita in her introduction to the Complete Works of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda' explains this unity of life thus.

“If the many and the one be indeed the same reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are parts of realization, no distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce, Life itself is religion”⁷.

The Complete Works of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda, which contain various strands of thought, provide as the glimpses of his philosophical ideals. His philosophy is based on spiritualism. For example, he interpreted history in terms of spiritualism. His concept of freedom which is all inclusive is spiritualistic. His ideal of equality stands for gradual growth of individual, his philosophy or nationalism, his views on democracy, anarchism, internationalism are all based on spiritualism. The philosophy of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda was moulded to some extent by his social background, but mainly by India's spiritual lore. His social upbringing revealed to him the environmental weakness of India, like

social authoritarianism and exclusiveness. In his opinion religious orthodoxy too had suffocated the growth of society. He was therefore determined to improve the social and political environment of India by liberally interpreting the Indian Scriptural ideas.

Formative Influences

The liberal family atmosphere played a major role in shaping the personality and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. His brother Bhupendranath Dutta, in his book 'Swami Vivekananda Patriot, Prophet' speaks about this atmosphere.

"The writer is proud of his family's liberal outlook. As Karl Marx said, that he was thankful to his father for bringing him out of Jewish ghetto outlook, the writer is thankful to the elders of his family for creating an intellectual and social liberal outlook of life rather than rooting in medieval quagmire, which indirectly is a creation of long-drawn foreign rule under which the Hindus lived."⁸

In the words of Swāmi Nikhilānaṅḍa

"The liberal atmosphere provided by his father, along with the self-confidence that he instilled in his son, enabled Narendranath, in his future chequered career, to preserve his serenity of mind, whether dwelling with princes or sharing the straw huts of beggars"⁹

At home, he became the heir of two different cultures; the Eastern and Western. He imbibed his mother Bhuvanewari Devi's religious outlook and his father 'Biswanath Dutta's appreciation of social and liberal outlook.

“Biswanath was a liberal Indian with a synthetic mind. That is the reason why his offsprings became ‘radicals’ in ways of thinking. Swami Vivekananda was a product of social environment”¹⁰.

The study of European philosophy widened the horizon of Vivekananda's rational outlook. While he was a student of the Presidency college Narendranath had acquired a degree of Western knowledge that set him far above the level of other students and gave him the intellectual foundations which stood him in such good stead when he went on his conquering pilgrimage of the western hemisphere. He had mastered western logic, western philosophy and ancient and modern history of different European nations even during the first two years of his collegiate carrier. The philosophies of Herbert Spencer, the three Critics from Immanuel Kant, positivism of Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill and his three essays on religion, David Hume's Skepticism as an overstretching of British empiricism etc, all came within his reading spree, giving him the scepticism towards authority and the faith in pure reason which enabled him in later years to meet Western thinkers on their own ground when he began introducing them to the treasures of *Vēdānta*.

About the various psychological and social factors that have contributed to Swāmiji's personality, V.K.R.V Rao says:

“This combination of reforming zeal, militant patriotism and defensive pride in India's religious and cultural heritage, was to attend the growth of the national movement in India during the entire 19th century. It was in this

environment of compendium of religious reform and patriotism that Vivēkānaṅda was born and brought up"¹¹

An Indian who is conscious of India's heritage, culture and philosophy is naturally proud of religion and spirituality. How could such a person not be a patriot and nationalist? The circumstances were such that a conscious Indian wouldn't lie down waiting; he would act and perform himself.

Widespread poverty in India, mainly due to the colonial rule also influenced Swamiji deeply.

"Similarly, India's economic impoverishment, the decline and pauperisation of Indian artisans and craftsmen, and the proletarianisation of the peasants as a result of colonial exploitation, had left a deep impact on Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda. Famines were a recurring feature of the period and used to take a heavy toll of human lives. The increasing impoverishment of the masses naturally disturbed the sensitive and patriotic minds which were slowly becoming more politically conscious. They began to find economic reasons, besides national pride, in seeking the liberation of the country from the foreign rule. This ubiquitous poverty was to make a profound impression on Vivēkānaṅda who later coined the expression 'Daridra-Nārāyana' and saw the worship of God in the service of the poor"¹².

He became a member of the *Sādharaṇ Brahmasamaj*. He looked at society from the rational point of view and denounced the social and religious weakness of India. But he was not satisfied with the activities of *Sādhāraṇ Brahmasamaj*. In the words of A.V. Ratna Reddy.

“But he found no solace in the intellectual dryness of the samaj and marched into the spiritual abode of Sri Ramakrishna”¹³

Vivēkānaṅda rightly realized that if anything could be done with Indian society, it can only be through the spiritual awakening of Indian minds. Spiritual and religious strengthening can only fortify Indian minds.

The single biggest influence on the life of Naren was that of Sri Rāma Kṛishṇa Paramahansa, whom he calls, 'My teacher, my master, my ideal, my God in life'.

“The result of the contact of these two great personalities, Srī Rāmākṛiṣhṇa and Narendranath, was Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda who was to become the heart of New India, with the ancient spiritual perspective heightened, widened and strengthened to include modern learning –old ideas assimilating the new. The intense activity of the west was to be combined with the deep meditation of the east. Asceticism and retirement were to be supplemented by work and service to others. From the merging of these two currents came Neo-Hinduism, the faith of a glorious Tomorrow, in which all should be fulfilment and nothing denial.”¹⁴

Let me call it as the unification of thought into action, the communion of the actual and ideal, borrowing the western term. I see this aspect of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda as “*The contribution*”. The Indian Spirituality that had got rusted in texts, temples and in the minds of few socially aloof scholars are now being put into action that makes the culture and spirituality itself vibrant which in turn made the Indians vibrant, who would rise against the short sighted British colonial rulers with vivacity and strength.

In the words of Swamiji:

“If there had been anything achieved by me by my thoughts, or words or deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his (Sri Rāmakrishna's)”¹⁵.

This seems most natural to me, Swāmiji laying no claim of what he is, what he had said and done. It is natural in the magnitude of a *Sanyāsi* to attribute all his achievement to his *Guru*; and Swamiji too was just doing the same. Undoubtedly Paramahansa was instrumental in creating a Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda out of Narendra Dutta, and I had often heard people of the Mutt calling Paramahaṅsa ‘the spiritual’ and Vivēkānaṅda the ‘intellectual’.

Thus, diversities found union and expression in Vivēkānaṅda, which is due to his inherent ability to combine diverse social influences of various level.

In the words of Ratna Reddy

“Vivēkānaṅda supplemented the religious teachings of his mother with his father’s appreciation of the Western values and the rationalism of the Brahmasamaj with spiritualism of Sri Rāmakrishna.”¹⁶

Vivēkānaṅda’s sojourn in the West also broadened his social and political outlook. He admired their social equality and encouragement of the individual initiative and freedom. He appreciated their organizational ability and efficiency and knowledge of science. His comparative study of the western society and India revealed to him the spiritual poverty of the

west and environmental weakness of India. He noticed that Europe ignored organism whereas India ignored environment.

“Therefore he envisaged synthesis of science and religion, organism and environment. He stood for mutual exchange of spiritual knowledge of the East and scientific knowledge of the West.”¹⁷

Perhaps synthesizing is the peculiarity with Indian Metaphysics, digging out a unity out of the divergent many, thus creating a synthetic unity of the whole. This perhaps is the most striking difference between popular Western thinking, when they look at the differences, we search for unity. Both may be even equally important in phenomenal world, but then look at what differences such different perspectives make to human existence!

In the words of Swāmi Raṅganathānaṅda

“He had assimilated in his own personality the manlieness of the West and the saintliness of the East. He saw clearly the excellence and limitations of each of these two human legacies which he embraced as two integral element of a total human culture and proclaimed the modern age as the era of their synthesis.”¹⁸

Vivēkānaṅda's study of the East and West made it clear to him that each individual and community must seek its growth according to its own nature and individuality. He clearly advocates that whatever one may do, spiritualism ought to be the end, the goal, the desideratum. Thus all thoughts and the activities ought to have their orientation of spiritualism as the end. Everything else are only means to this one end.

“Our Life-blood is spirituality if it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social and other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure.”¹⁹

He had rightly identified spirituality as the basis of all human activities: be it political, social or whatever it may be. The same is indirectly said by the *Puruṣhārthās* also. Among the four values of the *Puruṣhārthās*, viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mōkṣa*, *Dharma* is fundamental and it must have its bearing on every other values. *Dharma* is indeed akin to spirituality.

Summarizing the formative influences that went into the making of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda, Swāmi Raṅganathānaṅda says:

“There was, first, his mastery of Sanskrit language and through it, of the philosophical and spiritual legacy of India's hoary cultural past; secondly, there was his mastery of the English language and through it, of the scientific, artistic and social thought of the modern West; thirdly, his five years discipleship under Śrī.Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahansa, the most outstanding spiritual teacher of 19th century India, in whose extra ordinary life and realizations, vivēkānaṅda found verifications of India's age-old spiritual legacy, and its close kinship with the cultural legacy of the modern West; and fourthly, his intimate knowledge of the India of his time, gained from his journeys, Mostly on foot across the length and breadth of India.”²⁰

Metaphysical Foundations

The metaphysical ideas of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda are derived from the *Vēdās*, the *Upaniṣhāds*, the *Bhagavad Gīta* and also from Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Sāṅkya Philosophy, mainly.

“The impact of *Vēdās* was evident on his rational and liberal outlook. The *Upaniṣhāds* taught him the purity of human nature and the cult of strength, physical and spiritual. He owed much to the *Bhagavad Gīta* for his technique of activity and the theory of resistance. *Vēdānta* encouraged him to proclaim the inalienability of individual freedom and espouse human equality and Unity. His master Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahansa helped him herald the Neo-*Vēdānta* movement, which is also called practical *Vēdānta*. From the Sāṅkya theory of cause and effect he drew that ends and means are inseparable and derived that social evolution was cyclical.”²¹

He hoped to make the Indian society dynamic by liberal interpretation of her spiritual values. Accordingly he derived his philosophical ideas from them.

The *Vēdās*

Vivēkānaṅda wanted to mould the social life of India on the basis of India's sacred texts. By the ***Vēdās*** Vivēkānaṅda meant knowledge, which is eternal and infinite. According to Swāmiji all knowledge is ***Vēdās***, infinite as God is infinite.

He was of the view that the knowledge of the ***Vēdās*** is supreme and absolute. In case of conflict between ***Vēdās*** and other sacred books on any issue, he regarded the ***Vēdās*** as authority.

"With the exception of the *Vēdās* every book must change. The authority of the *Vēdās* is supreme for all time to come; the authority of every one of our other books is for the time being"²²

Vivekananda as an orthodox defender of the *Vēdās* regarded them as eternal and sacred. However, unlike the religious orthodoxical section, Vivekananda held the view that the *Vēdās* are not the last words on revelation.

"The Bible, the *Vēdas*, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded"²³

Vivēkānaṅda felt that the spiritual unity of India could be maintained easily and spontaneously by accepting the *Vēdās* as the common source and inspiration for all. He pointed out that even Buddhism and Jainism did not condemn the knowledge portion of the *Vēdās*, but they only repudiated the deformities and abominable practices of the Vēdic religion. Vivēkānaṅda objected the use of the word Hindu, for it was only a geographical name coined by the aliens.

"He wanted the Hindus to be called as *Vaidikās*, followers of the *Vēdās*."²⁴

He also preferred the name 'Vēdic religion' for 'Hinduism'. Thus to Vivēkānaṅda the common religious denomination would preserve and foster the spiritual unity of India.

Vivēkānaṅda, despite his regard for eternal knowledge of the Vedas, was not swayed by them.

“Though as a prophet he humbly submitted to the Vedas, exhumed the buried truths and scattered them widely, yet as a philosopher he brooded over independently and refused to accept anything as sacrosanct”²⁵

He depended on reason and stood for conditional acceptance of the Vēdās.

“Personally, I take as much of the Vēdās as agree with reason”²⁶

Between blind faith and reason, he followed reason. He was strongly opposed to religious fanaticism and dogmatism.

“He hated dogmatic thinking and wanted to dehypnotise the people from religious dogma, myth and superstition. His whole life was a ceaseless battle against them. He was of the view that in course of time these outward forms of religions suppress truth. Therefore he advised the individual and the community to avoid book-worship and follow reason in interpreting the sacred texts.”²⁷

Vivēkānaṅda’s assumption and insistence on rational attitude towards the Vēdās paved the way for expansion of his liberal outlook.

“It was as a liberal that he wanted to ransack the knowledge of the Vēdās with the light of the reason”²⁸

In the words of Swāmiji

“The proof of religion depends on the truth of the constitution of man, and not on any books. These books are the outgoings, the effects of man’s constitution; and man made these books. We are yet to see the books that

made man. Reason is equally an effect of that common cause, the constitution of man, where our appeals must be."²⁹

Upaniṣhāds

The mental make-up of Vivēkānaṅda was quite in consonance with the philosophy of the Upaniṣhāds

"Vivēkānaṅda felt more at home with the Upaniṣhāds than with the Vēdās, for the Upaniṣhāds gave importance to Jnana and subordinated Karma to it"³⁰

Vivēkānaṅda wanted to disseminate the spiritual truths as the common possession of all, including the pariah and the down-trodden. He exhorted his countrymen

"Go back to your Upaniṣhāds- the shining, the strengthening, the bright philosophy and part form all these mysterious things, all these weakening things. Take up this philosophy; the greatest truths are simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of Upaniṣhāds are before you. Take them up, live up to them, and salvation of India will be at hand"³¹

Undoubtedly, Vivēkānaṅda realized how *Upaniṣhāds* came to be called as *Vēdānta*. He realized *Vēdās* –and *Vēdāntās*, the *Upaniṣhāds*. The Metaphysics of *Upaniṣhāds* had created such lasting influence on him, that he was more thrilled than amazed by the principle of unity of 'Ātman' and 'Brahmaṇ'. Ātman, the self is one with Brahmaṇ, the ultimate reality. The difference is only *maya* or illusion, and the feeling of difference is due to 'avidya' or ignorance. Ignorance or *avidya* creates a cloud of smoke, making Ātman and Brahmaṇ apparently separate. Ignorance here means,

ignorance about the true nature of self or *Ātman* as *Brahmaṇ* itself in reality. A Guru imparts this realization through the expression '*Tat-tvam-asi*', meaning 'thou art that'. A realized student would then meditate on '*Aham Brahmāsmi*' meaning I am '*Brahmaṇ*', this is best exemplified in the '*Śanti Mañtra*' as follows :

"Pūrṇamada Pūrṇamidam

Pūrṇāt Pūrṇamudachyate

Pūrṇasya Pūrṇamādaya

Pūrṇamēva Vasisyate"

The *Brahmaṇ* is *pūrṇa*, a complete whole. From *Brahmaṇ* the complete whole comes *Ātman* which is also a complete whole. The separation of this complete whole is logically inconceivable from the complete whole, because complete whole by definition and nature shall be complete whole only. Thus the separation is *Māya* or illusion and *Ātman* in reality is *Brahmaṇ* itself. This makes human mind free and powerful and also that man is essentially divine. Such status the *Upaniṣhāds* carry.

"The Upaniṣhāds are the Magna Carta of human rights"³⁷

The Swamiji must have been influenced *Kōśā* theory of evolution in the *Upaniṣhāds*, that makes a hierarchy of conscious such as *Annamaya kōśā*, *Prāṇamaya kōśā*, *Manōmaya kōśā*, *Vijñāmaya kōśā* and ultimately *—ñ* *Angdamaya kōśā*, the transcendental. Man too can reach the

transcendental level of perfection, as the essential nature of man is transcendental. For Swāmiji the Semitic concept of Cardinal sin and all human beings as inheritants of cardinal sin was an anachronistic concept and he lashed the concept of sin as:

“A standing libel on human nature”³³

He reiterated.

“The one great idea that seems to be clear, and comes out through masses of superstition in every country and in every religion, is the one luminous idea that man is divine, that divinity is our nature”³⁴

Vivēkānaṅda avoided any sectarian outlook of man. According to him the individual must enjoy the earthly life and then renounce it for higher idea.

In the words of Swāmi Raṅganāthaṅda

“Thus viewing man integrally in his physical, social and trans-social dimensions, and with a view to ensuring his total fulfilment, Vivekananda expands a philosophy of man in which man, whether eastern or western, can feel at home and find the inspiration to achieve total life fulfillment.”³⁵

Vivēkānaṅda postulated his concept of freedom on the divinity of the individual. The Upaniṣhādic concept of divinity of human nature is inseparable from the eternity of individual freedom. As man is divine, freedom is his natural right. Vivēkānaṅda held that freedom is all-inclusive.

"Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watch word of the Upanishads"³⁶

He made it clear that freedom ensures growth. No individual and community can make progress without freedom. Vivēkānaṅḍa affirmed that the world is also real and supported selfless activity. To ensure freedom, the individual must perform *karma* and serve selflessly. Freedom includes service. Only a free individual can fulfill his obligations to society and become perfect. An individual fulfills his obligations to society and becomes perfect. Thus the individual freedom consists in performing selfless activity to society. Freedom is selfless activity and activity strengthens individual and social life.

Vivēkānaṅḍa derived the concept of strength from the Upaniṣhādic ideal of impersonal self. The impersonal self is free from fear and weakness. The individual, who is of infinite energy and strength, can never be weak. Vivēkānaṅḍa revolted against individual fear and weakness. He lashed at weakness because it would develop individual degeneration, slavery, misery and hinder freedom and spontaneous growth. He wanted the individual not to think of his weakness but of strength. He pointed out that remedy for weakness is strength.

"Thus I lay down as the first essential in all I teach: anything that brings spiritual, mental, or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet"³⁷.

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of strength promotes individual freedom and morality. In the words of Swāmi Athulānaṅda, Vivēkānaṅda, wanted the kind of strength: -

"That leads to the conscientious performance of Dharma, be it in social functions or in a life of withdrawal from worldly affairs"⁴⁸

A religion that is erected on the fear of 'Gods wrath', fear of 'Cardinal Sin' etc can never make human being strong internally to exist authentically. The ideas of 'fear and trembling' are hegemonic. One must remember here that in the context of Swāmiji, Christian missionary work of converting Hindus were making deft and definit progress, and this converting activities were also sponsored and abetted by the colonial rulers. They knew very well that spreading of Christianity would be strongly instrumental in strengthened and lengthened colonial rule.

Bhagavad Gīta

Bhagavad Gīta exerted a considerable influence on the Philosophy of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda. Social life in India was degenerated and immobile. Vivēkānaṅda perceived that India could be awakened socially and politically only by the ceaseless selfless activity as conceived in the Bhagavad Gīta. By interpreting the Gīta in terms of social activity, Vivēkānaṅda gave a social content to religion. Vivēkānaṅda regarded activity as an end in itself. Activity encourages the individual initiative and freedom. The individual works according to his nature and serves society according to his ability. Therefore the selfless work of every individual is

sacred and equal. Selfless activity uplifts the individual from his lower ego. He would cultivate an identical outlook with the members of the society. Thus selfless activity inculcates the spirit of social equality and promotes social good and unity. The importance of *Karma* that too '*Nishkāma Karma*' in reconstruction of Indian nation can never be exhausted. It was significant yesterday, it is significant today and will also be significant in the days to come. The Bhagavad Gīta is packed with such action plans, that we only have to learn, understand and follow it.

Vēdānta

Vivēkānaṅda held high the ideal of *Vēdānta*. He made it the basis for all walks of life. The higher the ideal, the greater would be the individual and society.

"I will ask you to understand that *Vēdānta*, though it is intensely practical, is always so in the sense of the ideal. It does not preach an impossible ideal, however high it be, and it is high enough for an idea"³⁹

Vēdānta reconciles the actual to the ideal. It stands for truth, social harmony and universal oneness. It inculcates the spirit of selfless service and mutual co-operation among individuals. It makes individuals obsessed with freedom and equality. Vivēkānaṅda's supreme faith in *Vēdānta* led him to profess (1) harmony between the individual and social life (2) freedom of each individual and nation (3) human equality, and (4) human unity⁴⁰.

Vēdānta is based on the principle of unity. *Vēdāntic* unity postulates the interdependence of life. Life is not solitary and poor but social and spiritual. Therefore the individual life is inseparable from social life. Interdependence of life eliminates mutual hatred and friction and social differences. As *Vēdānta* makes no difference between the one and the many, in this case individual and society, it emphasizes that mutual good relations are to be based on equality of rights and opportunities. Equality of relations among the individuals promotes social growth and unity. Thus Vivēkānaṅda's *Vēdānta* resolves

"The conflict not only between *Paramārtha* and *Vyāvahara*, but between individual and society as well"⁴¹.

Vivēkānaṅda believed that

"Human relations can thus be made divine"⁴².

The object of the individual and society is the same, namely, mutual growth, harmony and perfection. As a matter of fact, the individual ensures his growth by serving society

The *Vēdāntic* concept of freedom is inseparable from the *Vēdāntic* concept of individual. According to Vivēkānaṅda, '*Man is divine*'⁴³ Divinity is natural and inherent birthright of the individual. The right of divinity includes other rights like the right to freedom and equality. *Vedānta* recognizes freedom not only as an inherent right of the individual, but also accepts right to equality. As all individuals are parts of the Absolute, all

are equal. The right to equality stands for the abolition of privileges. Thus he pleaded for equality of human beings and condemned all kinds of privileges which perpetuate inequality in society.

The Vēdāntic concept of equality paves the way for the unity of all human beings.

“We are one-mentally, physically and spiritually. It is wrong to say that we are even physically different.”⁴⁴

Human equality fosters human brotherhood. He believed that universal brotherhood should merge in universal selfgood. Therefore.

“Brotherhood should be superseded by Universal selfgood”.⁴⁵

The Vēdāntic concept of equality, which stands for the abolition of privileges between man and man, led Vivēkānaṅda to advocate for the abolition of privileges and barriers, racial or social or national. He felt that perpetuation of national inequalities and privileges were fatal to international unity. Therefore he pleaded for their abolition.

“He emphasized that the Vēdāntic concept of unity should be put into practice and in this emphasis is found the influence of his master Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa, who moulded Vēdānta into Neo Vēdānta.”⁴⁶

The essential oneness of human being and man in nature itself became luminant from the *Upaniṣhāds*. He was trying to apply this principle very intensely to create a spirituality based social order as Plato attempted in his creation of Utopia. If some political scientist feel that

Utopia is not practical then, I feel that it is not the fault of Platonic theory, but a failure on the part of others to put the theory into practice.

Sri Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahansa

Of all the influences that moulded Vivēkānaṅda, the foremost was that of his master Sri Rāma Krishna. Vivēkānaṅda, despite the exuberance of his intellectual richness, humbly admitted that every word he uttered was that of his masters. Though he disclaimed anything of his own, he maintained his independent thinking in interpreting and developing his master's thought.

The position that of Swāmiji at this is very instructive, especially to empirical scholars of modernism. One can draw a distinction between intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge at this point. Undoubtedly Vivēkānaṅda's intellectual 'cognitive' knowledge was far ahead and superior to that of the Paramahansa: but then we find the intellectual superiority of Vivēkānaṅda humbling before the spiritual Paramahansa. Indeed, this ought to be a lesson to researchers and scholars of social sciences, where intellectual cognitivity, amassing as well as analysis of massive data with empirical tools, alone can very well end up in creating intellectual monsters who fail to cater the spirit of what they gather by way of knowing what they call 'cognitive reality'. To my mind, such intellectual monsters, when they turns anarchists becomes not only a problem to themselves, but also to the society and the nation itself. In case of Swami Vivēkānaṅda, his intellectual ability was supplemented by the spirituality

of his Guru and that made the entire world to take lessons from him. Intellection alone-minus spirituality- ends up creating intellectual monsters - *Bhasmāsūrās* or *Frankinstin*'s. But in the words Mukerjee S.L,

"Vivēkānānda shines more in his own light than in the glory of Rāmakriṣṇa"⁴⁷

According to Vivēkānanda, Rāmakriṣṇa's concepts of (1) Neo-Vēdānta, (2) Jīva is Śīva and (3) Emphasis on the means required rational interpretations.

Neo – Vēdānta

"Rāmakriṣṇa laid the basis of Neo-Vēdānta and Vivēkānānda build its superstructure"⁴⁸

They both emphasized the practical nature of Vedanta.

"Neo-Vēdāntism is a re-establishment and re-statement, reconstruction and re-valuation, reorientation and reinterpretation of Advaita Vēdānta of Sankara with modern arguments, in modern language, suited to modern man, adjusting itself with all the modern challenges"⁴⁹.

Ramakrishna and Vivekananda gave equal importance to the *Śakti* aspect of *Brahmaṇ* in the Universe. They held that the world is not illusory but real. It is also a manifestation of *Brahmaṇ*. Neo-Vēdānta makes no difference between the sacred and secular life. As world is *Brahmaṇ*, worldly activity too is sacred and all selfless work is worship. Therefore, selfless activity is not only social but also spiritual. As long as man lives in the world, he must perform worldly activity, with the spirit of detachment.

"This Neo-Vēdānta- encourages individual freedom and selfless activity on the part of the individual, and social equality and oneness in the society."⁵⁰

Here it is clear that both Swāmiji and his group were attempting to some kind of synthetic unity mainly of Śāṅkara Vēdānta and Rāmānuja Vēdānta. This attempt for a synthetic unity was not for any metaphysical reasons. Evidently, such efforts were for practical reasons. Vēdānta in its *nirguṇa* form shall not make an impact on the majority, as *Viśiṣṭādvaita* would do. Fundamentally the Swāmiji wanted Vēdāntas to affect people, so that their spirituality becomes vitalized and they become strong from within to fight against and oust the foreign rulers who were out to destroy Indian mental strength to continue subjugation. Thus, Neo-Vēdānta and all such interpretations were put in to practice for all practical purposes and certainly not with any philosophical design and end. This indeed had greatly contributed to the integration of Indian nation.

Jīva is Śiva

Neo Vēdānta visualizes divinity in every walk of life. It reminds man that he is the spirit. Rāmakriṣṇa's expression of 'Jīva is Śiva' is a practical realization of the spirit in man. His utterance of 'Jīva is Śiva' was atonce a revelation to Vivēkānaṅda. Vivēkānaṅda interpreted that individual is not only to be served but must also be worshiped, for he is not different from God. He identified himself with the masses to serve and worship them.

“For him, Karma is not divorced from Jñāna and Bhakti but is the medium through which Jnana and Bhakti are expressed.”⁵¹

He made the concept of ‘Jīva is Śīva’ the socio economic programme of the Ramakrishna Mission and monastery for the upliftment and liberation of the masses.

Importance of Means

Rāmākṛiṣṇa’s ‘Jīva is Śīva’ serves as a means for the individual to purify his self to identify himself with the community. He believed that every individual could make progress by following his own faith. Sri Rāmākṛiṣṇa’s concept of this is reflected in the thought and activity of Vivēkānaṁda. In the words of Swāmiji’.

“One of the greatest lessons I have learned in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He (Sri Rāmākṛiṣṇa) was a great man from whom I have learned it, and his whole life was a practical demonstration of this great principle”⁵²

Vivēkānaṁda believed that individual and social growth depended on the means pursued. The individual growth is impossible, when ends and means are separated: Vivēkānaṁda’s realization of the purity of means made it easier for him to visualize that ends and means were inseparable. Obviously neglecting means in the belief that ‘end will justify means’ is indeed ‘*Kirāta Dharma*’. A person in the path of spirituality will never be able to do it. Means must be righteous and *Dhārmic*. In a word, every thing must have complete bearing of *Dharma*. This idea of the

Swamiji is extremely practical and needed today for the meaningful and amicable co-existence of our societies. Materialistic inclinations creates tenets in the young minds to realize ends through any means. Such tendencies promotes selfishness, egocentricism and would end up creating individuals living in water tight compartments. This eventually leads to disintegration of nation, society and individual themselves. The warning, *Dharma* ought to bear upon means goes a long way in National integration.

Sāṅkhya

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of equality, theory of cause and effect and the technique of activity were drawn from the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Vivēkānaṅda's concept of equality is based on the Sāṅkhya analysis of human nature, which consists of three elements, namely, *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. One element, dominates other elements in every individual life. The natural difference or inequality between man and man is due to the degree of manifestation of these *Guṇās* in their thought and activity. Vivekananda, on the basis of Sankhya analysis of human nature, believed that human inequality is natural and creative. The individual can improve his growth by manifesting the finer form of *Guṇa*. Therefore, human inequality is not eternal. As he believed in the individual growth, he advocated the levelling up of individuals. As human nature is composed of three elements all are basically equal.

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of human relations in society and the technique of activity were based on Sāṅkya theory of cause and effect. He held the view that cause and effect are not separate and distinct but one and the same in a different form.

"That the manifested or the grosser state is the effect, and the finer state the cause. Thousands of years ago, it was demonstrated by Kapila, the great father of all philosophy, that destruction means going back to the cause."⁵³

As cause and effect were not contradictory to him, he held that the human relations in society were based on unity. As the individual is the cause and society the effect, all are equal and one in society and their social interests are identical. Unity of cause and effect postulates social unity. Therefore there is no eternal hostility between man and man, caste and caste, man and society.

Vivēkānaṅda devised the technique of activity to improve individual and social life depending on the means to be pursued. Means is as important as ends. It is on the basis of unity of cause and effect that Vivēkānaṅda regarded ends and means as inseparable either in individual or in social life. Ends and means are instrumental in solving social problems.

"First find out the cause, then remove it, and the effect will be removed also"⁵⁴

Individual ignorance is the cause, and the effect is enslavement. Ignorance could be dispelled by imparting education, sacred and spiritual, to individual.

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of History is based on Sāṅkhya Philosophy. The Sāṅkhya evolution of rise and fall of the universe guided Vivēkānaṅda in formulating his concept of history and the cyclical rule of for castes; *Brāhmin*, *Kṣhatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* successively.

Philosophy of Freedom

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of freedom is spiritualistic. The impact of *Upaniṣhāds* is evident on Vivēkānaṅda's concept of freedom. He was passionately attached to the Upaniṣhādic ideal of freedom. The seers of *Upaniṣhāds* made a deep study of the nature of freedom. They realized that the universe rises in freedom, rests in freedom and melts away in freedom. According to Pandit Nehru.

“----- the authors of Upaniṣhāds were passionately attached to the idea of freedom and wanted to see everything in terms of it. Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda was always emphasizing this aspect.”⁵⁵

Sister Nivēdita rightly pointed out that following the Upanishadic tradition,

“He (Vivēkānaṅda) preached Mukti Instead of heaven, enlightenment Instead of salvation”⁵⁶

Mōkṣa or liberalisation is a concept which is distinct from both 'Atonement' and 'Salvation'. The essential difference is this; *Mōkṣa*

(Hinduism) *Kaivalya* (Jainism) and *Nirvāṇa* (Buddhism) are attained through individual's efforts alone, whereas atonement, salvation etc are given through the grace of God. Individual alone can never attained them. A comparison here shows the highest of all freedom for the human beings are with the Upaniṣhādic tradition.

Vivēkānaṇḍa's concept of freedom is all inclusive. It includes spiritual freedom, individual freedom, social freedom, and economic freedom. He pleaded for a synthesis of individual and social freedom as well as material and spiritual freedom.

Vivēkānaṇḍa considered freedom as an inherent spiritual necessity for all forms of life, sentient, or insentient.

"Wherever there is life, there is this search for freedom and that freedom is the same as God. Necessarily this freedom gives us mastery over all nature and is impossible without Knowledge."⁵⁷

According to Vivēkānaṇḍa freedom is a product of struggle between the internal life and external nature.

"Everything that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom, from the atom to man. From the insentient, lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The whole universe is in fact is the result of this struggle for freedom."⁵⁸

Vivēkānaṇḍa held freedom to be absolute and infinite, changeless and qualityless, self-existent and immanent. This absolute freedom is to

be embodied by the individual. Vivēkānanda considered freedom indispensable for the spiritual growth of the individual. According to Swāmiji, freedom is not a contrivance of society but an inherent possession of the individual. The spiritual nature of freedom constrained Vivēkānanda to deny determinism of any kind on the individual freedom. Therefore as freedom is absolute, Vivēkānanda condemned the containment of freedom on any basis. He pointed out that even on grounds of *Advaita*.

“This denial of freedom is no explanation; on the other hand why not say that the idea of necessity or bondage or custom is an illusion of the ignorant.”⁵⁹

To Vivēkānanda, freedom is not only a biological necessity but also a spiritual ingredient of life. His spiritualistic concept of freedom rules out the competitive freedom among individuals and stands for altruism. This concept of freedom inculcates the individuals identity with society and it encourages the growth and freedom of all individuals. Belief in spiritual freedom made Vivēkānanda assert that individual freedom is no threat to social freedom.

“When human beings are most clearly aware, most awake, they feel, that in some sense which cannot be clearly articulated, they are instruments for the expression of the spirit, ‘Vessels’ of the spirit. When he realizes this, we out grow individualism and espouse the cause of our fellow-men because we and our fellow-men are the expression of the same spirit.”⁶⁰

Individual Freedom

Vivēkānaṅda wanted to make freedom as the natural possession of all individuals. He defined his concept of individual freedom as follows

“Liberty does not clearly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth etc, by you and me , but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence, or wealth according to our will, without doing any harm to others.”⁶¹

Vivēkānaṅda further says

“Freedom is the watchword. Be free! A free body, a free mind, and a free soul! That is what I have felt all my Life! I would rather be doing evil freely than be doing good under bondage.”⁶²

Vivēkānaṅda opposed any kind of intervention in individual freedom. He believed that individual growth can never be achieved by the external pressure or intervention.

“The idea that you can make others grow and help their growth, that you can direct and guide them, always retaining for yourself the freedom of the teacher, is nonsense, a dangerous lie which has retarded the growth of millions and millions of human beings in the world. Let me have the right of liberty. That is the only condition of growth.”⁶³

Vivēkānaṅda's belief in freedom led him to advocate the rights of the individual. According to Vivēkānaṅda, the rights of the individual are natural and inalienable as freedom is. Vivēkānaṅda's recognition of the natural rights of an individual puts an end to all kinds of privileges in society and establishes the right to individual equality. According to S L. Mukherjee.

"----- Privilege-breaking and elimination of all propitiations constitute the mission of his (Vivēkānaṅda's) Vedantic freedom in its social Character."⁶⁴

Despite his unbudging regard for individual freedom, Vivekananda did not place individual interests above society. He maintained an organic view of life. According to him,

"The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individuals happiness is in the happiness of the whole"⁶⁵

Social Freedom

Vivēkānaṅda opposed social restriction that hinders individual initiative and social growth and wanted to weed them out. According to him individual freedom is closely related to social freedom.

"None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty."⁶⁶

He regarded liberty and equality as complementary to one other. Social liberty encourages and ought to encourage social equality and unity.

"Being of one mind is the secret of society."⁶⁷

Vivēkānaṅda was not satisfied with mere denunciation of the authoritarian outlook of the society. Positively he encouraged the society to cultivate a liberal and assimilative outlook and learn things from others. He believed that social synthesis would ensure the proper growth of society. The process of social synthesis is the offshoot of struggle between the forces of internal reaction and external pressure of progressive forces. It may be

said in Hegelian terminology that social reaction is the thesis, social liberty antithesis and social assimilation and exchange of knowledge the synthesis. Societies that even thrive on social liberty may suffer from a complacency, megalomania and hinder their growth. This lacuna is to be remedied by maintaining constant and profuse exchange of ideas and contacts with other communities of the world.

Economic Freedom

Vivēkānaṅda rightly realized that economic poverty has been a hindrance to the individual freedom. By economic freedom Vivēkānaṅda meant freedom from want. He noticed that the material freedom and individual happiness are inter related. According to him.

"All the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education or knowledge."⁶⁸

Material possessions imply the right to property and Vivekananda recognized it as natural right of the individual. But his concept of economic freedom is not based on exploitative and acquisitive instinct of the individual. It is altruistic and ethical. According to S.N. Malhotra.

"The Vēdāṅdins are not economic individualists, though they admire many other principles of liberalism. Their ethical universalism cannot be reconciled to the egoistic individualism of the economic theory of the liberalism of the early nineteenth century."⁶⁹

Vivēkānaṅda's economic freedom, which stands for equal economic opportunities, reduces economic disparities. As Vivēkānaṅda's

individual is ethical, he is not exploitative and acquisitive. The individual uplifts himself by sacrificing his thirst for the pleasures of life, accumulation of wealth and serves society

As the quest of the individual is for higher spiritual freedom, the individual would not utilize his economic advantage to exploit the other individuals. Instead, he would restrain his economic wants to hasten his quest for spiritual freedom. It should be noted that Vivēkānaṇḍa did not advise the individual to give up his material wants. He wanted the individual to enjoy wealth in the name of the Lord.

“Have all that you want, and more only know the truth and realize it, wealth does not belong to anybody. Have no idea of proprietorship, possessorship. You are nobody, nor am I, nor anyone else, all belongs to the Lord.”⁷⁰

This means that the individual can enjoy his wealth but at the same time he must use it for social welfare with the spirit of religious service. Thus for Vivēkānaṇḍa,

“Wealth is for distribtion”⁷¹

Wealth is, therefore, not only personal but also social in purpose. The Bhagavad Gita too enjoins the same view.

“The virtuous, who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones, who cook food for the sake of nourishing their body alone, eat only sin.”⁷²

To Vivēkānaṅda, performance of selfless activity, either social or economic, is also a path to *Mōkṣa*. In other words, selfless activity is consistent with spiritual pursuit of life.

While expounding *Karma Yōga*, Vivēkānaṅda, lauded the life of an ideal house-holder. According to Vivēkānaṅda the householder is the prop, the basic of the whole society. He pointed out that

“It is a very difficult task to be a house-holder and perform all his social, economic and spiritual obligations properly.”⁷³

The maintenance of family, social and spiritual life depends on his material pursuits. According to him.

“A house-holder who does not struggle to get wealth is immoral. If he is lazy and content to lead an idle life, he is immoral, because upon him depend hundreds. If he gets riches, hundreds of others will be thereby supported.”⁷⁴

Thus the pursuit of material life by the individual is not a deviation from his spiritual path. It brings him nearer to the spiritual freedom. The Vēdantic outlook of Vivēkānaṅda makes it clear that he does not prescribe poverty for one and all and does not defy poverty. He recommended the pursuit of material life in the interests of common man and consolidation of socio-economic organization of society.

Vivēkānaṅda considered matter and spirit to be one and the same reality. Pursuit of material life fulfils spiritual freedom. In case of conflict

between the material and spiritual life, he preferred the former. He pointed out:

"I do not believe in a God, Who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven."⁷⁵

His master Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa taught him that religion was not for empty bellies. Vivekananda echoed his master when he said that

"It is an Insult to a starving people to offer them religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics"⁷⁶.

To the worldly man, matter is real and to deny material life to him is to condemn him to death. According to Vivēkānaṇḍa.

"There runs an economic struggle through every religious struggle. The animal called man has some religious influence, but he is guided by economy. Individuals are guided by something else, but the mass of mankind never made a move unless economy was involved."⁷⁷

Thus Vivēkānaṇḍa wanted to base the organization of society on a synthesis of material and spiritual life. This synthesis has been called 'dignified materialism.' It can also be described as *'sublimated spiritualism'*⁷⁸

Thus Vivēkānaṇḍa's concept of freedom is all inclusive. It stands for a synthesis of the individual and social freedom, material and spiritual freedom.

Philosophy of equality

His concept of equality is an offshoot of his concept of freedom. According to Vivēkānaṅda the struggle for freedom is also a struggle for equality. *'Equality is the sign of free individual'*⁷⁹

In the words of Vivēkānaṅda

"No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality."⁸⁰

Vivēkānaṅda's concept of equality is based on unity of individuals. Freedom expands into equality, and equality merges in freedom. Freedom and equality are interchangeable and interdependent. Explaining Vivekananda's concept of equality, S.L. Mukherjee Writes;

"----liberty is equality"⁸¹

Equality is only the beginning of individual life and the end is the realization of universal oneness. The concept of universal brotherhood must merge in universal oneness. According to Vivekananda.

"Vēdānta formulates, not universal brotherhood but universal oneness"⁸²

By equality Vivēkānaṅda did not mean any particular formal aspect like the social, or the economic or the political. He was concerned only with the process and not the form of equality. He made it clear.

"We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist on freedom of thought and action in every way"⁸¹

He stood for equal rights and opportunities. He further says:

"If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all-or if greater for some and for some less-the weaker should be given more chance than the strong"⁸⁴

He denounced privileges and discrimination in any form, either in individual thinking or social existence. His concept of equality bears the impress of his spiritual thinking, which lays emphasis on gradual growth of the individual. The assumption of gradual growth of individual implies the existence of human inequalities or differences. He was of the view that the demand for absolute equality of individuals in society is an impossibility and is also fanatical in demand.

"True equality has never been and can never be on earth. How can we all be equal here?. This impossible kind of equality implies total death"⁸⁵

He perceived that inequality is natural, beneficial and creative. But he also affirmed that inequality is not eternal and absolute. He Justified the individual aspiration for equality and also the necessity of struggle to limit inequality. According to him.

"Inequality is the very basis of creation. At the same time the forces struggling to obtain equality are as much a necessity of creation as those which destroy it"⁸⁶.

His belief in human inequality is based on *Sāṅkhya, Patāñjali's* "in-filling of nature" and the doctrine of *Karma* while his belief in Vēdānta led him to proclaim equality of human beings.

Sāṅkhya points out the struggle between homogeneity and differentiation and believes in the disturbance of equilibrium. Belief in the disturbance of equilibrium convinced Vivekananda not to affirm either absolute human equality or inequality. He believed in the rationality and inevitability of both inequality and equality. The Sankhya psychological analysis of human nature also points out human inequalities. Differences exist among individuals because they are differentiated by *Gunās* or qualities, *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*.

Vivēkānaṅda also believed in the Patāñjali's "in-filling of nature" which meant.

"that the amoeba goes higher and higher until it becomes a Budha."⁸⁷

Patāñjali's spiritual evolution points out one species being changed into another by the in-filling of nature. Accepting *Patāñjali's* views vivekananda maintained that difference between man and man is due to the manifestation of spiritual growth. The impact of *Patāñjali's* "in-filling of nature" made Vivēkānaṅda's concept of equality creative and positive. He advocated for a levelling up of individuals without destroying their individuality.

"The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher."⁸⁸

The process of levelling up of individuals is possible only in an atmosphere of social freedom and not coercion.

Vēdānta stands for spiritual equality of man. According to Vivēkānaṅda, equality is a spiritual necessity of life to realize universal oneness. He perceived that inequality.

"is the source of all bondage, physical mental and spiritual."⁸⁹

As a Vēdāntin he firmly believed that all life is one. The life and existence of an individual is not separate, distinct and independent from that of others. As all individuals are sparks of the same divine force or Entity, all are free and equal and one. Explaining the position of Vivēkānanda, B.N. Dutta Writes.

"He (Vivēkānaṅda) showed that no man is inferior to the other, no class has got special qualification than the other."⁹⁰

The Vēdāntic spirit of oneness makes the individual identify himself with the community and serves it with a service motive without any personal gain.

"The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable-this is an eternal truth and is the bed-rock on which the Universe is built."⁹¹

Thus Vivēkānaṅda's concept of equality fosters fellowship and unity among individuals and nations. It may be said that Vivēkānaṅda laid emphasis on social unity for socio economic upliftment of the people. He was of the view that mere unity in society is fictitious unless it is accompanied by the desire to uplift the down-trodden. The desire to uplift others becomes well established only when the lower self of individual is erased and community consciousness promoted. The individual must think that the collective self is inclusive of the individual self. In the words of Vivēkānaṅda.

"The eternal law is self-sacrifice, not self-assertion. What self to assert when all is one? There are no 'rights', all is love."¹⁰

Vivēkānaṅda held that social unity was to be maintained by identity and love. Social unity becomes real only when privileges are rooted out and equality and freedom promoted. Thus, Vivekananda visualized socialism for the establishment of a just society.

Socialism

Vivēkānaṅda's socialism is spiritualistic. He wanted to materialize the Advaitic concept of unity in the social and political life. He was of the view that socialism could establish a just society by eliminating inequalities through the spirit of love and social oneness. His socialism visualizes a just economy based on individual self-restraint which leads to equitable distribution of wealth. According to Vivēkānaṅda,

“The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism.”⁹³

Vivēkānaṅda found in socialism the key to social unity and economic justice. It is only the principle of justice: social, economic and political-that inspired him to proclaim himself a socialist.

“I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.”⁹⁴

He made the prophetic remark that

“Everything goes to show that socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards.”⁹⁵

The Vēdāntic concept of unity, which postulates freedom and equality, encouraged Vivēkānaṅda to espouse socialism. He thought that *Vēdānta* is conducive to the efflorescence of socialism.

“Vivēkānaṅda affirms that the Vēdānta can furnish all the modern communistic or equalizing theories with a spiritual basis”⁹⁶

Both socialism and *Vēdānta* aim at human equality, freedom and unity and both advocate the uplift and liberation of the masses from social, political and economic bondage and exploitation.

Vivēkānaṅda's versatile and volatile Neo-Vēdānta negated neither freedom nor equality nor accepted any one of them to the exclusion of the other.

“Vēdānta made Vivēkānaṅda a liberal in heart and a socialist in content. He reconciled the liberal idea of freedom with the socialist

fascination for equality by means of the spirit of oneness and love of Vēdānta.⁹⁷

Liberalism which stands for individual freedom and dignity provides the thought and socialism the means of a just society. Socialism is rootless without individual freedom and liberalism is growthless without accepting socialist concept of economic equality. Although he was a liberal, he visualized the eclipse of capitalism, and though he greeted the advent of socialism, it was only a half hearted measure to him.

"The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this (socialism) one be tried-if for nothing else, for the novalty of thing."⁹⁸

As a liberal, he realized the existence of human inequalities and classes and as a socialist he advocated class unity.

Social Unity

Vivēkānaṅda, on the basis of Sankhya analysis of human nature, believed in the class differences and also advocated class unity on the grounds of the *Vēdānta*. His concept of society is based on unity in variety. Vivēkānaṅda visualized only the existence of class differences, but not contradictions. His concept of society is based on unity and not on contradictions from within. He pointed out that progress comes through struggle.

"This complex struggle between something inside and the eternal world is what we call life. So it is clear that when this struggle ceases, there will be an end of life."⁹⁹

The universe is a creation of struggle between *Prāṇa* and *Ākāśa*. As the world is based on unity, contradictions exist neither in the internal nor in the external world but only between the internal and the external world. He believed in the unity of cause and effect, ends and means, and emphasized that ends and means are interchangeable and inseparable and the ends never justifies the means. He did not believe in the biological theory of evolution of competition and struggle.

"These competitions and struggles and evils that we see are not the effect of the involution or the cause, but they are in the way."¹⁰⁰

According to Vivēkānaṇḍa, unity in society is not a social or political device to keep class differences under control but a spontaneous social and spiritual necessity. He visualized social unity on the basis of *Vēdānta* which teaches the oneness of life and oneness of everything.

"We shall see how it (Vēdānta) demonstrates that all our misery comes through ignorance, and this ignorance is the idea of manyfoldness, this separation between man and man, between nation and nation----- But the Vēdānta says this separation does not exist, it is not real. It is merely apparent on the surface. In the heart of things there is unity still. If you go below the surface, you find that unity between man and man, between races and races, high and low, rich and poor, gods and men and men and animals."¹⁰¹

The difference between Indian thinking and western materialism becomes very sharp here. Marxism, for instances maintains differences as real differences and create a dialectical philosophy on the basis of the

principle of contradiction. For them differences are real, and contradictions are also real. They do not go beyond the surface level differences. Finally they all end up creating philosophies of differences. On the other hand, Indian thinking had kept unity as the ultimate principle upon which everything is based. What the West counted as differences are seen as varieties only, or mere multiplicities that strongly carry a principle of unity beyond the surface level. This inability of perceiving the unity is called as '*Avidya*' or 'Ignorance': ignorance that of the reality. The *Upaniṣhāds* themselves vouchsafes for the principle of unity.

Mass Education

Vivēkānaṇḍa pinned his faith in the mass education, sacred and secular, and pleaded for the restoration of their lost identity. He pointed out that when masses were educated by the middle class, they would remain grateful to them.

“Therefore I say, try to rouse the lower classes from slumber by imparting learning and culture to them. When they will awaken-and awaken one day they must-they also will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you.”¹⁰²

Vivēkānaṇḍa's approach to the masses was creative and democratic. As mass awakening was to be gradual and peaceful, the ushering of a socialist society was to be achieved by peaceful means. His socialism thus stands for self-reliance and self-rule of the masses.

Equitable Economy

Vivēkānaṇḍa's concern for the poor made him assert the importance of materialism

"Material civilization, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven"

He supported the enjoyment of material life because he hated poverty and also placed spiritualism above materialism as he knew the limitations of a material society.

According to Sister Nivēdita, Vivēkānaṇḍa witnessed the selfishness of capital and the struggle for privilege and confined to someone that western life now-looked to him *'like hell'*.¹⁰⁴ He was aware that

"The West is groaning under the tyranny of Shylocks"¹⁰⁵

He used the Marxian language that

"Gold standard has been making the poor poorer and rich richer"¹⁰⁶

Vivēkānaṇḍa wanted to shape economic life on spiritual basis. He warned that

"Without the knowledge of the spirit, all material knowledge is adding only fuel to fire, only giving into the hands of selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to others, to live upon the life of others, instead of giving up his life for them."¹⁰⁷

According to him, the success of just economy depends on individual contentment which results from restraint from within. Individual self-restraint leads to equitable distribution of wealth in society. Vivēkānaṅda's emphasis on renunciation and service '*may be equated with mutual social aid*'.¹⁰⁸

Limitation of Wants

Socialists believe that the individual happiness depends on multiplication of wants. But Vivēkānaṅda believed that individual freedom and happiness depends not on multiplication but on reduction of wants.

"If the power to satisfy our desires is increased on arithmetical progression, the power of desire is increased in geometrical progression."¹⁰⁹

The problem of poverty remains as long as man thinks in terms of multiplication of wants. Therefore remedy lies in limitation of wants by the individual. He observed.

"---- while the Western man tries to measure how much it is possible for him to possess and enjoy, the Eastern seems to take the opposite course, and to measure how little of material possessions he can do with."¹¹⁰

Humanistic Approach

Vivēkānaṅda, as a humanist, regarded man not only as an end in itself but also held that man is divine by nature. He made it clear.

"That each man should be treated not as what he manifests, but as what he stands for"¹¹¹

In the words of A.V. Ratna Reddy.

"Vivēkānaṅda's humanism may be called spiritualistic humanism or Humanistic Advaita."¹¹⁴

The humanistic *Advaita* of Vivēkānaṅda advocates identity of humanity with divinity. His humanism defends the purity of human nature, regards man as God, attacks social, economic and religious evils of society and inculcates faith and strength in the individual. His spiritualistic assumption of human nature forms the basis of humanistic Advaita.

Purity of Human Nature

Vivēkānaṅda, who was inspired and illuminated by the *Upaniṣhāds*, held that human nature is pure, free and divine. He believed that everything that is strong, good and powerful in human nature is the outcome of that divinity.

"So potentially, each one of us has that infinite ocean of Existence, knowledge and Bliss as our birthright, our real nature; and the difference between us is caused by the greater or lesser power to manifest that divine."¹¹⁵

As human nature is pure, man is ethical social and altruistic. All are free and equal in a humanistic society. A free and equal society stands for rationalism. Rationalism constrains the individual to identify himself with the community. Thus Vivēkānaṅda's concept of purity of human nature stands for purity of reason also. When rationalism is not properly developed in the individual, equality and freedom become meaningless.

Thus Vivēkānaṅda's concept of purity of human nature stands for a free, equal and rational society.

Humanistic Advaita

According to Vivēkānaṅda there was nothing above and beyond man. Man and God were one to him. There was no difference between his ideal of humanity and divinity.

"Man is the highest being that exists and this is the greatest world. We can have no conception of God higher than man, so our God is man and man is God."¹¹⁴

According to Vivēkānaṅda, man is not only to be loved and served but also to be worshipped. He believed that individual salvation is incomplete without the total salvation of mankind. He declared.

"I believe in God, and I believe in man, I believe in helping the miserable, I believe in going even to hell to save others"¹¹⁵

Romain Rolland summed up Vivēkānaṅda's humanism thus:

"It was wonderful that he (Vivēkānaṅda) kept in his feverish hands to the end the equal balance between the two poles: a burning love for the absolute (The Advaita) and the irresistible appeal of suffering Humanity. And what makes him so appealing to us is that at those times when equilibrium was no longer possible and he had to make a choice, it was the latter that won the day."¹¹⁶

Vivēkānaṅda's humanism advocates that man who is an end in himself must also become a means to serve humanity.

“The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples.”¹¹⁷

The man himself is the subject and object, the end and means.

“It is for this reason that some critics called Neo-Vedanta also as Humanistic Advaitism (manavādwaita).”¹¹⁸

As an end man shines in his own divine light and as a means he serves others to find divinity in them and also to make conscious of their divinity.

“First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. ‘Be and Make’. Let this be our motto.”¹¹⁹

As a finite being, man serves society and as an infinite being seeks to embrace humanity. Thus humanity is Vivēkānānda’s God and social service his religion. In the words of Chelsev,

“Though we do not agree with the idealistic basis of Vivēkānānda’s humanism, we recognize that it possesses many features of active humanism manifested above all in a fervent desire to elevate man, it instill in him a sense of his own dignity, sense of responsibility for his own destiny and the destiny of all people to make him strive for the ideals of good, truth, justice, to foster in man an abhorrence for any suffering. The humanistic ideal of Vivēkānānda is to a certain degree identical with Gorkhy’s man with a capital letter.”¹²⁰

Vivēkānaṅda was not content with the mere defense of divinity of human beings. He was also earthly and wanted to remove the weakness of society which impede the growth of man into humanism

Attack on Environmental Weakness

Vivēkānaṅda revolted against the social, economic and religious evils which hindered individual growth and social perfection.

As a humanist he declared war on poverty.

"I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth."¹²¹

Vivēkānaṅda believed in reason. He subjected even the *Vedas* to individual reason and judgement. He pointed out that religious orthodoxy '*stunts the growth of humanity*'.¹²²

According to Narvane,

"In a theistic religion man is often portrayed as a miserable sinner or weak or helpless being completely at the mercy of God and Nature. This trend has developed side by side with the humanistic trend which exalts man as the true abode of divinity. Vivēkānaṅda's aim was to strengthen the latter element in religion."¹²³

Technique of Activity

Vivēkānaṅda envisaged the technique of activity to hasten individual and social growth. His technique of activity postulates: (a)the unity of ends and means (b)the imperative of individual initiative in social

reform (c) the necessity of mass-awakening and (d) the right to resistance as moral and spiritual necessity-¹²⁴

Vivēkānanda's technique of activity depended on his philosophy of life. His view of life was neither pessimistic nor optimistic. He knew the limitations of pessimism and optimism and regarded them as transitory. As a *Vedāntin*, no activity is either wholly good or bad. However between good and bad actions, he was for good actions.

“The result of every work is mixed with good and evil. There is no good that has not a touch of evil in it. Like smoke around the fire, some evil always clings to work. We should engage in such works as bring the largest amount of good and smallest measure of evil.”¹²⁵

His affirmation of the positive aspect of life thus stands for positive activity which expands the individual growth and freedom. He regarded activity as indispensable to the social growth and spiritual freedom of the individual to offer resistance and compromises with circumstances. Individual freedom is illusory when it is based on selfish activity. The activity which promotes individual freedom is moral and selfless.

Individual inactivity should not be interpreted as non-resistance. By practicing non-resistance, he condemns, his growth and freedom. Vivēkānanda did not prescribe non-resistance. He pointed out that society as a whole cannot practice non-resistance. His outlook was not utopian but thoroughly realistic.

"I do not know if I have seen twenty persons in my life who are really calm and non-resisting, and I have travelled over half the world."¹²⁶

The non-resistant individual takes no interest in matters of society and will not be critical of it.

"For him (Vivēkānanda) the difference between the ideal and real has vanished and individual and communal differences are obliterated. He visualizes the Universal outlook of oneness and regards the universe as a play of unity in variety."¹²⁷

He is an embodiment of the ideal of freedom and strength which is to be followed by community for perfection. His technique of social and political activity maintains that selfless activity is social and spiritual. It is indispensable to the growth of the individual and society. He considered activity as an end and also a means in the individual and social life. His right perspective of the unity of ends and means made it for him to correct the social evils in a constructive way. As a prophet of the masses, he asserted that their liberation is based on education. He also eulogized to make the individual moral and spiritual.

In other words, his faith in the individual as an end and advocacy of mass liberation made him become an avow democrat. His technique of social and political activity is intended to make the masses self-reliant.

Spiritual Nationalism

Vivēkānanda rightly observed that each nation has a mission and a message of her own.

"Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is a national individuality-each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish."¹²⁹

Pursuit of spiritualism constituted India's way of life. According to Vivēkānaṇḍa,

"---here in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life centre is religion and religion alone."¹³⁰

He held that the transcendental or impersonal constituted India's individuality.

According to Dr. Narvane,

"Towards the end of nineteenth century many enlightened and patriotic people had come to believe that religion had outlived its utility as a lever of social progress and that Indian culture needed to be given a new direction. Vivekananda, like Gandhi, disagreed with this view. He thought religion was bound up with India's destiny."¹³⁰

Therefore, it was his mission to reverse the eternal teachings of the *Vēdās* and the *Upaniṣhāds* to strengthen the nation's growth and faith in its individuality.

According to Swāmiji, spirituality constituted India's individuality. He was for the retention and expansion of its individuality and not for its replacement.

"As India was spiritual, he felt that its social and political institutions must be national and spiritual. It was for that he advocated India's spiritual nationalism."¹³¹

He believed that India would become dynamic only by expanding her spiritual knowledge at home and abroad. He was also of the view that pursuit of spiritualism was not only in the interest of India but also in the larger interest of humanity. Thus he wanted to unite mankind on the basis of spirituality.

Of all the mentors of the Indian Renaissance, Vivēkānanda propagated with untiring energy and enthusiasm the incandescent spirituality of India which constituted her national growth and vitality. Vivēkānanda pointed out that there can be no regeneration for India unless it regained its spirituality. When her spirituality was lost in oblivion and subjected to derision, it was foolish to think of her independence. He was of the view that India relegated her religion and lost her freedom. He felt that India by neglecting her faith weakened itself and was enmeshed in social, political and spiritual servitude. He traced the political success of Britain to her faith in herself and India's weakness to the neglect of the *Upaniṣhāds*. He admonished.

“Go back to your Upaniṣhāds, the shining and the strengthening, the bright philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your existence: The truths of the Upaniṣhāds are before you. Take them, live up to them, and the salvation of India will be at hand.”¹³²

He pointed out that the *Upaniṣhāds* blazened out freedom and fearlessness. Thus Vivēkānaṅda held that India would become dynamic and strong by cultivating faith in her *Vēdānta*, the impersonal religion.

Religion and National Unity

Vivēkānaṅda's intense nationalism was the product of his innate religion. He held that *Vēdānta* was a Universal religion. He pointed out that India's religious disunity rather than diversity constituted a grave menace to the national unity. He was of the view that the reforming religious sects in India suffered from schismatic outlook and prevented the growth of national unity. Therefore, the Swāmiji felt that religious conflicts must give place for concurrence, diversity for unity.

"The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. This is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India."¹¹⁵

To achieve national unity, he devised the concept of common religion. According to Vivēkānaṅda, recognition of common religion was absolutely essential for India's unity. He visualized a common religion which incorporates the common principles of diverse religious sects. Religious unity could be achieved by accepting truth from all sects. He explained his concept of common religion as follows.

"There must be the recognition of one religion through the length and breadth of this land. What do I mean by one religion?. Not in the sense of

one religion as held among the Christians, or the Mohammadans, or the Budhists. We know that our religion has certain common grounds, common to all our sects, however varying their conclusions may be, however different their claims may be. So there are certain common grounds; and within their limitations this religion of ours admits of a marvellous variation, an infinite amount of liberty to think and live our own lives."¹⁴

He conceded that the religious sects may retain their identity but they should not threaten national unity. He denounced sectarianism not sects. His concept of common religion is based on equality of sects and co-ordination of faiths.

The impersonal religion of Vivēkānaṅda was identical with strength and selfless activity. He pointed out that selfless activity and spread of spirituality among the masses would awaken them and enable them to regain their lost individuality, namely inherent spirituality. He wanted to mould India as the field of eternal spiritual activity. He told his disciple that.

"The sight of the Country's misery and the thought of its future do not let me remain quiet any more! Even the Samadhi and all that appears as futile—even the sphere of Brahma with its enjoyments becomes insipid. My vow of life is to think of your welfare."¹⁵

In the words of Ratna Reddy

"The panoramic carousal of mass poverty and ignorance seaved his heart and instigated him to make Vēdānta practical."¹⁶

To alleviate the miseries of the poor, Vivēkānaṅda subordinated the bliss of the absolute to the liberation of the Indian masses

"Patriotism means love of the country; and the country means its masses. Only Vivēkānaṅda arrived at this road through religion."¹³⁷

Like his master, he said that it was an insult to offer religion to starved and afflicted people. He held the conviction that materialism fulfills spiritualism. His identity with the poor and downtrodden reached its zenith at Kanyakumari in 1892. Here he felt so deeply and strikingly the despicable plight of India and determined to dedicate his life to serve his countrymen.

"To him (Vivēkānaṅda) religion was no longer an isolated province of human endeavor; it embraced the whole scheme of things, not only the Dharma, the Vēdās, the Upaniṣhāds, the meditation of sages, the asceticism of great monks, the vision of the most High, but the heart of the people, their lives, their hopes, their misery, their poverty, their degradation, their sorrows, their woes, and he saw that the Dharma and even the Vēdās, without the people, were as so much straws in the eyes of the Most High. Verily at Kanyakumari the Swami was the Patriot and Prophet in one."¹³⁸

Kanyakumari *'represents what Vivēkānaṅda calls practical Vēdānta.'*¹³⁹ At Kanyakumari he formulated his plan to go abroad for serving India.

"Taking stock of the world situation at the end of the nineteenth century, Swāmiji could not have selected a more suitable country than America for gaining some help for the poor of India."¹⁴⁰

He pointed out that the west was tired of *Bhōga* and was fit for *Yōga* while India which was enmeshed in poverty cannot contemplate on *Yōga*. He told the Americans what India needed was not proselytizing missions but bred and scientific knowledge. He pointed out that an exchange of spiritual and scientific knowledge between the East and the West would provide a better and stable world.

Thus, Vivēkānaṅda, though not a born patriot, was patriotism of the patriot. The more he knew India, the more he loved India.

“Patriotism was not a vision or faith to him, but a fervid feeling of identity with India’s oneness and its masses. It was the fruit of an inward feeling, urge and growth. He heard the voice of India, discussed it, meditated on it and knelt before it with rapture and became one with it. Again it was his innate love for India that restrained him from condemning its age-old institutions, for they served India well and their utility should not be judged from the present standards.”¹⁴¹

Vivēkānaṅda Wanted a receptive and retentive India.

“The traditional past of India illuminated him, the present reflected her degradation and beckoned him to remold the future of India and even the world, which was afflicted with materialism, on a firm basis of spiritual unity of mankind.”¹⁴²

Vivēkānaṅda held the view that pursuit of spirituality was not only in India’s interest but it was also the impending necessity of the western world. As such he wanted India to deluge the world with the message of her spirituality.

Internationalism

Thus Vivēkānaṅda's nationalism is not narrow or exclusive

"Intense was his love for his country, his love was not confined to his country alone. There was nothing chauvinistic about his patriotism. His heart was large enough to take within its embrace the whole of humanity. His ultimate aim was internationalism and brotherhood of man"¹⁴³

Thus his nationalism paved the way for his international outlook. He considered nationalism and internationalism as interdependent. According to Vivēkānaṅda, national growth and expansion depends on cultivating international outlook. He expressed the view that nations became dynamic and harmonious by assimilating knowledge, scientific and spiritual. Therefore, he postulated his internationalism on mutual exchange of knowledge among nations and advocated union of nations on a spiritual basis. He was indeed expanding the idea, '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*'. In the words of Isherwood, Vivēkānaṅda's nationalism

"Was not nationalism in the smaller sense, it was a kind of supernationalism, a kind of internationalism sublimated."¹⁴⁴

Vivēkānaṅda's international outlook was moulded partly by his reaction against India's degradation. Partly by his experience of life in the West but mainly by *Vedānta*. He traced India's backwardness, degradation and slavery to the narrow and exclusive outlook of Indians. The Indians, falsely believed in the superiority of their culture and civilization and refused to come into contact with other countries on an equal basis. They held others as unequal and branded them as *Mlēcchas*, untouchables.

They refused to share knowledge with other peoples. In the words of Vivēkānānda.

"India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word Mlechcha and stopped from communication with others."¹⁴⁵

Vivēkānānda thanked Britain for expelling India's inactivity and Narrow-mindedness.

"Since the English came, they have been forcing you back into communion with other nations, and you are visibly rising again. Every one that comes out of the country confers the benefit on the whole nation; for it is by doing that alone that your horizon will expand."¹⁴⁶

He also commended Raja Ram Mohan Roy for breaking India's exclusiveness.

"----- every one of you knows that little stir, the little life that you see in India, begins from the day when Raja Ram Mohan Roy broke through the walls of that exclusiveness. Since that day, history in India has taken another turn and now it is growing with accelerated motion."¹⁴⁷

According to him many Indians must go abroad to widen their mental horizons.

His own experience of life in the East and the West showed him the importance of internationalism. He wanted to bring the East and the West together by exchange of scientific and spiritual knowledge. He pointed out that the West which had developed conquest of external nature was in need of spirituality and the East which adhered to spirituality

must learn scientific knowledge from the West. In the words of Romain Rolland, Vivēkānaṅdas'

"Prolonged contact with the West made him feel more deeply the personality of India. And in contrast this made him value the strong and multiple personality of the West. Both seemed to him equally necessary, for they were complementary, awaiting the world to unite them, the common Gospel, and it was he who was to open the path to union."¹⁴⁸

The concept of unity of the world even on material and spiritual grounds was a reality to Vivēkānaṅda.

"To my mind, if modern science is proving anything again and again, it is this, that we are one mentally, spiritually and physically."¹⁴⁹

His faith in internationalism was also strengthened by *Vēdānta*. The Vēdāntic concept of love and Universal oneness captivated his heart. On the basis of *Vēdānta*, he regard all nations as equal and condemned all kinds of privileges. He pointed out that.

"---- that between nations one is superior and the other inferior has no meaning whatsoever."¹⁵⁰

He was of the view that individuals and nations were parts of the Universal Existence, *Brahmaṅ*.

"Each individual is like a bubble, and nations resemble many bubbles. Gradually these nations are joining, and I am sure the day will come when separation will vanish and that oneness to which we are all going will become manifest."¹⁵¹

He hoped that nations by realizing their individual nature would also realize the nature of universal unity

Spiritual Leadership of India

Vivēkānaṅda believed that it was the historic mission of India to lead the countries of the world to spiritual unity. He proclaimed that the Indians were

“Fated by Divine providence to play the spiritual note in this harmony of nations”¹⁵²

He was emphatic that in the realm of spiritual knowledge India was superior to the west. Therefore he proclaimed

“Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life...”¹⁵³

He warned that failure of India's mission spelt death to humanity and to herself.

“Shall India die?. Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religions will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies and human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.”¹⁵⁴

Vivēkānaṅda's advocacy of harmony and spiritual unity of nations was based on his conviction in *Vedānta*. He considered it as a Universal

religion. He was of the view that on the basis of *Vedānta* all national and international problems could be solved

"My message in life is to ask the East and the West not to quarrel over different ideals, but to show them that the goal is same in both cases, however opposite it may appear."¹⁵⁵

He was for all round progress and perfection of the human race. Following the thought of Vivēkānanda, Romain Rolland advised Europe to meet Asia.

"She is working for Us. We are working for her. Europe and Asia are two halves of the sole."¹⁵⁶

Views of Caste and Social Evolution in India

Vivēkānanda's concept of social evolution postulates the cyclical rule of the four castes, namely, the *Brāhmin*, the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaiśya* and the *Sūdras*. The social evolution is through succession and replacement of the degenerated caste rule. The Social evolution will be completed and perfected by successive caste rule. In other words, caste system is the root and social evolution the fruit of history. Vivēkānanda read social evolution in terms of caste rule. Therefore, he viewed that social evolution based on the caste system is natural and social, progressive and orderly. According to Vivēkānanda '*Caste is a natural order*'¹⁵⁷

He pointed out that society is a combination of the four groups or castes viz, *Brāhmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaiśyas* and *Sūdras*. According to him these four castes are every where present at all times, '*in all civilized societies*.'¹⁵⁸

He was of the view that nature classifies human being into groups or castes on the basis of predominance of *Gunās-Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*. His concept of caste is in accordance with *Bhagavad Gītā*.

"The four orders of society (the Brāhmin, the Kṣhatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) were created by me classifying them according to their parental qualities and apportioning corresponding duties to them"¹⁴⁹

Vivēkānanda was of the view that caste system stands for mutual growth and promotes harmonious relations among the other castes. He did not visualize caste rivalry but only cooperation of castes in promoting progress and unity. It should be noted that for Vivēkānanda, it is caste that is natural and eternal and not society. According to him.

"Society did not exist ages ago, possibly will not exist ages hence. Most probably it is one of passing stage through which we are going towards a higher evolution"¹⁵⁰

When society is not natural and eternal, its authority cannot be absolute over individuals or groups. As long as the ruling class is conscious of community interests, it is allowed to rule but when it becomes degenerated, it will be overthrown by the other castes.

Cyclical Caste Rule

The cyclical caste rule provides the form of Government. According to Vivekananda.

"--- from a careful study of the history of the world, it appears that, in conformity to the law of nature, the four

castes, the Brāhmin, the Kṣhatriya, the Vaiśya, and Śūdra do, in every society, one after another in succession, govern the world”¹⁶¹

The *Brāhmin* caste represented aristocracy, the *Kṣhatriya* monarchy, the *Vaiśya* plutocracy and the *Śūdra* democracy. As the cyclical caste rule is evolutionary, forms of government are evolutionary and social in content. The priestly order was replaced by *Kṣhatriya*, the *Kṣhatriyas* was succeeded by *Vaiśya*, and the *Vaiśya* will be succeeded by *Śūdra*. According to Dr. V.P. Varma, Vivēkānanda felt,

“That the history of the world was a manifestation of the four principles which find their concrete realisation in the four-fold social varnas----- The spiritual principle, he felt, was embodied in Indian history of Roman expansion and imperialism represented *Kṣhetra* or military factor in action, the epoch of British mercantile aristocracy was the concrete demonstration of the *Vaiśya* principle, while the sudocracy of the future will be represented by American democracy.”¹⁶²

Thus, according to Vivēkānanda, the British rule will be replaced by the *Śūdra* rule in India. According to him, the first three castes have had their day. Now is the time for the rise of the *Śūdras* and ‘None can resist it’¹⁶³

He identified democracy with the rise of the *Śūdras*. He called this age as the age of the *Śūdras* and welcomed it for it brings out mass-awakening and progress. He wanted to awaken them to shoulder their responsibility of self-government. He was of the view that inspite of the numerical majority of the Sudras they always remained as subjects because of their ‘mutual hatred’.¹⁶⁴ But he was not dismayed. He hoped.

"A time will come when there will be the rising of the Śūdra class, with their Śūdra-hood.... will gain absolute supremacy in every society" ¹⁶⁵

Vivēkānanda pointed out that Śūdra rule is also not eternal. Due to debasement of cultural values, the Śūdra rule too will degenerate. The end of Śūdra rule will usher in again a new cycle of the caste rule.

"As the cycle is in the natural order of things, he (Vivēkānanda) admits that the Śūdra's rule will be replaced by the Brāhmins at the completion of the cycle; but he clearly points out that this time the Brāhmins will be new Brāhmin-Śūdras or the masses themselves." ¹⁶⁶

Thus Vivēkānanda did not visualize any contradiction at any phase of social evolution. According to his philosophy the downtrodden people of India will definitely overthrow the British rule and for this purpose he instilled self-confidence and patriotism in the minds of Indian youth. At the same time he asserted that the entire process will be natural and evolutionary.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

CONTRIBUTION OF SWĀMI VIVĒKĀNĀṂDA TO THE NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National Integration

The question of thinking in terms of National integration arises when there is a threat of disintegration. When there is harmony and unity there may not be a serious question of integration. Whenever there is disintegration and conflict among different sections of a national society there comes the question of national integration. In Indian context, by the term national integration, the reference is made to the cultural integration and not a political integration maintained by the Constitution and legal structure of the country. Constitutional and political integration etc is coercive in nature. Thus it is artificial. True integration must arise out of the minds of individuals who form national society. Indeed the integrating phenomena ought to come from within. The only source that enables this, is culture-spirituality combination. Thus for India the edifice of the unity of Indian union ought to be Indian culture and spirituality itself. This makes integration spontaneous and natural; and no force can destroy it, given the possibility that Indians remain conscious of Indian culture. Thus cultural awareness is the point from where the work towards integration ought to begin. Spirituality-culture combination is what Indians must be aware of. Let me ^{quote} ~~say~~ the late Dr. Harsh [;] Narayan [;] of Lucknow.

"Mūlyam̐ Vai Bhāratam̐

Na Syād Deśamatram̐

Na Bhāratam̐"

Vivekānaṅda was well aware of the strength of the Indian spirituality and weakness of the society existing around him. The conditions of India and were appalling to him. He felt that there were many fold evils which hampered India's growth and hastened its degeneration. The British colonial rule and their deliberate attempts to destroy Indian culture hastened the degeneration of Hindu society. The Indian society at that time, in a way, was authoritative. It did not allow the individual freedom and growth in social matters. The widespread economic poverty and ignorance of the masses moved him to tears. He was shocked to see that India was forgetting its National individuality, which is essentially spiritualism, by imitating the west in a servile way without discrimination. He traced India's backwardness, economic and social, in failing to establish cultural and scientific contacts with the rest of the world. Thus the problems he confronted in India were many and he bestowed his thought and activity in overcoming them by devising the ends and means of national reconstruction on spiritual and cultural basis. It was also in this aspect of national rejuvenation that Vivekananda carved out a high place for himself among the galaxy of leaders and thinkers of modern India. Grayson Kirk rightly mentions.

"If Vivēkānaṅda came at a time when people were on the verge of becoming a little better prepared for more appraisal of each other, he also came at a time when his views on society could be of greatest help to his own countrymen"¹

After the Chicago Parliament of Religions (1893) Vivēkānaṅda became confident of his spiritual mission and determined to reorganize society on the basis of Neo-Vēdānta. In his triumphant march from Colombo to Almora, he spoke loudly of his social and political views on the Indian society and wake Indians from their long hybernation. K.S. Ramaswami Sastri explains the self confidence of Vivekananda in the awakening of the nation in the following words.

"The difference that I noticed between Vivēkānaṅda of 1892 and Vivēkānaṅda of 1897 was what struck me most. In 1892 he looked like one who had a tryst with destiny and was not quite sure when or where or how he was to keep the tryst. But in 1897 he looked like one who had kept that tryst with destiny, who clearly knew his mission and who was confident about its fulfilment"²

Vivēkānaṅda believed that negative interpretation of *Vedānta* retarded the national growth and therefore he followed Sri Ramakrishna's *Neo-Vēdānta*, which is also called practical *Vēdānta*, to rejuvenate faith and strength in individual and society. He asserted that there could be no national growth without freedom, no monastic discussion without social service, and no spiritual progress without material freedom. He was concerned with practicing not negativism, but positivism. He was not

content with mere denunciation of national evils. Positively he encouraged individual and social growth and freedom.

In the task of national revival, the Anglicanized social reformers blamed the hold of religion on the masses for India's social and economic backwardness. But Vivekananda made it clear that religion was not responsible for India's degradation. On the contrary, he held that it was lack of religious approach that allowed the national evils to exist in one form or the other. Therefore to make society dynamic and preserve the purity of religion from superstitions, he pleaded the separation of religion from social matters. According to him.

“what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a religions law-giver”³

About the sphere of religion he said

“The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow”⁴

Thus Vivēkānaṅda offered constructive criticism of society without attacking and deracinating the national faith, ideas and institutions. While asserting for preservation of spiritual values Swamiji was never tired of emphasizing the need for making Hinduism aggressive. In the words of Swamiji.

My objective as regards India,

"had always been to make Hinduism aggressive . The eternal faith must, become active, proselytizing, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate assimilation of new elements"⁵

He felt intensely proud of being a child of the great Hindu nation and deep anguish at her present plight, and was determined to make Hindu Society strong, organized and aggressive.

"The Champion, of Hinduism in the present age was Swami Vivekananda, the ochre clad Generalissimo of the God-intoxicated master. They have infused a new spirit into the dead bones of our religion and have made the much abused Hindu, bold, strong and self confident"⁶

The above words of Sri Kamakhya Nathu Mitra indicates the situation of the Hindu society at the time of Swami Vivekananda and the work done by him to improve the condition of the Hindus. The abuse of the Hindu religion came from all section of the society. The combination of Macaulay and Max Muller by their Aryan Invasion Theory and English education programme tried to wrest the cultural heritage of India by declaring that the Europeans were the forefathers of the Aryans. The intense proselytizing efforts of the Christian missionaries and indiscriminate imitation of the West by some national leaders have all lead to the pathetic situation of the Hinduism and the Hindus became mentally weak and this led to stagnation in the spiritual path. According to Vivekananda this stagnation should be overcome as the first requisite to social progress and freedom. In other words the Hindus should become

proud of their religion and should show vitalism both in spiritual and social matters. This vitalism and strength alone will lead to freedom.

Swāmiji categorically refused the Āryan invasion theory. He says.

“Wherever the Europeans find an opportunity, they exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on their lands; and therefore they conclude that the Āryans must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guesswork? Then keep your fanciful ideas to yourselves! In what Vēda, in what Sūkta (Hymn) do you find that the Āryans came to India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you get by talking such nonsense?”

The social reformers of the day called Vivēkānaṅda a revivalist and a reactionary as well, for his resuscitation of spiritual values to the body-politics of India. But it must be said that no individual and community can make progress and find the meaning and fulfilment of the ideal of life without pursuing the eternal spiritual values. The spiritual values form the fulcrum of the society and nourish its growth. Therefore Vivekananda reinterpreted scriptural values liberally. By this liberal interpretation he made scriptures accessible to all. He advocated the masses to take these scriptural values to become self-confident and bold—indeed bold enough to face the aggressor mentally and physically. Sister Nivedita in her introduction to the Complete Works of Swami Vivēkānaṅda paid this glowing tribute to Vivēkānaṅda for his liberal and enlightening interpretation of the scriptures:

“He stand merely as a Revealer, the interpreter to India of the treasure that she herself possess in herself. The truths he preaches would have been as true, had he never been born. Nay more, they would have been equally authentic. The difference would have lain in their difficulty of access, in their want of modern clearness and incisiveness of statement, and in their loss of mutual coherence and unity. Had he not lived, texts that today will carry the bread of life to thousands might have remained the obscure dispute of scholars. He taught with authority and not as one of the Pandits. For he himself had plunged into the depths of the realization which he preached; and he came back like Rāmanuja only to tell its secrets to the pariah, the out caste, and the foreigner”⁸

The westernized elite of the day showed extreme disregard to the traditional spiritual values of the Hindu society in their blind imitation of the West. They tried to propagate these Western values, ofcourse with the support of the ruling authority. Due to the joint effort of the Christian missionaries, British Government and the Anglicanized elite, the average Hindu was in dilemma. He was unable to make a selection between traditional Hindu values and modern western values. To the confused masses of Hindu society, Vivēkānanda, categorically asserted:

“Our Life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social and other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure”⁹

His appeal to the masses was not in vain. He succeeded in his effort to prevent the masses from being Anglicanized. His effort to inculcate self confidence and respect to traditional value among the masses succeeded to a great extent. For regeneration of the Hindu

society Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda had given us a definite scheme of work, which according to Swami Nikhilānaṅda is as follows.

“The great danger that threatens us at present is the right apprehension of the gradual disappearance of our race by the steady dwindling away of the number of Hindus through conversions to other religions, due to a great extent, to the working of some of our own iniquitous laws. Our first duty is to put an immediate stop to this work of conversion and reclaim those, with all honors, that want to come back to Hinduism. We must broaden the Hindu society by changing our present angle of vision and treating everyone down to the chandālas as component and useful parts of Hindu society”¹⁰

Vivēkānaṅda wanted to make the Indian society dynamic by liberal interpretation of her spiritual values. He wanted India to recapture the eternal spirit of the *Vēdās*. He hoped that India would maintain the balance between the orthodoxal stability and the modern outlook. However between religious orthodoxy and modernism, he stood for orthodoxy.

“There are two main obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charitbdis of modern European civilisation. Of these two, I love for the old orthodoxy, and not for the European system”¹¹

The religious orthodoxy was firm in its faith and steadfast in devotion to its ideals. It probed into problems of life, solved them and maintained social stability. But modern India, which was a product of the Western impact, was imitative, rootless, skeptical and dithering. It was not anchored to anything and reduced life to a vacuum. Vivēkānaṅda pointed out the futility of reshaping India in a western mould. India of his time was moving hither

and thither. It required a firm anchor to hold on to its ideals and Vivēkānaṅda provided the ideals by reviving faith in religious values of India.

The superiority of the knowledge of the *Vēdās* was accepted by all religious sects in India. Vivēkānaṅda felt that the spiritual unity of India could be maintained easily and spontaneously by accepting the *Vedas* as the common source and inspiration for all. He pointed out that even Buddhism and Jainism did not condemn the knowledge portion of the *Vēdās*, but they only repudiated the deformities and abominable practices of the vedic religion. Dayananda Saraswathy was also of the same view as far as spiritual unity of India was concerned.

“The demand for new India was not for a new sect: it was for a universal religion acceptable to all Hindus. The first effort to provide such a basis was Dayananda Saraswathy who saw in the Vedas the revealed word of God and felt that, as the Vēdās were acceptable by all who claimed to be Hindus, religion based on Vēdās should have universal appeal in India”¹²

Vivēkānaṅda’s preference for Vedic religion instead of Hinduism is due to this universal appeal of *Vēdās*. Thus to Vivekananda the common religious denomination would preserve and foster the spiritual unity of India. While accepting the universality of *Vēdās*, Vivēkānaṅds encouraged the individual to rely on reason in all walks of life, either social, political or religious.

“By championing reason, Vivēkānaṅda emancipated the individual from the bonds of a hidebound life and diehard society”¹³

Thus the effort of Swāmiji was to strengthen the spiritual unity of the nation and to emancipate the individual from the diehard society.

Vivēkānaṇḁa by his own individual nature and liberal nature held the banner of liberal outlook and revolted against the tyranny of terrible orthodoxy, let me term, the Hindu Decadence. Though he was a liberal in his approach, was diametrically opposed to that of his contemporary Indian liberals. The English educated liberals in India adopted merely a negative attitude and attacked whatever evil they saw either in social or religions life. They wanted to salvage India by complete break with the past. Social reform was their desideratum and attributed social evils to religion. But Vivekananda was of the view that religion was a constitutional necessity of man. He felt that social reformers were wrong in mixing social evils with religion. He made it clear that religion had nothing to do with social evils. According to Panikkar, Vivēkānaṇḁa's:

"Unique contribution to the growth of liberal spirit in India was his emphasis on the dissociation of social institutions from religion. He proclaimed all over India the truth that such institutions as caste and prohibitions like widow remarriage were merely social practices and were fundamentally unconnected with Hindu religion. He emphasised that their reformation was essentially a matter of social justice. This was indeed a basic contribution to Indian liberal thought, for without this separation the reform of Hindu society according to the liberal principles would not have been possible"¹⁴

The liberals preached reform but did nothing to ameliorate the miserable condition of the poor, the illiterate and woman. Vivekananda

was of the view that service to the poor must be given precedence over reform. He wanted to awaken the people by preaching their inherent divinity and strength. As a liberal Vivēkānaṅda warned the individual not to be tied up to social and political institutions that hamper his growth. He said it was good to be born in a church but bad to die in it

“To make it clear it is very good to be born in a certain sect and have its training - it brings out our higher qualities; but in the vast majority of cases we die in that little sect, we never come out, or grow”¹⁵

He expected the young to imbibe the eternal values and the old to become more liberal in interpreting the values of life and adapting them to social and political institution, to serve the needs of society.

“Vivekananda's reaction to religious orthodoxy and liberalism shows that he was a liberal among the orthodox and an orthodox among liberals.”¹⁶

He was a class by himself in both schools and adapted himself ably well. He endeavoured to seek a proper co-ordination between liberalism and religious orthodoxy. By affirming liberalism he questioned social evils and infallibility of the scriptures. He favoured some kind of orthodoxy for the sake of social stability, as also for maintaining the eternity of spiritual values. He was ahead of liberals in championing in mass uplift and education, and was also abreast of religious orthodoxy. He insisted on positive, rational interpretation of scriptures.

“Neither orthodoxy nor westernism could hold him within its bounds. Even regarding the scriptural statements, he had his own views, and he refused

to depend solely on the writings of the great commentators. Yet by his own outstanding personality, he carried all before him”¹⁷

According to Swāmiji no individual or community can make progress without freedom; and strength is necessary for freedom. He commanded the poor and the weak to resist tyranny in society. He advised the young.

“Be strong! Be manly! I have respect even for a wicked person so long as he is manly and strong, for his strength will make him some day give up his wickedness and even renounce all works for selfish ends, and will thus eventually bring him to the Truth”¹⁸

In the words of S.K. Raichanduri

“Swamiji wanted to build up a tower of self-confidence and strength in us to determine our own destiny whether in socio-political or spiritual life. He planted in us the great Yearning for freedom.”¹⁹

At the time of Vivēkānānda the morale of India was weak. He wanted India to throb with strength. His concept of strength was identical with the primal energy or *Śakti*. He worshiped *Śakti*, for she pervades all aspects of life. The individual and nation must worship *Śakti* and every thing works according to her will. Therefore, to worship *Śakti* is to overcome weakness, to find identity with the many and, above all, to secure freedom. Vivēkānānda held that India had to aspire after the cultivation of *Śakti*.

“Without Sakti (power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries?. Because Sakti is held in dishonour”²⁰

His concept of *Śakti* adored the philosophy of nationalists in India. Vivekananda himself initiated the worship of Mother India. His exposition of the *Upaniṣhāds* strengthened the national will for freedom and unity

His propagation of strength and boldness at times sounded like a discourse on general morality, but his Indian audience was well aware of what he was talking about. Strength and boldness were necessary to struggle for India's freedom. They contrasted with the politics of beggary²¹

Vivekananda perceived that India could be awakened socially and politically only by the ceaseless selfless activity as conceived in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. His teaching and interpretation paved the way for the rise of militant nationalism in the minds of the people. Social life in India at that time was degenerated and immobile. He wanted to dispel India's inertia, social misery and economic backwardness by means of selfless activity as enjoined by the *Gītā*.

“The rediscovery of the *Gītā* and diffusion of its activist teachings started with Bankimchandra and culminated in Vivēkānānda- In Bengal, at least, the influence of the *Gītā* was owing to Vivēkānānda, not Tilak. Therefore, to credit Tilak with the pioneering role in this respect is to misread history”²²

To make India dynamic and growing he expostulated the '*Karma Yōga*' of the *Gītā* in terms of selfless activity and freedom and resistance to injustice.

Vivekananda wanted India to be rejuvenated with selfless activity to attain social and political freedom. Though a man of renunciation, he prescribed activity to common man and monk alike to realise social and individual freedom. He said

“Karma Yōga, therefore, is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and good works”²³

According to Vivekananda selfless activity inculcates the spirit of social equality and promotes social good and unity. Vivekananda viewed that freedom, activity and resistance were interrelated.

“Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical”²⁴

His advocacy of resistance to injustice naturally arises the question whether he advocated armed resistance against British rule. Some of his close relatives and followers believed that he was in favour of armed revolution. Vivēkānaṅda's brother Bhupendranath Dutta says.

“Very few people know that he had political revolutionary ideas in the beginning. He wanted to free the country from foreign yoke. But he failed in his attempt; and seeing the cause of his failure, he tried a different remedy and deflected his attention to another channel. The key to the new venue of his work for India lay here”²⁵

On being asked by sister Christine as to why he (Vivēkānanda) requested sister Nivēdita to keep aloof from Indian politics, Vivēkānanda answered

“What does Nivedita know of Indian conditions and politics? I have done more politics in my life than she. I had the idea of forming a combination of Indian princes for the overthrow of the foreign yoke. For that reason, from Himalayas to cape camorin I have travelled all over the country, for that reason, I made friendship with the gun-maker, Sir Hiram Maxim. But I got no response from the country. The country is dead”²⁵

In the words of Sisir Kumar Mitra.

“In 1939 Sri Aurabindo said that Vivēkānaṅda had his own ideas of political work and of revolution and that he visioned a revolutionary centre similar to the one at Maniktala garden in Culcutta”²⁷

But in the words of SL. Mukherjee

“That Śwāmi fervently wanted political independence of India is beyond any shadow of doubt, but the view that he wanted to achieve this by militant or terrorist means and made conscious efforts towards this can always be challenged.”²⁸

Thus Swamiji's role as a revolutionary may be controversial. But his impact on the nationalist movement is beyond doubt. In the words of A.V. Ratna Reddy.

“Whether he (Vivikananda) contemplated an armed revolution or not, it is beyond doubt that the Swami left an indelible impact on the armed revolutionary and pacifist in the struggle for freedom. He sowed the seeds of revolution on the mental plane and on the material it was nurtured by the doughty revolutionaries and Gandhi, the pacifist”²⁹

It may be said basing on Vivēkānaṅda's philosophic speculation and experience and impression of India, that Vivēkānaṅda contemplated a revolution. To him, India was weak and inactive. It would be awakened

only by activity and activity meant resistance or strength. His repetitive and emphatic utterances on strength became the gospel for the nation to seek its own light and find freedom. In the words of Dr. V.P. Varma

“His concept of Strength and fearlessness which in terms of Political philosophy can be called the theory of resistance”³⁰

He was merciless in his attack on weakness and wanted the weak to become strong or lose their freedom for ever. As India was weak, she was justified in offering resistance to the alien rule. By resistance alone she would become moral, strong and free herself from hibernation and delusion. As she was weak, she could not practice non-resistance which is the attribute of the strong one. He was of the view that India deluded herself, became hypocritical when she mused over the virtues of non-resistance. Non resistance was not within the means of India. Therefore, the only means for India was to girdle up her lions and face bravely the challenge of overthrowing alien yoke. Freedom is as imperative as is its perseverance and as sacrosanct as is resistance.

“Instead of talking about political freedom and social justice he (Vivēkānaṅda) talked about a mere basic concept-strength. Without strength we can neither preserve our individual existence nor can we fight for the vindication of our rights. Only through sustained efforts and constant perseverance can a person succeed in the struggle for existence. Character develops through resistance to impediments. As a theorist and teacher Vivekananda has given the country the ideal of fearlessness and strength. The outstanding legacy of Vivēkānaṅda was that he reconciled

life and religion. He sometimes gives a rational, almost pragmatic definition of religion: strength is religion”³¹

As a nationalist Vivēkānaṅda worked for the spiritual renaissance of India and advocated India’s spiritual nationalism. Sri. Ramakrishna was the starting point of the spiritual renaissance of India and the advent of Vivekananda marked its apogee. In the words of prof. D.S. Sharma

“We have just a glimmering of the dawn about 1830 connected with the agitation of Rammohan Roy and the founding of the Brahmosamāj, but the actual dawn came only at the beginning of this century when along with nationalism came the renaissance of Hindu religion”³²

Vivēkānaṅda revived India’s spiritual legacy and made it pervade all activities of national life. His contributions

“have been diverse and have touched almost all the aspects of our national resurgence-political, social, cultural and spiritual”³³

As the leading exponent of spiritual renaissance of India, Vivēkānaṅda pioneered the past and present, traditionalism and modernism to mould modern India’s future. In the words of Pandit Nehru.

“Rooted in the past and full of pride in India’s prestige, Vivēkānaṅda was yet modern in his approach to life’s problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present”³⁴

Swāmiji was a unifying force in Indian spiritual renaissance and there by the national revival

“The eternity of the Vēdās, the strength of the Upaniṣhads, the compassion of the Budha and the spirit of equality of Islam found a sonorous Echo in him in representing India’s renaissance”³⁵

He proclaimed that an Āryan, a Budhist, a Muslim, a dualist and a non-dualist Hindu were all Indians who inherited and enriched India’s spiritual legacy. According to Panikkar.

“This new Saṅkārachārya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology. Travelling all over India he not only aroused a sense of Hindu feeling but taught the doctrine of the universal Vēdānta as the background of new Hindu reformation.... It is Vivēkānaṅda who first gave to the Hindu movement its sense of Nationalism and provided most of the movement with a common all-India outlook”³⁶

Vivēkānaṅda ejaculated India’s self-respect and rejuvenated faith in her spiritual glory and unity. He urged his compatriots to disseminate her spiritual truths to the high and the low and expand her national institutions.

“By invoking the national ethos and touching the chords of her spirituality, he vindicated India’s spiritual unity and freedom more spontaneously and effectively than his social and religious contemporaries”³⁷

None of the Indian reformers before him conceived the idea of common nation on the grounds of spirituality. As Romain Rolland pointed out, Vivēkānaṅda

“Not only proved its unity by reason but stamped it up on the heart of India in flashes of illumination”³⁸

According to Vivēkānaṅda 'That freedom is the same as God'³⁹ He stood foremost in pleading for India's freedom. The contemporary reforming religious sects and social movements confined their thought and activity only to reform Hinduism and Hindu society.

"The so called reformation movements that were in the field were either unnational or antinational, leading the country away from her tradition and genius"⁴⁰

They lacked the initiative and perspective of projecting a united India and creating national consciousness on the basis of spirituality. Their activities only conceived Vivekanda that they were '*accelerating the process of India's degeneration and denationalism.*'⁴¹

Vivēkānaṅda felt that social rigidity from within and the enervating though alluring waves of alien culture from without sounded India's denationalism. He was critical of the aglicanised social reformers and the Britons who attempted to Europeamise India. The reformers who were under the hypnotism of superiority of western culture and civilization gleefully and brazenly aped westernism in thought and activity which only hastened the loss of India's self-respect. Vivēkānaṅda did not spare even the Ārya samajists and Brahmōists for the stigma of blandishing Britain. He condemned them that

"they were only voices of apology to our English masters."⁴²

Vivēkānaṅda was of the view that enslaved India could be liberated neither by social reform nor by political means but only by religious revival. He pointed out that in India,

“social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants- its spirituality”⁴³.

He also reminded the social reformers that her religious teachers maintained social dynamism by weeding out social evils without attacking her national institutions and beliefs. Therefore, he believed that the remedy for India's degradation was not social reform but religion which encouraged individual and national growth. The Christian missionaries, in their efforts of proselytisation attacked Hindu religion from all quarters and attributed the cause of social evils to the Hindu religion. Vivekananda strongly opposed this view.

“I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it should have been.”⁴⁴

The impact of Vivēkānaṅda on the Indian psyche confronted the missionaries with a serious problem.

“What the missionaries faced in India, roughly between 1890-1910 was a religious revival and awakened nationalism, which praised and idolised everything Indian. The educated Hindu, to a great extent, came to believe that Hinduism and Indian civilisation were purely spiritual and good and Christianity which was the religion of the foreign rulers was materialistic and therefore unsuited to the soil of India. Vivēkānaṅda and others had

declared that it denationalised the converts, it produced hatred for things Indian and engendered reverence for western materialism."⁴⁵

Vivēkānaṅda believed that social evils could be eliminated by mass education. He made it clear that religion and reform should not meddle in each other's affairs. Vivēkānaṅda also held that Britain came to India not to fulfil but to destroy India's national faith and institutions. He surveyed that their cultural impact on India was glutinous with '*mounts of broken brandy bottles*'⁴⁶. He also studied its rule and questioned its administrative methods. He pointed out that Britain provided neither good government nor retained the well established local self government but only offered an indifferent bureaucratic government. He described it as follows:-

"This is the state of things- even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already (of course we have been disarmed long ago) the bit of self government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off, we are watching what next."⁴⁷

He was of the view that British government in India was avowedly anti-democratic and anti-national. Continuity of British rule indicated to him further disfiguring of national life and its institutions.

Thus keeping in view the repercussions of social Anglicanism and alien rule, Vivēkānaṅda exhorted that the programme of national revival should be chalked out with moderation. He pointed out that it must avoid the extremes of national fanaticism of religions and social orthodoxy and alien infatuation.⁴⁸ It should take the middle course, that is it must retain

its national individuality and with an open mind to learn things from others for her growth. According to Sri Aurobindo, Vivēkānaṅda was the leading and powerful exponent of *'this preservation by reconstruction'*⁴⁹ in the words of Dr. Majumdar.

"the conflict between the thesis represented by the Anglican reformists, and the anti-thesis represented by the reactionary Hindus was resolved by the synthesis propounded by Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda, which has been accepted as the basis for the evolution of modern India."⁵⁰

Vivekananda believed that limited rigidity and flexibility should be adopted in the process of national revival. He stood for the growth and not replacement of her national soul or individuality. He advised his country men.

"Stand on your feet, and assimilate what you can, learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our national ideals."⁵¹

Of all the mentors of Indian Renaissance, Vivēkānaṅda propagated with untiring energy and enthusiasm the incandescent spirituality of India which constituted her national growth and vitality. Perhaps no one before him ever evoked the latent nationalism as he and no Indian nationalist prior to him regarded religion as a panacea for India's manifold problems. According to Swami Shradhānaṅda,

"His was a programme of constructive and practical nationalism which could be worked out without waiting for the political freedom of the country."⁵²

To the inactive, exclusive and degenerated India, he showed the heights of its majestic culture, and philosophy and the depth and eternity of its spiritualism. He infused faith and strength into the nation. Subhash Candra Bose evaluated his impact as follows:

“Though the Swami never gave any political message, everyone who came into contact with him or his writings developed a spirit of patriotism and a political mentality. So far at least Bengal is concerned, Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of modern nationalist movement.”⁵³

The above quotation clearly envisages the role played by Swamiji for the national revival and cultural integration of India. According to Swamiji then prevailing mood of national weakness was not only anti-national but also anti-religious. He pointed out that the *Upaniṣhāds* blazoned out freedom and fearlessness. Therefore, he flooded India with the Vēdāntic message of strength, fearlessness and freedom. Thus Vivēkānaṇḍa held that India would become dynamic and strong by cultivating faith in her *Vēdānta*, the impersonal religion. His intense nationalism was a product of his innate religion. He held *Vēdānta* as a universal religion.

Swāmiji pointed out that India's religious disunity rather than diversity constituted a grave menace to national unity. He was of the view that the reforming religious sects in India suffered from schematic outlook and prevented the growth of national unity. Therefore, the Swamiji felt that religious conflicts must give place for concurrence, diversity for unity.

“The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. This is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia religious ideas form the national unity. The unity in religion therefore is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India.”⁵⁴

To achieve national unity, he devised the concept of common religion. According to Swāmiji, recognition of common religion was absolutely essential for India's unity. His concept of common religion incorporates the common principles of diverse religious sects. Swamiji is not opposed to religious sects. He conceded that religious sects may retain their identity but they should not threaten national unity. His concept of common religion is based on equality and coordination of faiths.

“Thus Vivēkānaṅda wanted to strengthen the nation by infusing unity between the ‘brain’ of Brāhmin and the heart of Buddhist, the Islamic body and Vēdāntic brain, and an European society with India’s religion.”⁵⁵

Thus his concept of common religion is all inclusive and lasting. The reason behind the appeal for common religion is the cultural integration of India which has been severely damaged by the deliberate policies of the alien rulers. He was the leading force behind the Hindu revivalism and thereby the national resurgence during the 19th century.

In the words of Śrī Aurabindō

“The visit of Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda to America and the subsequent work of those who followed him, did more for India than a hundred London congress could effect. That is the true way of awakening sympathy, by showing ourselves to the nations as a people with a great past and ancient

civilization who still possess something to give the world and therefore deserve freedom- by proof of our manliness and fitness, not by mendicancy”⁵⁶.

Jawaharlal Nehru describes the impact of Swāmiji in the following words.

“He came as tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self reliance and some roots in the past.”⁵⁷

His opposition to the policy of ‘mendicancy’ his appeal to Shakti and his theory of resistance to injustice deeply influenced the militant nationalist like Tilak and Bibin Chandra. It was due to his influence in the nationalist movement that Netaji Subash Chandra Bose described him as *‘The spiritual father of modern nationalist movement’*

According to Swāmi Raṅganathānaṅda,

“His subtle influence inspired the nation to fight for political freedom to work for revolutionary social changes, to establish a truly Vedantic humanist society. This silent education prepared the nationalist mind to accept the revolutionary social changes through political action such as Travancore Temple entry Proclamation, a fraction of which would have resulted in civil wars in any other society; this led up to the nation accepting the vast social changes initiated in the Indian constitution in 1950. And in the utilization of the political freedom won, Vivēkānaṅda's impact, subtle but potent, can be seen in the same direction of a vedantic harmonist socio-political order. In this particular field, other influences are also at work, like the Marxist, but the uniqueness of Vivekananda's influence is that when Marxist and other influences have worked out their possibilities and cease to inspire. Vivekananda's ideas will continue to inspire and influence, with greater and greater force, for centuries to come”⁵⁸.

In the words of AL Basham

"It is very difficult to evaluate his importance in the scale of world history. It is certainly far greater than any western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested. Events which have occurred since then suggest that, for centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world (especially as far as Asia is concerned, and one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian Religion) comparable in importance to such great men as Shankara and Ramanuja. I believe also that Vivekananda will always be remembered in the world's history, because he virtually initiated the counter attack from the East. Since the days of the Indian missionaries who travelled in South East Asia and China, preaching Budhism and Hinduism more than a thousand years earlier he was the first Indian religious teacher to make an impression outside India."⁵⁹

In the words of VKR Rao,

"Though not in politics, Swami Vivēkānānda has played a great role in the shaping of modern India, second if not equal to the role played by the God-conscious patriot Mahatma Gandhi who followed him. Secularism, socialism mass uplift and mass power, women's liberation, abolition of untouchability, Inclusion of social service as a part of religious worship, Hindu-Muslim unity, universal literacy and informal education- all these constitute the contribution of Swāmi Vivēkānānda to the building of modern India."⁶⁰

Commenting on the impact of Swāmiji, Aurobiudo observed

"Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something genuine, grand, intuitive upheaving that has entered that soul of India and we say 'behold Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his mother and the souls of her children"⁶¹.

Thus Vivēkānaṅdaś role in the Nation building is beyond any doubt. He was the soul behind the nationalist movement.

The threat to the Hinduism from the foreign missionaries and rulers like Macaulay were successfully prevented and defeated by him. At the same time his Vēdāntic humanistic ideas provides for social coherence and religions tolerance. His silent education prepared the national mind to accept revolutionary social changes.

To conclude, we may quote Sri. Rājagōpālāchāri. He says.

“Swāmi Vivēkānaṅda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him, we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swāmi Vivēkānanada. May his faith, his courage and his wisdom ever inspire us so that we may keep safe the treasure we have received from him”¹⁶²

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