THE OXFORD INDIA
HINDUISM READER

edited by

Vasudha Dalmia
and
Heinrich von Stietencron

Religious Configurations in Medieval India and the Modern Concept of Hinduism

※⟪⟫⟫

Heinrich von Stietencron

In popular parlance, most people in the West today speak of Hinduism as if it was *one single* religion, comparable, for instance, with Islam or Buddhism or Christianity. However, scholars who study the history of the Hindu religion more closely discover such a plurality of religious doctrine and practice within Hinduism, that the current practice of subsuming them under one religion appears inadequate. At least Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, the latest form of Śāktism, and some of the other so-called sects of Hinduism must be classed as separate religions. They each have a different theology, rely on different holy scriptures, follow the teaching of a different line of teachers (*guru-paramparā*) and worship a different supreme deity reciting different prayers.

It has been shown that the term 'Hinduism' is a relatively recent one.[1] Not only is the term modern, as I hope to show in this chapter, but also the whole concept of the Hindu religion as a monolith was introduced by missionaries and scholars from the West. Its acceptance and rapid spread in India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is no indicator for its antiquity. Rather it indicates how strongly some Western perceptions acted on the minds of the educated middle class in British India, and became instrumental in creating an urgent need for religious and social reform in order to adjust the reality to unfulfilled expectations. Historically, the concept of Hindu religious unity is questionable when applied to any period prior to the nineteenth century. Both the religious practice and the theological doctrine of important Hindu religious traditions go against it. Even for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its validity is restricted to predominantly urban religious reform movements. The traditional religious life of the vast rural expanse of India remained largely unaffected.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first deals with the self-perception of Śaivas in medieval India as revealed in a document of South Indian Śaivism; the second examines the reasons for the origin of the concept of 'Hinduism' under the influence of preconceived Western notions. Together, these two parts indicate that the painful and sometimes alarming search for identity which can be witnessed in modern Hindu self-perception reflects a genuine, though self-created, dilemma; it is hard, if not impossible, to find an all-India Hindu identity and orientation when confronted with an embarrassingly rich and heterogeneous tradition which contains several distinct religious identities, but was lumped together as 'Hinduism', at first mistakenly, and later in the service of 'national interest'. This, indeed, is a case where nationalist politics in a democratic setting succeeded in propagating Hindu religious unity in order to obtain an impressive statistical majority when compared with other religious communities.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF RITUAL

Period and Source

The present investigation is concerned with medieval India. It is therefore important to go back in history at least 800 years to a time when the first Sultanate of Delhi had not yet been established. Is it reasonable, in an essay on modern Hindu self-perception, to revert to such a distant past? So many changes in lifestyle, in values and culture have occurred during the eight centuries which followed! They constitute a period in Indian history which differs from the earlier ones in terms of the fact that the ruling powers resisted absorption into the Hindu religious traditions. In contrast to the earlier manner in which invaders interacted with the existing Indian culture, the dominant political power, during these centuries, was not attracted by, and integrated into, Indian religious traditions, but was vested in persons and institutions guided, first by Islam, and later by the Christian faith.

History cannot be turned back, it always proceeds from its latest stage. This simple rule applies to present-day India as well. Religions, however, tend to move in a slower rhythm than political institutions, and the roots through which they draw their nourishment may be traced back to a far more distant past. More than 3,000 years ago some Vedic *ṛṣis* recited hymns that are still considered inspirational. More than 2,000 years ago the Bhāgavatas gave an initial shape to the worship of Vāsudeva/Nārāyaṇa and developed the nucleus of the Vaiṣṇava religion. Similarly, Śaivism as a separate religion received its distinct form more than 2,000 years ago. Sacred texts of considerable age, notably selected Vedic hymns, portions from the Brāhmaṇas, several *Upaniṣads*, the Bhagavadgītā, many sections from the two epics, as well as the Purāṇas, *Āgamas*, *Tantras*, and numerous *Stotras* continue to be used in prayer and meditation even today.

My choice of a period prior to the twelfth century for ascertaining the state of Hindu self-perception does not imply that I consider the end of the twelfth century as constituting an absolute caesura in Hindu religious life. Much of what can be shown to have been religious practice between the eighth and the eleventh centuries continued for several centuries longer, particularly in parts of Rajasthan, Orissa and in South India where Muslim domination appeared later and did not cover the entire country. Some of it has continued to survive under Muslim and Christian dominance up to the present day. However, before the twelfth century, the Hindu religions could exert absolute influence on social life, politics and culture. They were in a state of expansion, not of self-defence. And, as will be seen, they were in a mutual contest for supremacy, rivalling with each other and with Buddhism and Jainism not only for royal support but also for spiritual excellence and for the guidance of souls: the question of religious truth was not yet relegated to the realm of relativity, and for final release from *saṃsāra* it was not at all immaterial which *sādhanā* or path to spiritual perfection was chosen.

In order to obtain a representative picture, I have selected a text from a category of religious literature which was hardly affected by changing trends, a text that was not concerned with erudite or polemic sectarian disputes over minute metaphysical differences, and a text that was not repeatedly revised, remodelled, and changed as, for example, most of the Purāṇas were. The text is a *pūjā-paddhati*: a manual for priests who officiate in the regular and occasional rituals of their community. The very fact that it is not concerned with theoretical or speculative issues but exclusively with the actual practice of religion in its relation to *puṇya* and *pāpa* or religious merit and demerit in everyday life makes this text a reliable witness for our purpose. Rituals may be abridged or slightly modified, but they rarely change in their essence. They often retain what was considered essential for human self-purification, for prosperity, and for communication with the gods.

The text chosen is the *Somaśambhupaddhati* (also known as *Karmakāṇḍa-kramāvalī*), an important early work on Śaiva rituals. The 'Hindu' self-perception which it reflects, in a passage that I have selected for analysis, is that of the Śaiva community—and here it speaks with authority for all the orthodox *sampradāyas* of Śaivism. It will be seen that Śaivism is conceived of as an independent religion, and *not* as a part or sect of any larger entity which we might wish to call Hinduism.

The *Somaśambhupaddhati* is a compendium edited at Devakoṭṭai in 1931 and again at Śrīnagar in 1947.[2] It was translated and commented upon in three parts by Hélène Brunner-Lachaux between 1963–1977.[3] Of these, Part I contains the daily rites, Parts II and III describe the occasional rites. It is among the latter where we come across an interesting set of rituals which are grouped together in a chapter entitled 'Vratoddhāraviddhi'. It contains the ritual procedures designed to relieve a follower of Śaivism from the burden of a vow after its completion (or, in case of inability to continue with the vow, even prior to its completion). It also contains a ritual for non-Śaivas who want to convert to Śaivism: their souls are freed from the marks binding them to another religion in order to prepare them for an initiation into Śaivism. It is this short section which is of particular interest for ascertaining the self-perception of a follower of Śaivism in contradistinction to members of other creeds. Without any theoretical discussion and without polemics, it deals in a matter of fact way with a situation that must have been part of the routine of a Śaiva priest. And in doing so it gives clear indications of the fundamental difference between Śaivism and other religions.

The author Somaśambhu wrote in the second half of the eleventh

century, probably in South India.[4] The earliest available manuscript of his *paddhati* is from Kashmir and bears the date *vikrama* 1130 (= AD 1073). The work was also in use in South India where a manuscript from Sūryanārkoyil was copied in *vikrama* 1153 (= AD 1096). Obviously, the manual gained wide recognition quickly, since all its ritual injunctions are based on the sections concerning ritual (*kriyāpada*) contained in important Śaiva Āgamas and Upāgamas. The rituals themselves, therefore, must have been considerably older to Somaśambhu's time. Although it is not easy to date these texts— 28 Āgamas are recognized as canonical, but many more are in existence—it seems that a major part of them belonged to the eighth to tenth centuries. Somaśambhu himself mentions three generations of famous teachers who preceded him.[5] He is the ninth in a list of 18 compilers of *pūjā* manuals contained in the *Śaivabhūṣaṇa* (Brunner-Lachaux 1963: xxii). We thus have a period of roughly three to four centuries prior to Somaśambhu during which some of the major Āgamas were composed and those āgamic rituals were evolved which he incorporated in his work.

Somaśambhu wrote his manual for specialists who knew the general routine. And, of course, he expects the reader to know his more explicit āgamic sources. In many cases, therefore, he gives guidance only for the more complicated issues. Conciseness and brevity make the text appear rather cryptic at times and occasionally it proves helpful if the reader turns to the Āgamas themselves for a fuller treatment of the issue and its context. In fact, the almost *sūtra*-like brevity of Somaśambhu's style necessitated an extensive commentary which came to be written about 83–90 years later. It was called *Kriyākramadyotikā* and composed by the famous South Indian scholar Aghoraśivācārya in AD 1158.[6] He faithfully incorporates all the teachings of Somaśambhu, adding many details and explanations which render the commentary very useful. Since the *Kriyākramadyotikā* is both more comprehensive and easier to read, it eclipsed the *Somaśambhupaddhati* in fame and became the authority on Śaiva ritual for centuries to come. Even today it is still in use in South India. Considering the āgamic source of Somaśambhu and the continuation of his teachings in Aghoraśiva's work, it is evident that the rituals described by him had an authoritative standard for a very long period of time.[7]

To place Somaśambhu in a historical perspective it must be remembered that after three centuries of exceptionally creative expansion Śaivism moved into a phase of consolidation and assessment in AD eleventh century. In the North, Abhinavagupta undertook, in his *Tantrāloka*, to write a monumental synopsis of the Śaiva scriptures, and to propound their essence in the *Tantrasāra*. In the South, both *dvaita* and *advaita* schools of thought began to build metaphysical systems as superstructures on the songs of the Tamil saints with their strong devotional impact. Less than 200 years after Somaśambhu, in the thirteenth century, Meykaṇḍa and his pupils were to write the final treatises of the Śaivasiddhānta school.

Liṅgoddhāra: The Eradication of the Liṅga

The fact that persons in search for spiritual perfection had a choice between different possibilities of *sādhanā* is well known. Within Śaivism itself the different *sampradāyas* propagated a variety of methods for attaining to the highest perfection, and some of them, like those of the Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas, were highly controversial and rejected as unclean or even heretic by a majority of Śaivas. But there were also Vaiṣṇavas, Jainas, Bauddhas, Sauras, Gāṇapatyas, Smārtas and others, all offering more than one path for perfection and all claiming to know the king's road to the highest goal. Many of the saints and *gurus* in post-Gupta India, with its devotional fervour and its rivalling philosophical systems, were inspired by a strong missionary zeal. In the South, their devotional songs aimed at attracting a wide range of people to a life a spiritual surrender to the highest god, that is, the god they had chosen, experienced and recognized as the highest—whose grace alone would rescue them from the bonds of *saṃsāra*. All over India their philosophical systems provided distinct and rivalling metaphysical insight into the structure of the world and the all-pervading activity of the divine on all levels of existence. The hagiographies of several saints and great teachers narrate of mass conversions at pilgrim centres, and are triumphant when reporting the conversion of famous individuals. It can be reasonably surmised that individual conversion must have been a rather common occurrence as a natural result of the competitive religious spirit of the time.

Somaśambhu's manual provides us with information on the ritual procedure in cases of conversion from other creeds to Śaivism. Why such a ritual was necessary and how it transformed the soul of the convert must be understood on the basis of the āgamic context regarding initiation, self-perfection and the operation of divine grace. The following description, therefore, supplements Somaśambhu's brief statements with additional information from some of the Āgamas and Upāgamas, notably the *Pauṣkara-, Kiraṇa-* and *Supra-bhedāgamas* and the *Cintyaviśva-, Kālottara-, Ṣaṭsahasrikā-,* and *Dīkṣottara*[8]*-Upāgamas*, most of them cited in a compendium on initiation called *Dīkṣādarśa*, 'the mirror of initiation', and referred to in the footnotes to Madame Brunner-Lachaux's translation (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 540ff).

The purpose of the rite, as its title '*liṅgoddhāra*' indicates, is the removal of a *liṅga*, a distinctive and distinguishing mark, from a person. The *liṅga*, in this case, is not an outward sign such as the pendant in the form of a *śivaliṅga* worn around the neck by the Liṅgāyats, or the ashes and other marks worn on the forehead by followers of different sects or schools (*sampradāyas*), or the matted locks and other distinguishing hair styles of priests and ascetics. It is a mark invisibly fixed in the soul of a person, a mark which is different for the Buddhist, the Jain, the Bhāgavata, or the Pāśupata, and also for the follower of Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, or Vedānta. It is the spiritual impression made by birth and initiation (*dīkṣā*) into a particular religious community and by the *puṇya* or merit acquired while following the spiritual path prescribed by that community.

Why should a person wish to remove that *liṅga*? Is it not enough to realize that in one's present situation another religious teaching carries more conviction and consequently to follow it and seek the grace of another god? Apparently it is not, for, according to the Āgamas, the *liṅga* imprinted on the soul by a non-Śaiva religion constitutes an insurmountable hindrance for attaining salvation in this life. Only if it stems from Śaivism, is there such a chance.[9]

The *liṅga* establishes the religious identity of a person. Since it is normally imprinted on the soul either by birth or by the ritual of initiation, it cannot be removed except through ritual. If, therefore, a person born or taught in another creed intends to embrace Śaivism

which, according to its self-understanding, is the only religion that can lead to salvation, then the annihilation of one's former *liṅga* is of utmost importance. Similarly, the imprint onto the soul of a new *liṅga*, by which one will be marked as a Śaiva, is absolutely essential.

The ritual, though simple in its procedure, has important, even frightening consequences. Together with the *liṅga* one will lose all the merit that may have been acquired while following the previous creed. This shows that the *liṅga* is not only an identification mark but also the carrier of accumulated religious merit. Its destruction destroys that merit while the karmic demerit carried on from previous births remains untouched. The person who has his or her *liṅga* removed will have to start from zero again. Like a newly born child he or she commences, spiritually, a fresh life. This new beginning, of course, takes place under far better conditions: there is no longer any barrier in the way that will arrest the spiritual progress at a certain point. One is not running into a blind alley without any exit leading to salvation. Indeed, all possible merit achieved through other religious paths would only result in the privilege of being born into a Śaiva family in the next life. So why not start afresh immediately and try to cross *saṃsāra* in this very life?

It is worth stressing the fact that the ritual removal of an earlier religious affiliation, whether entered by birth or by *dīkṣā*, was considered fundamentally important in āgamic Śaivism. This is no longer so today. The competing Hindu religions have moved closer together. But from a theological point of view, the Śaivas had a compelling reason for insisting on the *liṅgoddhāra* rite. It was based both on the conception of the world and on the nature of liberation as contained in the Āgamas. For us, today, it offers an insight into their perception of the role and value of other religions.

Liberation (*mukti*): Its Anthropological and Cosmical Conditions in Āgamic Śaivism

In order to understand the implications of the conversion rite we should briefly recall the basic ontological structure of the world and its anthropological consequences, leaving aside the disputes among the Śaivas themselves about Parama Śiva and Śakti and their

relation to the evolutes of the 'pure path'.[10] Apart from Parama Śiva, the basic elements underlying the plurality of worlds and beings are:

1. An infinite number of individual souls (aṇu).
2. A sequence of 36 tattvas or principles that constitute all worldly existence.

These are arranged in a hierarchical order in the sequence of their emanation from Parama Śiva (also Parameśvara), starting from śivatattva and ending with pṛthivītattva, that is, the gross element, earth. When seen from the perspective of the bonded soul, aspiring for liberation and trying to trace back the steps of evolution in order to regain the pure state of Śiva from whom emanation originally poured forth, the tattvas may be counted in reverse order, with the earth as the first and Śiva as the last tattva, that is, in the order of their destruction or resorption into the divine being at the time of liberation or of world dissolution. It is in this last-mentioned order that I will number the tattvas in the following discussion.[11]

The souls are all potentially equal, but only one of them exists from eternity in its pure state: Parama Śiva. All the others are bound from beginningless time by two fetters: karma (result of action) and mala (primordial impurity). That karma does not have a beginning can be ascertained by considering that, being the fruit of action, it presupposes action which presupposes existence which, in turn, presupposes karma. Mala, too, is eternal; and it is one entity (not many) which affects all souls. Both these fetters keep all souls in bondage. But they have one weakness: they can be discarded.[12] If they are discarded, it means liberation.[13]

The creation of the world, which emanates from Śiva, has as its sole purpose the liberation of innumerable individual souls from their fetters in order to permit them to attain to śivatva, the state of Śiva-ness which is, in fact, their own nature. This state is characterized by unlimited cit-śakti or power of consciousness which manifests itself in two forms: illimited power of knowing (jñāna-śakti), and illimited power of acting (kriyā-śakti). To become omniscient and omnipotent like Śiva is the goal of all individual souls.

One way, open to all beings, of reaching this goal is to gradually climb up the ladder of the tattvas in order to overcome, with each

step, the binding forces inherent in each component of evolutionary reality. By karmic purification and corresponding increase of knowledge the adept in any sādhanā—be it Buddhist, Jain, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, or whatever—strives to move up the scale of tattvas, gradually understanding the structure of the universe and the nature of bondage. The sādhanās, however, offer unequal opportunities. To take again the simile of the ladder: only Śaiva sādhanā is able to lead to the sphere of direct divine grace.

The sādhaka thus realizes and overcomes the levels of the gross elements (tattvas 1 to 5), the subtle elements (tattvas 6 to 10), the 10 senses of action and perception (tattvas 11 to 20), the intellectual processes operating in manas, ahaṃkāra and buddhi (tattvas 21 to 23), and even the subtle constituents of matter itself, that is, the three guṇas or qualities of primordial matter (tattva 24). In this way the adept (sādhaka) arrives at the tattva puruṣa (tattva 25), which was the highest tattva in the conception of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems. The Śaivas had inherited that system but they evolved it further as a result of analysing the forces operating through māyā-śakti, icchā-śakti, and jñāna-śakti: in the process the number of tattvas was increased to 36.

Beyond the tattva puruṣa are the tattvas 26 to 31. These are the most difficult to cross. It is here, under the influence of māyā and near the line which divides the 'impure path' (aśuddhādhvan) of the lower 31 tattvas from the 'pure path' (śuddhādhvan) of the uppermost five tattvas, that the originally omniscient and omnipotent soul was reduced to a state of limited capacities of both knowledge and action. In order to undo this limitation, the ascending adept has to get rid of the five kañcukas or cuirasses that limit his capacity of perception and action. They form the tattvas 26 to 30, are produced by māyā, and, being closely interrelated, they operate simultaneously to obscure the perception of the pure reality by creating a confusing plurality in which the soul gets totally lost.

The first of these kañcukas to be encountered is 'emotional attachment' (rāga or tattva 26) which causes selection of and association with or dissociation from, single elements of reality by means of attraction and repulsion, love and hatred. Combinations and oppositions arise under the influence of this tattva, as well as conflicts and attachments. The soul loses its equanimity towards

everything that exists. Attachment becomes possible because 'limited knowledge' (*vidyā* or *tattva* 27) replaces universal perception by a more restricted perception of individual things or mere aspects of things; also because 'segmentalization' (*kalā* or *tattva* 28) causes division of the one limitless reality into many district and limited parts. Simultaneously, the fourth *kañcuka* which is 'causality' (*niyati*, counted as *tattva* 29) transforms the ubiquitous reality into a sequential stream of cause and effect, or dependent origination. And, finally, the last of the five *kañcukas*, 'time' (*kāla* or *tattva* 30) orders all these segments of reality in a temporal sequence and spatial distribution, thereby concealing the omnipresence of the pure reality.

All these five *kañcukas* which imprison the soul and reduce its faculties to the miserable state of our limited mental and physical capacities in this world, are direct creations of *māyā* (*tattva* 31). Except for *puruṣa*, *māyā*, 'illusion', is responsible for all other *tattvas* of the 'impure path' down to the *tattva* 'earth'. This is the realm where *karma* operates. And this is also where most living beings—including the majority of gods—are caught in the cycles of limited existence.

For those souls who, in the course of their self-perfection, have succeeded in conquering the *tattvas* of the world of *māyā* and in destroying *karma*, Śiva created five other worlds, constituted in ascending order by *tattvas* 32 to 36 and the last of which is *śivaloka*, the world of Śiva.[14] These five uppermost worlds constitute the 'pure path' (*śuddhādhvan*) and the bodies of all beings that inhabit them are made of a different, more subtle kind of matter described as *mahāmāyā*. Though free from *karma*, the beings in these worlds are still affected by the primordial impurity (*mala*) which constitutes a last difference between them and Parama Śiva. It is only by transcending even *śivaloka* and reaching the sphere of Parameśvara or Parama Śiva that all impurity is overcome and equality of the individual soul with the highest state of Śiva is achieved.

The Role of Divine Grace and the Relative Value of 'Religions'

Both the concept of cosmic evolution (*pravṛtti*) from an initial unity, and its reversal in a process of involution (*nivṛtti*) by which

the individual soul can trace its steps back to the original source of all existence and attain liberation, are known from earlier Indian metaphysical speculation. The Sāṃkhya system, in particular, had developed this idea by combining in one list of *tattvas* the basic constituents of the external or material and the internal or psycho-mental worlds.

What distinguishes the āgamic Śaiva doctrine from its antecedents is the division of the evolutionary chain of *tattvas* into two distinct levels of existence: an impure world created by *māyā* that offers an impure path (*aśuddhādhvan*) to the soul in bondage; and a purer yet still impurity-afflicted world (created, according to some schools of Śaivism, by *mahāmāyā*) that offers to the soul a pure path (*śuddhādhvan*). The first is impermanent and subject to cyclical decay and renewal, the second is permanent and beyond *saṃsāra*. Śiva himself, being absolutely pure, operates only on the upper level. His direct grace reaches all those souls who have managed to escape from the world of *māyā* and attain the pure path. It is they alone who can attain to liberation (*mokṣa*). All other souls will have to be reborn. They cannot come into direct contact with Śiva. Nevertheless, they are not left without help. By means of powerful intermediaries like Sadāśiva and Īśvara, as well as through Mantreśvaras and Mantras (conceived of as souls at a high level of spiritual attainment who, prior to final liberation, remain in the service of Śiva in order to guide the bonded souls at lower levels of existence), and through each Śaiva *guru*, it is possible for divine grace to descend into the lower worlds, to purify the souls, and to push them on towards spiritual perfection. Consequently, with strong devotion and with the help of the Śaiva *guru* (who acts as an intermediary for allowing *śaktipāta*, that is, the descent of Śiva's *jñāna-śakti* into the impure world) it is possible for the Śaiva to reach the pure path while still existing in this material world. And still living but, inwardly, already beyond *māyā* he can experience the direct presence of Śiva and reach the final goal of becoming equal to him in this very life.[15]

To lead to the highest goal is the claim of many religions and philosophical systems, but are they able to fulfil this promise? The answer of the Āgamas is absolutely clear: except for Śaivism, none of them is. This judgment is understandable because, according to āgamic premises, in order to fulfil that promise they would have to

lead their devotees into the presence of Śiva or at least into the pure order of creation where Śiva's grace can be directly received, that is, into one of the five levels of existence beyond *māyā*. This they are unable to do; they even ignore the existence of the *tattvas* of the pure path altogether. And since *mukti* is attained through Śiva's grace alone, how could those who do not approach him succeed in obtaining it?

Indeed, the inability of non-Śaiva religions and philosophies to lead to perfection is imprinted into the soul of their followers like a karmic barrier on the road to liberation. This imprint is the *liṅga*, the removal of which our rite is concerned with. It determines the *muktisthāna* of the follower of another religion: i.e., the place in the hierarchy of the *tattvas* up to which the religion which he follows can lead and where in spite of all efforts his further ascension will be blocked. The *liṅga* acts, as it were, as a passport to its owner: it identifies the boundaries within which he is allowed to move, and a *tattva* for which it possesses no permit of entry will not let him pass.

Somaśambhu gives a few examples of persons characterized by a *liṅga* and of the maximum levels of perfection they can reach. He does so casually in verses seven and eight of his short text. They read:

The followers of Buddha are situated in *buddhi-tattva* (as their *muktisthāna*; the Jainas in (*sattvaguṇa* which forms) the top of the *guṇas*; but those who fully know the Veda (i.e., the Mīmāṃsakas[16]) are in (*prakṛti* which is) the womb of the *guṇas*; and those who direct themselves towards Bhagavān (Viṣṇu) are in *puruṣa* (-*tattva*). (7) But the Pāśupatas (remain) in *māyā*, and the Mahāvratas in *vidyā* (-*tattva*). These are, in sequence, the *muktisthānas* of Buddhists etc. (i.e., the places they wrongly believe to yield *mukti*). (8)[17]

Of course, Somaśambhu mentions these few groups as mere examples. He has no intention of listing all the types of *liṅgins*. Here, again, the Āgamas and their commentaries can supplement his scanty information. With only slight variations in their apportioning of *muktisthānas* to the various rivalling schools, they offer a fairly clear picture of the relative ranking and demonstrate their own keen sense of superiority. The texts give no reasons for the respective positions. Probable explanations are provided by me without any claim to completeness.

Materialists (*cārvākāḥ*), Śāktas practising left-handed rituals (*kaulikāḥ*), and astrologers (*jyotiḥśāstrajñāḥ*) remain in the sphere of the gross elements (*tattvas* 1–5 on which their interest is so intensely focused).[18] The Smārtas who are accomplished in the meaning of Vedic *mantras* reach up to the senses of perception[19] (among which the ear, *śrotram*, that is, *tattva* 20 ranges as the highest: it is *śruti* or Vedic revelation they value most). The followers of Nyāya or logicians (*sāmānya-vādinaḥ*) reach the sphere of *manas* (*tattva* 21 where logic has its place), and it should not be surprising by now that the Buddhists (*bauddhāḥ*) are placed in *buddhi* (*tattva* 22). As to the Vaiśeṣikas, their analytical and individualizing approach is suggestive enough to place their *muktisthāna* in *ahaṃkāra tattva*, the principle of individuation (*tattva* 23).[20] The Jainas are assigned a slightly better position by placing them in the *guṇas*[21] or, as Somaśambhu says with more precision, in *satyaguṇa* (*guṇamastake*, *tattva* 24a).[22] We have already seen that the Mīmāṃsakas (*vedāntajñāḥ*)[23] are placed in *prakṛti* (*guṇayoni*, *tattva* 24b) and the Vaiṣṇavas or Bhāgavatas (*bhagavanmukhāḥ*) in *puruṣa* (*tattva* 25) almost certainly because they worship Viṣṇu as Puruṣottama. The *prakṛti tattva* is also assigned to the Pāñcarātrins, because they consider Hari (not only as the efficient cause but also) as the material cause of the world.[24] *Puruṣa tattva* is also assigned to the Vedāntins (*vedāntinaḥ*), the Sāṃkhyas and the Yogins.[25] In the case of the latter two, this reflects their aim to dissociate *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* and her evolutes in order to regain a state of perfect isolation (*kaivalya*). As for the Vedāntins, their placement in *puruṣa tattva* shows that their attempt to attain *mukti* through identification of the individual soul (*ātman*) with the universal soul (*brahman*) appears to the Śaivas as basically similar to that of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga[26] schools. That the abstract concept of *brahman* appears to be closer to the uninvolved and isolated *puruṣa* than to the Lord *īśvara* of the Śaivas may have essentially to do with the latter's compassionate involvement with the world and all living beings which seems absent from both the concepts of *brahman* and *puruṣa*. It is, of course, evident that all these attributions of a supposed *muktisthāna* to rivalling systems of religious thought or philosophical doctrine are rather superficial.

Puruṣa is the highest *tattva* the followers of a non-Śaiva *sādhanā* can ever hope to reach. They all remain helplessly engulfed in *māyā*.

There are 11 more *tattvas* above *puruṣa* to be crossed before salvation is attained—and these are the most difficult to master. Even the most degraded of the devotees of Śiva are better off. Somaśambhu mentions two more groups. They profess to be devotees of Śiva, but are looked upon as unclean and heretical by the more orthodox Śaivas. They are the Pāśupatas and the Mahāvratas, the first of whom he locates in *māyā* (31) and the second in *vidyā tattva* (27).[27] Note that the Mahāvratas and the Pāśupatas, even though heretic and despised, reach nearer to Śiva than any of those following the non-Śaiva religions.

The Ritual Procedure

The above list makes it abundantly clear that for a Śaiva of the āgamic period and for Śaivasiddhānta (the school supported by Somaśambhu's commentator Aghoraśiva) there can be no question of an equality of faiths. Only Śaivas can attain liberation; all others remain in *saṃsāra* until they are one day reborn in a Śaiva family—unless they decide here and now to convert and change their faith. This is imperative for all who really seek salvation, and this is when the *liṅgoddhāra* rite has to be performed.

To make this decision requires a great deal of confidence, because the first outcome is that the adept loses all the merit he may have accumulated so far. He is freed from all the previously adhered to religious obligations and rules of conduct except for those of his caste. Like a newly born child he commences a new life under new conditions: an initiation (*dīkṣā*) into the Śaiva faith can follow immediately after the previous *liṅga* has been removed. It will imprint on his soul a new and better mark which gives him access to the Śaiva fold and a chance to achieve liberation in this life.

The ritual itself (verses 9–17 of the *vratoddhāravidhi*) is quickly told. Since it provides authentic evidence for the perception and valuation of the religious configurations of the time, a translation is given which follows the text closely, with some additional notes in parentheses.

On behalf of the *liṅgins* who are keeping a fast for three days or five days, who are purified by *prāyaścitta* and remain outside the temple hall (9) the spiritual guide (*deśika*) shall first offer worship to the Lord of the bonded souls

(*paśubhartāram*) in the extensive fashion described above[28] and then act for them according to the rule for eradication of the *liṅga*. (10)

(In case they are Buddhists) he shall place the group of *tattvas* from *buddhi* to earth[29] into the fire, and mentioning their names worship them (collectively) or one by one. (11)[30]

He then connects the subtle channels (*nāḍī*) (of his own body) with (the subtle channels) of those (*liṅgins*) standing outside; performs the actions of beating (loose), disconnecting, and pulling out (the *liṅga*) which is (now) present in himself, (12) and of uniting (it) with the fire (i.e., throwing it into the fire) while (reciting) the *mūlamantra* (*Oṃ Namaḥ Śivāya*) with *svāhā* added in the end; and in order to destroy the fruits of merit acquired by worshipping the (formerly) chosen deity he offers (13) thousand and eight oblations with the *astramantra*[31] (*Oṃ Haḥ Astrāya Namaḥ*) for everyone of the *liṅgins*; and for releasing (the *liṅgins*) from each of the *tattvas* (involved) he offers, with the *mūlamantra*, five (oblations) to each *tattva*. (14)[32]

After extracting them (i.e., their marks) completely from all the *tattvas*, beginning with *buddhi* and ending with the earth, he ties them (the converts) again to their former caste (*jāti*), to its way of conduct, and to the rules of its profession (*yogasthiti*) (15) and offers 108 oblations with the *mūlamantra*, making a full oblation in the end.[33]

In the same way (as described in verses 1–6a in connection with the eradication of a vow for Śaivas) he throws the signs of their (previous religious) vow[34] into water and makes them (again) householders (*gṛhastha*).[35] (16)

Or, out of compassion with the devotees, he may perform for them the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*). By this method the guru may free all the *liṅgins* (from their *liṅgas* and vows). (17)[36]

An alternative method for extracting a vow follows in verses 18–24. I present only a summary, since it does not primarily concern members of other religions but rather is meant for getting free of a lifelong vow of celibacy, though it can be used for other purposes as well. This rite makes use of the power inherent in the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and in its mystical syllables.

The eight groups of letters—beginning with the last one, the sibilants (*śavarga*) and ending with the first group, the vowels—are placed in a counter-clockwise order starting from the north-eastern

direction on the eight petals of a lotus diagram (18), in the centre of which Śiva (Śambhu) is seated in the form of the mystical syllable *Kṣaum*. He is surrounded by other syllables representing the five *Brahman* (Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna)[37] and his members (*aṅgāni*, namely, heart, head, tuft of hair, cuirass and weapon).[38] Then Śiva is worshipped in the fire (19) and a water oblation is made to each group of letters. With the permission of Śiva, the sibilants are placed in the fire, as well as the consciousness (*caitanya*) of the person concerned. (20) A hundred oblations with each of the six mystical syllables representing the members of the Lord are offered into the fire, the whole procedure ending with a full oblation. Thereafter, the consciousness (purified by the fire, by the power of the syllables, by the presence of Śiva, and by the oblations) is taken from the fire and replaced into the body of the adept. (21) This process is repeated one by one with the other seven groups of letters. Finally, the signs of the vow are thrown into deep water, (22) the adept receives fresh clothes and is given the status of a householder or, out of compassion (he is given) an initiation. (23) Last, the *guru* bids farewell to Śiva and to the fire and purifies the ground where the rite took place. (24a)

The Śaiva Self-perception and Corresponding Vaiṣṇava Concepts

The *liṅgoddhāra* rite as described in the *Somaśambhupaddhati* and supported by the commentary of Aghoraśiva and quotations from the Āgamas allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the self-perception of the Śaivas in pre-Muslim India.

First, it is evident that they firmly believed in Śaivism as the only religion that could lead directly to salvation. Non-Śaiva religions, including the Vedic tradition itself as represented by the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsakas, the Vedāntins, and the Smārtas were considered incapable of leading to *mokṣa*. The same verdict applied to the other famous systems of philosophy and self-perfection that were propagated within the brahmanic tradition though not directly based on the Veda: to Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. None of these could lead to the promised goal of freedom from *saṃsāra*. This was equally true for the Pāñcarātrins and other devotees of Viṣṇu or of

one of his *avatāras* such as Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. And, of course, it was valid for all extra-Vedic religions like Buddhism, Jainism and the teachings of the Cārvākas. Even Śāktism was condemned as a complete failure when it attempted to follow a course independent from Śaivism. There was no access whatever to the state of *mukti* without the grace of Śiva, conferred on the individual *sādhaka* either directly, or through the mediation of a Śaiva *guru*.

Second, there is no question of considering Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism as two sects of the same religion. Their difference is all too clear: Vaiṣṇavism is a dead alley within *saṃsāra*; Śaivism leads out of it. Nor is there any marked difference between Vaiṣṇavism and Jainism or Buddhism that would justify the notion that there is something like 'Hinduism' which unites Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism as opposed to Buddhism or Jainism. There are simply several religious groups which falsely claim to show, in doctrine and practice, the path to salvation while in truth only Śaivism does so. The others block it completely.

Third, no distinction is made between what we call 'religious' and 'philosophical' systems. They are all spiritual paths which mark a person's soul with a distinct imprint, binding it to a certain limited performance. And they are not only just a little inferior to Śaivism: it appears that the best they can (unwittingly) achieve—and that provides a reason for tolerating them—is to prepare a person for a possible later birth as a Śaiva. But in their claim of leading to *mokṣa* they are basically wrong to the extent that their imprint on the soul was considered to be a decisive hindrance to salvation.

It is clear from the Śaiva argument that the claim of superiority for their religion is absolute, and that it is based on a fundamental difference between Śaivism and other religions. The verdict of total uselessness for the main aim of all beings, namely, to attain final liberation, applies to all other religions without exception, whether they are of Hindu or foreign (*mleccha*) origin, and whether they believe in the existence of a soul and a transcendent reality (*āstika*) or reject such a belief as nonsense (*nāstika*). For minor aims they may be helpful, though only to some degree, for example, to reduce the burden of one's negative *karma* thereby gaining a better incarnation. Interestingly, the *nāstikas* are not classed as generally inferior to the *āstikas*: the Jainas and the Bauddhas rank only a little below

the Vaiṣṇavas or the Vedāntins, and they are placed above the Smārtas.

The absolute claim of superiority demonstrated here in a particularly explicit form is not, however, unique to the Śaiva religion. It can be shown to have been present in other Hindu religions as well, notably, in Vaiṣṇavism and in Śāktism. The Bhagavadgītā, for instance, declares that there is, in reality, no god except Kṛṣṇa, that even the devotees of other gods worship Kṛṣṇa, though not according to proper rules, and that Kṛṣṇa alone is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the giver of all boons.[39] In spite of this all-inclusive claim, it makes a decisive difference whether one knows that Kṛṣṇa is the only Lord and worships him directly with complete devotion, or whether one worships him unknowingly and indirectly through the worship of other gods. In the latter case which includes the worship of all gods other than Kṛṣṇa, the result is similar to that conceded to other religions in the Śaiva system: one can reach only a certain level on the scale of possible incarnations, but will remain caught in the cycle of *saṃsāra* and fall down again into lower births. Thus, the soma-drinking knower of the Vedas may reach the heaven of Indra (*surendraloka*) but thereafter he will enter again the world of mortals.[40]

In the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata we can also find a near parallel to the Śaiva attribution of particular places on the scale of *tattvas* in the cosmic evolution to other religious groups. In connection with the doctrine of the four *vyūhas*, or manifestations of the divine, this text[41] states that it is Vāsudeva who is *paramātmā* or *puruṣa* from whom emanation proceeds and to whom it returns. He also is the *ātman* of all individual beings.[42] The second manifestation is Saṃkarṣaṇa or Śeṣa who is known as the living soul (*jīva*) in all beings, without which the elements cannot form a body.[43] From him a third manifestation is born, known as Pradyumna who is the *manas* of all beings. On account of its action *manas* remains ever young and all elements dissolve into it at the time of world annihilation. From Pradyumna emerges the last manifestation, Aniruddha, who is the agent, the cause and the product in the process of the creation of the world. He is *ahaṃkāra*, the individualizing factor which produces the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. And it is he who is identified with Īśāna[44] or with Maheśvara,[45] that is, with

the two most prominent names of the highest form of Śiva in the contemporary Śaivism of the late Kuṣāṇa and the Gupta periods.[46] Thus, Śiva is placed in this Vaiṣṇava text at the level of *ahaṃkāra* which is the lowest of the levels of divine manifestation in the *vyūha* scheme. Again, in another passage of the same text, Brahmā and Rudra are described as created by Aniruddha: Brahmā in the early morning in a mood of favour (*prasāda*) for the purpose of creation, Rudra in the evening in a mood of anger (*krodha*) for the purpose of destruction.[47] These texts have been selected at random and more could be adduced. They are considerably older than the āgamic passages quoted for the Śaiva doctrine. They show that to claim superior status for one's own god and for the religion devoted to him, and to deny all other religions the capacity to lead to final liberation, was not only a common feature in the competition and rivalry between Hindu religions, it was also a relatively early feature which has been in existence ever since the time of the Bhagavadgītā, if not earlier.

Subordination: A Theological Strategy for Asserting Spiritual Superiority and Maintaining Practical Tolerance

Ritual has always been, and still is, a conservative factor in religions. It preserves religious truths, convictions, or attitudes longer and more faithfully than the more flexible speculative sectors of theology. In the case presented here it shows us that the modern notion of Hinduism as *one religion* does not correspond to the view of the medieval Śaivas. Nor does it correspond to the view of the medieval Vaiṣṇavas, if we closely examine their sacred texts.

It may be argued that there must be something inadequate about this picture. Are there not numerous passages in the Purāṇas and Āgamas where Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are explicitly stated to be one and the same?[48] Are there not temples containing images of more than one important deity? And from inscriptional evidence it is obvious that it was one and the same king in pre-Muslim India who constructed temples and gave endowments for very different gods!

I am aware of all these evidences. All too often misleading conclusions are drawn from them. The textual passages mentioned are

embedded in a context where the coordination and interrelation of three important functions of the divine is being discussed, namely, the functions of creation, preservation and destruction of this transient world. In this connection, the *trimūrti* concept was developed in accordance with the numerous myths, which attributed the role of the creator to Brahmā, the role of preserver of the world order to Viṣṇu, and the task of the destroyer to Śiva. These three deities, as it is emphasized in this cosmological context, are nothing but personifications of different functions of only *one* deity. Their devotees, therefore, are exhorted to realize that the three deities are in essence one. Consequently, they should stop making false distinctions between them.

The message seems to be clear enough. It is often taken and quoted as its surface value. But the reader generally forgets to look at its wider context. If he did, he would not fail to notice that the *trimūrti* concept forms part of a complex cosmological speculation explaining the origin of the impermanent from the permanent; and of this cosmos with all its spiritual and physical plurality from an ultimate single and undecaying source. This process of unfolding worldly reality or *pravṛtti* is counterbalanced by *nivṛtti*, that is, the movement in the opposite direction which leads to a process of reabsorption of the manifold into its ultimate source. It should be noted that the three gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—are, in this bidirectional process, always situated on a relatively low level of cosmic manifestation: their place of action is at the borderline between the upper realms of pure spiritual beings and the lower realm of a temporal and continuously decaying physical world. None of them is the highest god, none of them is permanent and undecaying.[49] They are eminent souls each appointed with an *adhikāra*, namely, with the task and responsibility for creation, preservation and destruction of (one or more, out of many) physical worlds. Like all other created beings they still await final liberation. They are different in function, but as representatives of limited aspects of the supreme god's unlimited power they are indeed equal. This is what the *trimūrti* passages want to convey. The highest god is far above these three functionaries.

The confusion arises because, in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava religions, the name Śiva or the name Viṣṇu recur as appellations for the supreme godhead, the ultimate source of all existence. This should

not create misunderstandings. The unlimited power permeates all levels of existence and similar names may occur on different storeys of the world structure. The authors of these texts expect the reader to be initiated by a learned teacher and, therefore, to understand the differences and to know the limitations inherent in worldly existence. In addition, they make it perfectly clear by adding, where necessary, a qualifying term when they speak of the supreme god as Parama Śiva (in the case of Śaivas) and of Puruṣottama or Ādi-Nārāyaṇa (in the case of Vaiṣṇavas). And it is here where the religions really differ. For no devotee of Śiva would accept Viṣṇu as the supreme lord. He would see him rather as a servant or part of Śiva on a lower level of existence. And no devotee of Viṣṇu would see the ultimate position occupied by any god but Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa who, out of compassion, descended to earth as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and in several other forms.

We thus have, in the two dominant Hindu religions of today, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, a form of what Paul Hacker called 'inclusivism'.[50] The chief god of the rival religion is not denied his existence. He is only discreetly shown to be inferior by the inclusion of him as one of several divine powers who operate in dependence of, and servitude to, another deity who is truly the highest god and who is, of course, the one to whom oneself has surrendered in complete devotion. The same procedure was followed in regard to other Hindu religions like those of the Kaumaras, Sauras, Gāṇapatyas and Śāktas. Since all these gods belong to a common culture, an 'inclusion' does not even seem to have been necessary: they were already present in a common horizon, and what happened was 'subordination without expulsion' rather than 'subordination by inclusion.' The Śaiva ritual of conversion discussed earlier was a telling example of precisely to which level of relevance one was condescending to admit rival gods and their religions, or great agnostic (*nāstika*) teachers and their paths to salvation.

This technique of subordination also accounts for the presence of several gods in one temple which is, however, always dedicated to the presiding deity alone. And the fact that kings used to sponsor several religious groups either by donations or by constructing temples does not necessarily reflect their personal belief: it was the duty of the king to protect *all* his subjects and to support the

dharma of all, including their religions. The famous 12th rock edict of emperor Ashoka propagating religious tolerance is not the only example of this 'secular' tradition of Indian kingship.

II. Conceptual Preconditions in the West and the Emergence of 'Hinduism'

The above discussion has shown that there existed an acute awareness of a plurality of competing Hindu religions in pre-Muslim India. Each of these claimed to know the shortest path leading to liberation. The major theistic religions had developed a tendency to absorb other cults. They did so both by superimposing a part of their ritual structure on already existing rituals (in the case of tribal or low caste cults),[51] and by integrating other religious groups within the framework of their metaphysical world construction by means of a sophisticated technique of theological subordination.

On the other hand, such universalistic tendencies of the major religions were counteracted by a number of factors which promoted fragmentalization and regionalization rather than the development of a uniform and centralized religious doctrine and practice. None of these Hindu religions—except perhaps for monastic Advaita Vedānta—developed an all-India institutional body invested with the power to pass binding judgments on the correct exegesis of sacred scriptures. Diverging interpretations of religious tradition could not be effectively banned. Authority was never vested in a central organization comparable to the Roman church. It was vested exclusively in the individual charisma of a religious teacher and in the *guru-paramparā* through which spiritual knowledge was transmitted. Therefore, even the dominant theistic religions such as Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism were subdivided into numerous *sampradāyas* (i.e., denominations or sects) which, in turn, had subsects and regional differentiations in theory and practice. Communication and competition between these branches did exist. And it happened only in cases of extreme confrontation within a religion that the representatives of various *sampradāyas* would be called together for a public disputation about the meaning of the scripture (*śāstrārtha*) in the assembly of the learned (*paṇḍita-sabhā*) to accept or dismiss a contested teaching.[52]

Thus, there was religious plurality; but the different entities were characterized by a common cultural heritage, a common socio-economic and historical background, and by mutual influence through intensive intellectual debate.

As pointed out earlier, this state of affairs did not entirely change after the establishment of the Sultanate in North India. At least parts of India remained essentially Hindu up to the sixteenth century. How, then, was it possible to lose sight of this age-old plurality of religions in barely four centuries intervening between the sixteenth and the twentieth century? Today, those religions are subsumed under the term Hinduism. They are reduced to the status of sects within what is claimed to be one Hindu religion. The Sikhs, too, were included. Following the lead of the administrators of British India, the government statistics of independent India lump them all together as Hindus, thereby (intentionally?) producing figures which demonstrate a large Hindu majority over Muslims, Christians, Jains, Parsees and Buddhists. This may be politically desirable: a large country like India which is subdivided by a plurality of languages, races, castes and separate regional histories may need something to give it a sense of unity. 'Hinduism' fulfils this need. But is it true, does it correspond to reality? The Vaiṣṇavas still worship a different god than the Śaivas, they continue to use completely different holy scriptures in prayer, in ritual, and in mythology. Even their paradise is located in a different mythical world.[53] The same could be shown for other Hindu religions. If this is so, why insist on the mere verbal unity of 'Hinduism'?

It is my intention in this section of the paper to show that the concept of a common Indian religion—whatever its name—did not originate in India. It was introduced from the West, and its history goes back to a period when Western knowledge about distant India was still very meagre.

We have to revert to fifteenth-century Europe in order to retrace the outlines of a basic framework of conceptions that was considered valid at the time and into which the missionaries and traders, when they reached India at the end of that century, could insert their impressions of what they understood about Indian religious doctrines and behaviour. It will be seen that, although the term 'Hinduism' came into common use as late as the nineteenth century,

the underlying concept of a unity of Indian religion was already in existence in the West before that religion was actually encountered by European missionaries and traders.[54]

In many respects, the fifteenth century was a fascinating period in European history. Among intellectuals, the humanistic movement brought about a noticeable emancipation from some of the church's doctrines and superstitions. In Italy, the Renaissance was at the height of its creativity and influenced entire Europe not only with its works of art, but also with a sudden confidence in man and his genius. No longer was he depressed under the damning burden of his sins: he was now conceived of as the measure of all things,[55] creative and able to discover with his intellect and reason the innate laws of nature. The sciences were rapidly developing. The earth was now perceived as a globe, a fact which offered challenging new perspectives to navigators, adventurers and traders. Soon the earth would also lose, against harsh opposition of the church, its privileged position in the centre of the world and be seen as turning around its own axis and moving around the sun.[56] With the earth losing its static centrality, man, too, was relieved eventually from the ancient hierocratic structure of a multispheric world which had been resting like a tremendous burden on his weak shoulders. Together with the movement of the earth, he gained spiritual mobility. His physical mobility had already reached a standard unheard of in earlier times. The trading ships of Venice and Genova travelled on all known seas and the Portuguese and Spanish made preparations to undertake voyage around the world. But the turn of the century, around 1500, Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci had discovered both Americas; Portuguese traders, crossing the land barrier between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, had explored the West coast of India from Goa to Calicut (in 1488); Vasco da Gama had succeeded in sailing around Africa and had landed on the West coast of India (in 1498); world trade had acquired a new dimension and a basis was laid for colonial expansion.

But the fifteenth century also brought disasters. The fall of Constantinople to the armies of Islam and the ensuing massacre of the faithful (1453) came as a shock to Christianity. With the fall of this eastern bulwark of Christendom the West became once again vulnerable[57] and Islam came to be seen as a devastating power and

an immediate danger. Rumours had it that far away in the East, in India, there existed a Christian monarch known as King John. He was rich and powerful and true to the Christian faith. When the Portuguese ships were manned to sail around Africa and find a route to India this enterprise was undertaken, among other reasons, with the hope of gaining a Christian ally who would come to the rescue of the occident by attacking the Muslims from the rear. The Syrian pseudo-epigraphic 'Acts of (the apostle) Thomas'[58] were known, and through them the information that the Christian message had found its way to India at an early date. Otherwise, all that was known about India in the West except for a few surviving fragments from Greek and Roman sources,[59] were some phantastic notions perpetuated in popular versions of the Alexander romance, accounts of travels like those of Marco Polo, and vague information received from Arabs in Mediterranean trade centres or during crusades.[60] This knowledge was available to scholars and was not easily accessible to those daring men who went overseas. When the Portuguese finally landed on the West coast of India, they did find Christians living there. Unfortunately, they also found fault with the way these native Christians practised their religion. A King John was nowhere to be found. But the resulting trade in spices, only a side effect of the expedition, was to start a new chapter in Indo-European relations.

The Christian Concept of World Religions

Although they had little positive knowledge about India, the European missionaries and traders who settled down on the shores of India from 1598 onwards had a relatively clear conception about their own position in this world. They were Christians living in the firm conviction that they were in possession of the only true revelation and that their faith alone could lead to salvation. The missionaries were also convinced, that they were chosen by god to rescue those who had not yet heard the good news of the gospels. This belief was not even shattered when, only a few decades later, European Christianity found itself split into bitterly fighting factions under the impact of a whole series of reformation movements. The belief in the superiority of the Christ's message and in the task to spread it abroad remained unaffected.

To a certain degree, the missionaries also knew what awaited them in India and elsewhere in the newly accessible continents. Carrying on conceptions inherited from the Middle Ages, they had learnt to be aware of the tricks of Satan, and they knew for certain that the entire population of the world was divided into four major religious systems or laws, namely, *lex christiana, lex iudaica, lex mahometana* and *lex gentilium*, i.e., the religious norms and doctrines of the Christians, the Jews, the Moslem and the heathen. The former three were based on the Old Testament and therefore on revelation, although, in the Christian view, the Jews and Mahometans had misread the message, disobeyed the laws, refused the promised messiah, or even followed a false prophet.

The heathen were all the prey of Satan and populated the rest of the world. They were divided into sects named after the countries they inhabited. The farther travellers went, the more heathen came to be known: African heathen, American heathen, Chinese heathen, etc. Since the Portuguese landed on the West coast of India, the inhabitants of the Konkan and Malabar coast were the first Indian heathen to be described in detail.

The Latin word for heathen is *gentiles*. The Portuguese changed it to *gentio*, the British adopted it from the Portuguese in the form *gentoo* which was in use from 1548 to 1837.[61] Another term, derived from the *banya* or merchant class of North India, was 'Banians' which was sporadically used from 1630, when Henry Lord published his *Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians*,[62] up to the end of the eighteenth century when it appeared in a German publication of 1779[63] the title of which, if translated into English, would read 'Curiosities from East-India Regarding the History of its Country, People and Culture'. By that time the term 'Hindoo' had already been taken over from the Mughal administration, and from it the term 'Hinduism' was derived in the late 1820s by way of abstraction.[64]

Some of the early missionaries, like Roberto de Nobili, were interested in the language and culture of the Indian heathen. Being brought up in late fifteenth-century Europe they had imbibed the idea that, what the act of creation, god had given his children a natural religion which was based on reason. Certainly, this natural religion had suffered corruption in the course of time. Also, Satan had gained influence and diverted the natives from their original beliefs. But in

India, like elsewhere, it seemed worthwhile to make an effort at finding the remnants of this natural religion in order to free it from the overgrowth of later superstitions and use it as a platform on which to build the edifice of the Christian message and the doctrine of their church.[65] They knew for certain that what they saw was one of the hitherto unknown sects of heathendom, and whatever differences they could gradually detect within this sect were attributed to further splitting up into subsects. It never occurred to them that they might have to do with different faiths because their conceptual framework regarding the religions of this world had no room for any new creed other than the superstitious creed of the followers of Satan; and the apparent contradictions within this world-wide system of the heathen only confirmed their belief that Satan had created the baffling variety of superstitious cults precisely in order to confuse and enslave these poor, ill-guided people in the snares of delusion.

As late as the first quarter of the eighteenth century when Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg wrote his famous book on the Malabarian heathendom this was still the world-view of European missionaries—and this in spite of the fact that Ziegenbalg had evinced a keen interest in Indian religious texts and even advised his superiors to allow him to translate some of them because he believed there was more to be learnt from them than from the works of Aristotle. His superiors, on the contrary, thought he should concentrate on converting the heathen rather than on learning from them and locked away his work on the Malabar Indians. It was not published until 1926.[66]

However, the end of the eighteenth century saw a change in this state of affairs. Studies of Indian literature, Chinese literature, the customs of Red Indians, the South American Indians, and of tribes in Africa and in the Pacific made it necessary to acknowledge that there was more than one religion of the heathen. One of the decisive preconceived notions of all Christian missions broke down under the impact of expanding scholarship. Now, finally, the Indian heathen were considered to have a distinct religion of their own. That religion had to be given a name. The name originally used to denote it was 'Brahmanism', and from the 1820s onwards it was 'Hinduism' (originally spelt Hindooism). For a while, scholars used the two terms side by side in order to distinguish Vedic 'Brahmanism' from later 'Hinduism'. In the long run the term Hinduism triumphed.

Historical developments were specified by qualifications like 'Older', 'Younger', and 'Neo'-Hinduism. That this Hinduism was a culture or civilization rather than a religion, and that it contained several distinct religions within itself could not yet be perceived at the time.

It may be remembered at this point, that the Christian experience with other religions had been, through the centuries, one of militant antagonism. Their messiah was crucified on account of the hostile attitude of his own people, the Jews, and for centuries the Jews suffered persecution and social discrimination from the Christians in return. Death by torture was the fate of scores of Christians throughout the Roman empire, who died as martyrs for their faith; but after the Roman emperor Theodosius I had accepted Christianity as the state religion the Christians saw to it that other creeds were extinguished. Christian expansion into nothern Europe and into Latin and North America can be read as a story of subjugation, suppression and annihilation of local faiths. The Christian encounter with continuously expanding Islam was viewed as a nightmare from the time of the Muslim invasion of Spain in AD 711 to the end of the Ottoman empire in the last century.

Keeping in mind this antagonistic experience with regard to other religions and with cruel religious wars even between different Christian denominations, the Western observers of the Indian religious scene were unable to conceive of the possibility that the peaceful coexistence of the supposed sects of the Hindus could be, in reality, a coexistence of different religions. Never had they seen such religious coexistence and tolerance.

Other factors contributed to cement the initial misconception, the most important being simply the incompleteness and highly contingent character of the available information that had been picked up at various trading posts. At the end of the eighteenth century, for example, when even missionaries started accepting Indian religion as a separate entity, knowledge about this religion was still vague in Europe.[67] The Vedas had been discovered but, except for a limited number of hymns, their contents were not yet deciphered. Some upaniṣadic teachings in Persian translation roused interest, and the Bhagavadgītā was one of the first texts to be translated into English. Several purāṇic and epic stories had been reported. Also,

the *Manusmṛti* became known at an early period since the British made it a policy to administer justice in accordance with the indigenous *śāstra*. Among literary works, the *Śakuntalā* of Kālidāsa was accepted in Europe with great enthusiasm.[68] But the bulk of Indian religious literature including almost the entire literary production of the six systems of Indian philosophy, as well as all the Saṃhitās, Āgamas and Tantras containing the sacred scriptures of the Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Śāktas, and the rich religious poetry and philosophy of the *Bhakti* movements were as yet unknown.

Colonial administrators and traders had, indeed, not much to go by. Such was the state of affairs in the late eighteenth century.

Research in the nineteenth century was propelled by the enthusiasm with which the European romantic movement greeted the discovery of early Indo-European links in language, culture and race. Research concentrated on the Vedas and *Upaniṣads*, on Theravāda Buddhism, on major dramas of court poets like Kālidāsa, on the two great epics, on *Advaita Vedānta*, *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*, and on political and cultural history. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* had been translated, but being regarded as less ancient they were also considered less important. The scriptures of the major living Hindu religions and of Jainism and Indian Islam as well as the tribal religions remained largely unknown. Only in the twentieth century did they come to be studied seriously, and even today only a minor part of the relevant texts is accessible in translation in European languages.

These are some of the important cultural factors that made the Europeans think the way they did. They were led by their early concept of world religions and by their perception of Indian religion as a regional entity with some sectarian sub-divisions. Though they were wrong, their notions had a strong impact on the urban elite in India. It was a Christian missionary, J.N. Farquhar, who wrote the first extensive and widely read histories of Hindu religion.[69] The entire reconstruction of Indian political and cultural history through the decipherment of inscriptions, evaluation of literary sources, excavation of ancient monuments and preservation and study of Indian art, though done with the help of learned Indian paṇḍits, was inspired and decisively influenced by British and other European scholars and by a Western perspective. The results were taught in Indian schools and universities. And when, with the stirring nation-

alist impulse in India, the European idea of the 'nation' started influencing Indian historiography, it was again a Western concept that determined the selection of what was important in history. Generations of Indian intellectuals have thus grown up with a perception of their history and their culture which bore the imprint of a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western perspective.

Conclusion

I have skipped over the period of Islamic domination in India, but it would not be fair to leave it out of the picture completely, nor would it do justice to the complexity of the situation. The term Hindu itself is a Persian term. Used in the plural it denotes the people of Hind, the Indians, and in this sense it occurs in the inscriptions of Darius I and other rulers of ancient Persia from the sixth century BC onwards. It certainly goes to the credit of Persian scholars like Al-Biruni, Abū-l Qāsim, al-Masūdī, al-Idrīsī and Shahrastānī that they knew and distinguished different religions among the Hindus.[70] Administrators were less exact and by and large, they saw no need for such differentiation between Hindus for taxation purposes. The British adopted the term from administrators, not from the scholars.

On the other hand, to the Muslim ruling class, their Muslim descent and their region of origin remained highly important: it carried prestige and was therefore proudly retained as a self-designation. It was important—and still is—whether one could claim descent from the clan of the Prophet (Sayyid), or from the early Arabs in Sindh (Sheikh), or from Afghan (Pathan), Mughal, or Persian, immigrants or, lastly, whether one was a mere Indian convert. The titles and credentials of origin distinguished the immigrated Muslims (Ashraf) from the Indian converts to Islam and the social distance between these groups was such that intermarriage was, except for high nobility, in most cases out of question. For this Muslim ruling class, the Hindus remained a separate population and, in spite of all differentiation according to caste and status, they continued to form a distinct entity characterized by their indigenous Indian origin. Whether caste Hindus, outcastes, or tribals, they were all designated as Hindus. It was a sad mistake of the British when they adopted this term from the Persian administrators, to believe that it was a religious term.

All these events, however, did not produce one Hindu religion. But together with the aforementioned British perspective of Hinduism and the joint struggle for independence it contributed to the perception, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, of a unifying and politically viable factor in Hindu religion, a factor that could help in creating a 'nation'. Moreover, the legalization of Hindu customary law by the British administration also tended to strengthen a dharmic, or religious, foundation for a future Hindu 'nation'. In the early part of the twentieth century it was mainly the Vaiṣṇava community of North India which actively propagated its main religious tenets as 'essentials of Hinduism'. The North Indian Śaivas remained conspicuously silent. It was in the South where the Śaiva voice was more prominently heard. Today, again it is mainly the Vaiṣṇava community which lends itself to rousing religious emotions for political ends. The result is violence and communal conflict.

The only effort at real amalgamation of selected strands from the religious traditions of India came from other sources: from nineteenth-century religious reform movements like Brāhmo Samāj, Ārya Samāj, Prārthana Samāj and others, which were all eclectic in nature and vedāntic in their apologetics. These reform movements renewed and reaffirmed self-respect in Indian urban elites. Compared to the entire population they were relatively small in number; yet, as a highly articulate group, they effectively counteracted Christian missionary activities in major urban centres. However, they failed to attract the silent majority of rural India. Thus, in spite of centralizing efforts, plurality and diversity continue to be the dominant features of the Hindu religious scene. This is indeed its strength, its beauty and its richness.

Notes

1. von Stietencron (1988: 127–31) and (1989a: 11–27, particularly 12–13); Frykenberg (1989: 30–3). See also Smith (1964).
2. The first edition, prepared by K.M. Subrahmaṇyaśāstrī, has better text and notes based on the commentary of Aghoraśivācārya. The second edition appeared in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies No. 73 and is of inferior quality (compare Brunner-Lachaux 1963: xl).
3. Madame Brunner-Lachaux has spent many years on this work and the reader becomes a witness to her increasing competence as she proceeds from volume to volume. Part III, which is dealt with here, is a veritable

mine of information and whatever I have to say in the following pages is indebted to what she has achieved.

4. He was the abbot of Golaka-maṭha, a place not identified, but possibly identical with the Golakī-maṭha mentioned in South Indian inscriptions.

5. Śrī Īśāna, Vimaleśa and Astraśiva, who was his own teacher (*Soma-śambhūpaddhati* 1931: 297; Brunner-Lachaux 1963: xli).

6. *Kriyākramadyotikā* of Aghoraśivācārya, with the commentary of Nirmalamaṇi (1927).

7. Roughly estimated, between the ninth to the eighteenth centuries.

8. This text is also known as part of the *Niḥśvāsakārikā* (Brunner-Lachaux 1977, 540: note I).

9. For the *liṅga* of heterodox Śaivas, see pp. 35–6 and note 27.

10. The 'pure path' (*śuddhādhvan*) constitutes the five levels of existence above *māyā*. Since subtle matter with its three *guṇas* is an evolute of *māyā*, the question arose as to what kind of matter the upper levels could be composed of and from whom they evolved. The answers vary in the *dvaita* and *advaita* schools of Śaivism.

11. There are 36 *tattvas* which have to be conquered and crossed by the aspirant to *mokṣa* before Śiva is attained. By crossing 31 *tattvas*, the pure path can be reached and Śiva's grace can operate directly on the devotee. Interestingly, 25 *tattvas* is the maximum a non-Śaiva can ever hope to master.

12. Since *karma* is a product of *māyā* and operates in the 'impure path' only, its removal is achieved through the devotee's devotion, service, self-purification, and, above all, through the mediation of the *guru* who acts as an operational source for an influx of Śiva's grace (*śaktipāta*) into the world of living men. The removal of *mala*, on the other hand, is directly and exclusively dependent on Śiva's liberating action.

13. Śiva is free from *karma* and *mala*; so are the liberated souls. But *karma* and *mala* are eternal, and the number of eternal souls cannot be counted. The Śaiva system is, therefore, pluralistic in its ontology. To conceive it as monistic—as was the case in some schools both in Kashmir and elsewhere—requires a sophisticated argumentation and the modification of some basic premises.

14. There was a time when *śivaloka* was thought of as the highest of all possible worlds where the first principle of existence reigned supreme. But the consideration that like all the *tattvas* it must have been the product of a process of individuization soon required the addition of Parama Śiva: the one beyond and above all *tattvas* as well as beyond even the most subtle form of matter.

15. The *jīvanmukta* continues to live as long as required for the final consumption of karma-in-action in his physical organism.

16. *Vedāntajñāḥ*; the term can refer to 'those who know the Vedānta, i.e., the Vedāntins, or 'those who are fully versed in the Veda', 'who know the Veda to its end'. The latter is probably the case here. See note 23.

17. *buddhitattve sthitā bauddhā jainās tu guṇamastake* ।
vedāntajñās tu tadyonau puruṣe bhagavanmukhāḥ ॥ 7
pāśupatās tu māyāyāṃ vidyāyāṃ tu mahāvratāḥ ।
bauddhādiliṅginām eṣāṃ muktisthānāny anukramāt ॥ 8
(Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 553).

18. *cārvākāḥ kaulikāḥ jyotiḥśāstrajñāś caiva bhautikāḥ* Citation from *Pauṣkarāgama* (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 553).

19. *mantrārthasiddhāḥ smārtāś ca cakṣurādīndriyaṃ pare*. Quotation from *Pauṣkarāgama, ibid*. I have taken *mantrārthasiddhāḥ* as attribute to *smārtāḥ* but it can also be taken as denoting followers of the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā school. An alternative placement of these is in *prakṛti* (cf. note 23).

20. The sequence of the *tattvas* between the senses and *prakṛti* varies in different texts. For Somaśambhu and his commentator Aghoraśiva, the sequence is *manas, buddhi, ahaṃkāra*, the philosophical implication being that individuation and self-awareness (*ahaṃkāra*) precede the perception and reflection of objects in *buddhi*. Classical Sāṃkhya had arranged these *tattvas* in the order: *manas, ahaṃkāra, buddhi*; and the quotation from the *Pauṣkarāgama* seems to imply the sequence: *ahaṃkāra, manas, buddhi*. The citation from *Pauṣkarāgama* reads:
vaiśeṣikās tvahaṃkāre manaḥ sāmānyavādinaḥ ।
buddhitattve sthitā bauddhā guṇeṣv evārhatāḥ sthitāḥ ॥ (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 553).
manaḥ for *manasi* is *metri causa*. The second half of the verse is cited by Aghoraśiva in his *Dīpikā* to the *Mṛgendratantra* as quoted by Brunner-Lachaux (1977: 553, 7b).

21. *guṇeṣv evārhatāḥ sthitāḥ* (*ibidem*).

22. *Tattva* 24 is sometimes divided in two sections: the three *guṇas* (in action) and *prakṛti* (with the *guṇas* in a latent state).

23. See note 16. *Vedāntajñāḥ* has been taken by Madame Brunner-Lachaux to refer to Vedāntins like Śaṅkara. But the term is also a rather common designation for followers of the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā school. The Vedāntins, on the other hand, are normally associated with *puruṣatattva*. When Aghoraśiva, in his commentary to the *Mṛgendratantra* (*vidyāpada, para-mokṣanirāsapaṭala*, II), cites a verse where the *vedavid* is placed in *puruṣa* (*puṃsi*) he has the Vedāntin in mind (Brunner-Lachaux, 1977: 553, 7b).

24. *prākṛtāḥ pāñcarātrās te manvate prakṛtiṃ harim*. Cited according to *Pauṣkarāgama* by Brunner-Lachaux (1977: 553) (misprint: *manvante*).

25. *vedāntinaś ca sāṃkhyāś ca yoginaḥ puruṣe sthitāḥ* (*ibidem*).

26. It is *anīśvara yoga* which is referred to here.

27. Somaśambhu mentions the *liṅgins* in ascending order: this is why Madame Brunner-Lachaux (1977: 553f) thinks that *śuddhavidyā* (*tattva* 32) is to be understood here. On the other hand, it can be observed that all available lists of *liṅgins* in āgamic texts and commentaries refer only to groups of people who require the *liṅgoddhāra* rite for further spiritual advance. This would not apply to the Mahāvratas if they were really able to reach *śuddhavidyā* on their own because there they would be in the pure path and

within direct reach of Śiva's grace. The context and the whole purpose of the *liṅgoddhāra* rite, therefore, support the actual reading of the text: it is *vidyā tattva* (*tattva* 27) where the Mahāvratas are supposed to find their spiritual ascent blocked. This placement is also in agreement with the orthodox Śaiva tradition which treats the Mahāvratas (= Kāpālikas) with less respect than the Pāśupatas. The disturbance of the ascending order may be secondary (by transposition of two half-verses) or by negligence. A comparison of several lists shows that an ascending sequence is not always maintained and that inverted positions may be simply due to metrical reasons. Somaśambhu treats the Pāśupatas and the Mahāvratas as heretics beyond the pale of the legitimate Śaiva tradition. This is precisely why they, too, require the *liṅgoddhāra* rite.

28. In the *śivārcanāvidhiḥ* which forms the third section of the *paddhati*.
29. Note that he takes precisely those *tattvas* which a Buddhist can at best attain—if he works hard.
30. *Trirātram pañcarātram vā liṅginām upavāsinām |*
    prāyaścittaviśuddhānāṃ sthitānāṃ manutapād bahiḥ ‖ 9
    sampūjya paśubhartāraṃ vistareṇa yathā purā |
    amīṣāṃ deśikaḥ kuryāl liṅgoddhāravidhiṃ yathā ‖ 10
    buddhyādibhūmiparyantatattvavrātaṃ vibhāvasau |
    upasthāpya svasaṃjñābhir ekaikaṃ vā prapūjayet ‖ 11 (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 555).
31. The text has *śastrasya*; while the reading *śastra* for *astra* is common, the instrumental case would be preferable. In a corresponding passage of the *Sarvajñānottaratantra* as cited in the *Dīkṣādarśa* (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 555) the reading in *astrabījena*. The *astramantra* is a destructive power used here to destroy the merit which proves to be a hindrance because it was acquired while following the wrong path.
32. *bahiṣṭhānām athaiteṣāṃ nāḍīsandhānapūrvakam |*
    Kṛtvā tāḍanaviśleṣāvakarṣaṃ svātmani sthitam ‖ 12
    svāhāntena ca mūlena tad yogaṃ jātavedasi |
    iṣṭadevārcanāpuṇyaphaladhvaṃsāya homayet ‖ 13
    śastrasyāṣṭau sahasrāṇi liṅgaṃ liṅginam prati |
    pañca pañca ca mūlena pratitattvavimuktaye ‖ 14 (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 557).
33. The *pūrṇāhuti* or full oblation is described at length in section IV dealing with the fire ritual (*agnikāryavidhi*). See Brunner-Lachaux (1963: 262).
34. The signs of the vow (*vratāṅgāni*) consist of those outer marks which show the religious affiliation and status such as the matted hair (*jaṭā*), ashes on the forehead and body (*bhasman*), staff (*daṇḍa*), and loin-cloth (*kaupīna*) of the Śaiva ascetics, and of inner attitudes, notably, the self-control (*saṃyama*) which governs their behaviour. Similarly, the Buddhists, Jains, etc., have their distinctive appearance and behaviour.
35. As mentioned earlier, the passage describes the conversion of Buddhists. In this case it is the removal of the monastic vow which makes them return to their former status of householder.

36. *buddhyādibhyo dharāntebhyaḥ samuddhṛtya niyojayet |*
    pūrvajātau tadācāre tadyogasthitaye punaḥ ‖ 15
    pūrṇāntaṃ mūlamantreṇa yajed aṣṭottaraṃ śatam |
    tadvat toye vratāṅgāni kṣiptvā kuryad gṛhasthitān ‖ 16
    tcṣāṃ kurvīta vā dīkṣāṃ bhaktānām anukampayā |
    nyāyānānena sarvās tān liṅgino mocayed guruḥ ‖ 17 (Brunner-Lachaux 1977: 557-9)
37. The five *Brahmans* and their syllables are: Sadyogāta = *kṣaṃ*, Vāmadeva = *kṣiṃ*, Aghora = *kṣuṃ*, Tatpuruṣa = *kṣeṃ*, Īśāna = kṣoṃ. (In other contexts they are *haṃ*, *hiṃ*, *huṃ*, etc.).
38. *hṛdaya* = *kṣāṃ*, *śiras* = kṣīṃ, *śikhā* = *kṣūṃ*, *kavaca* = *kṣaiṃ*, *astra* = *kṣaḥ* (in other contexts, their syllables are *hāṃ*, *hīṃ*, *hūṃ*, etc.). The eye (*netra*), is omitted from this list which must correspond to the five *Brahmans*.
39. *Bhagavadgītā 9, 23-4ab:*
    ye 'py anyadevatābhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ |
    te 'pi mām eva kaunteya yajanty aviddhipūrvakam ‖
    aham hi sarvayajñānāṃ bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca |

    Bhagavadgītā 7, 21-2:
    yo yo yāṃ yāṃ tanuṃ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati
    tasya tasyācalāṃ śraddhāṃ tām eva vidadhāmy aham ‖
    sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārādhanam īhate |
    labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitan hi tān ‖
40. *Bhagavadgītā 9, 20-1; 24cd.*
41. *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) 12, 326, 20-43.
42. *Ibid.:* 12, 326, 31.
43. *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) 12, 326, 32-6.
44. *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) 12, 326, 37:
    tasmāt prasūto yaḥ kartā kāryaṃ kāraṇam eva ca |
    yasmāt sarvaṃ prabhavati jagat sthāvarasaṃgamam ‖
    so 'niruddhaḥ sa īśāno...
45. *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) 12, 326, 39cd: *pradyumnād yo 'niruddhas tu so 'haṃkāro maheśvaraḥ ‖*
46. The other four forms of Śiva in this period, represented in early Śaiva religious art by four faces on the *caturmukhaliṅga*, are Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora and Tatpuruṣa. For a discussion of the distribution of these on the *caturmukhaliṅga* and for further evolution of the concept and alternative names see Kreisel (1986: 65-73).
47. *Mahābhārata* (crit. ed.) 12, 328, 15-16.
48. See, e.g., *Kūrma Purāṇa* 1, 2, 93; *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* 45, 19; *Brahma Purāṇa* 130, 17-21. Cf. also Kālidāsa *Kumārasambhava* 7, 44; Jinadāsa *Sūyagada* 2, 125. For an equation of Śiva and Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa see, e.g., *Brahma Purāṇa* 56, 61-73; 206, 45-8.
49. They are 'gods from birth'. In Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* (*araṇyakāṇḍa* 5, 39-42) it is stated that the brahmin ascetic Śarabhaṅga who, after meeting Rāma, relinquishes his body to the fire and ascends in youthful form to *brahmaloka*, has to pass and leave behind several worlds: that of the forefathers

who used to keep the sacrificial fires, that of the *ṛṣis*, and that of the gods. The commentator Rāma explains in his *Tilaka* the world of the gods as 'the worlds of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra who are gods from birth, around which the polar star circulates' (*ājānadevānāṃ brahma-viṣṇu-rudrāṇāṃ ca lokāḥ yān dhruvaḥ pradakṣiṇaṃ karoti*). See *Rāmāyaṇa* ([1912–1920] 1983).

50. Hacker's term has provoked a lively discussion. His paper on inclusivism (Hacker 1983) should be read in conjunction with his earlier paper on tolerance and intolerance in Hinduism (Hacker 1957). Both Halbfass (1983) and Wezler (1983) have added critical observations to Hacker's use of the term. In particular, Wezler made it clear that inclusivism is a form of thinking which is not peculiar to Indian thought but can be found both in the West and in the Far East as well.

51. For processes of Hinduization of tribal cults, see Eschmann (1978a; 1978b) and von Stietencron (1983: 137–40).

52. A public dispute of this type (*śāstrārtha*) which gained much publicity was held in Benares, with the rājā presiding, on 16 November 1869. Dayānanda Sarasvatī, founder of the Ārya Samāj, had challenged the renowned *paṇḍits* of Benares, but suffered defeat. Another famous debate took place at Galta under the patronage of Rājā Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur around AD 1718.

53. It is in Vaikuṇṭha or Goloka for the Vaiṣṇavas, in Śivaloka for the Śaivas, in Maṇipurī for the Śaktas, and in Svarga for the Vedic tradition, to name only a few.

54. This applies also to the earlier travels of Marco Polo and others. The concept I am talking about was present in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and it was totally independent of any concrete knowledge about India. Rather, it was derived from an eschatological scenario as developed in early Christianity.

55. This, in fact, was a rediscovery and restatement of an earlier Greek position. It was Protagoras whose famous dictum 'man is the measure of all things: those that are that they are, and those that are not that they are not' had been opposed by Plato and others as introducing pure subjectivism. The reinterpretation of this dictum as affirmation of man's reason and creativity was one of the most consequential achievements of the Renaissance period.

56. The new theory was fully evolved by the astronomer Nikolaus Kopernikus 1473–1543.

57. The first shock had been the conquest of important parts of Spain by Arab armies in AD 711. The Cordoba califat became a centre of Muslim culture for many centuries. A Christian reconquista started in the ninth century and intensified in the eleventh century but was completed with the fall of Granada only as late as AD 1492.

58. See Klijn (1972).

59. See, e.g., McCrindle ([1901] 1971); ([1876] 1926); Majumdar (1960).

60. A survey of travellers to India from the fourth to the twentieth centuries, arranged in chronological order and nation-wise, is offered by Kaul (1979). See also Dharmpal (1987) and von Stietencron (1988: 125–6, 132).

61. Hobson-Jobson ([1903] 1963).
62. Marshall (1970).
63. v. Wurmb (1779).
64. While the term 'Hindoo' was current in English publications of the late eighteenth century, its derivation 'Hindooism' has not been traced, to my knowledge, prior to 1829, when, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Vol. H: 294), it occurs in the *Bengalee*: 45. I owe this reference to Frykenberg (1989, 43: note 7).
65. Rajamanickam (1972). The same author edited and translated two important Latin treatises of Roberto de Nobili.
66. Ziegenbalg (1926).
67. For a full treatment of the cultural response of Europe to India see Halbfass (1988). The best exposition of the progress made by Western Indology up to the beginning of the twentieth century, although in need of revision, is Windisch (1917). See also Kopf (1969). For a critical view of Western Orientalism see Said (1978); and, with less balanced judgment, Inden (1990).
68. Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones and Henry Colebrooke were pioneers in making Indian texts accessible to the West.
69. Farquhar (1912, 1920).
70. This has been shown by Lawrence (1976).

References

Ā'īn-i-Akbarī. [1871] 1965. By Abū 'L-Faẓl 'Allāmī. (Tr. H. Blochmann). (reprint). Delhi: Aadiesh Book Depot.

Alli, Athar M. 1985. *The Apparatus of Empire*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Badāonī, 'Abdu'l-Qādir. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*. 3 Vols. Cited in *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*. [1871] 1965. Delhi: Aadiesh Book Depot.

Brunner-Lachaux, Hélène. 1963. *Somaśambhupaddhati, première partie. Le rituel quotidien dans la tradition śivaite de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu. Traduction, Introduction et Notes*. Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie No. 25 II. Pondichéry: Inst. Français d'Indologie.

———. 1968. *Somaśambhupaddhati, deuxième partie. Rituels occasionnels dans la tradition śivaite de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu I Texte, Traduction, et Notes*. Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie No. 25 II. Pondichéry: Inst. Français d'Indologie.

———. 1977. *Somaśambhupaddhati, troisième partie. Rituels occasionnels dans la tradition śivaite de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu II Texte, Traduction, et Notes*. Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie No. 25 III. Pondichéry: Inst. Français d'Indologie.

Dharampal, Gita. 1987. Swischen Utopie und Empirie: Indien im Spiegel deutscher Reisebeschreibungen der frühen Neuzeit. *Utopie—Projektion—Gegenbild. Indien in Deutschland. Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 37, 3: 399–417.

Eschmann, Anncharlott. 1978a. Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa. In A. Eschamann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (Eds), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*. Delhi: Manohar, pp. 79–97.

———. 1978b. The Vaiṣṇava Typology of Hinduization and the Origin of Jagannātha. In A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (Eds), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*. Delhi: Manohar, pp. 99–117.

Farquhar, J.N. 1912. *A Primer of Hinduism* (rev. and enlarged 2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 1920. *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*. London: Oxford University Press.

Frykenberg, Robert Eric. 1989. The Emergence of Modern 'Hinduism' as a Concept and as an Institution: A Reappraisal with Special Reference to South India. In G.D. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (Eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*. Delhi: Manohar, pp. 29–49.

Hacker, Paul. 1957. Religiöse Toleranz und Intoleranz im Hinduismus. *Saeculum* 8: 167–79.

———. 1983. Inklusivismus. In Gerhard Oberhammer (Ed.), *Inklusivismus: Eine indische Denkform*. Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, pp. 11–28.

Halbfass, Wilhelm. 1983. 'Inklusivismus' und 'Toleranz' im Kontext der indisch-europäischen Begegnung. In Gerhard Oberhammer (Ed.), *Inklusivismus: Eine indische Denkform*. Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, pp. 29–60.

———. 1988. *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Hobson-Jobson. [1903] 1963. H. Yule and A.G. Burnell. *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms* (new ed. W. Crooke). (reprint Delhi). London.

Ikram, S.M. and A.T. Embree. 1964. *Muslim Civilization in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Inden, Ronald. 1990. *Imagining India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kaul, H.K. 1979. *Travellers' India: An Anthology*. Chosen and edited by H.K. Kaul. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Klun, A.F.J. 1972. *The Acts of Thomas*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Kopf, David. 1969. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*. Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay Publishers.

Kreisel, G. 1986. *Die Śiva-Bildwerke der Mathurā-Kunst: Ein Beitreg zur frühhinduistischen Ikonographie*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Krishnamurti, R. 1961. *Akbar, the Religious Aspect*. Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao University.

Kriyākramadyotikā. 1927. *Kriyākramadyotikā of Aghoraśivācārya, with the Commentary of Nirmalamaṇi*. Cidambaram.

Lawrence, Bruce B. 1976. *Shahrastānī on the Indian Religions*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton.

Majumdar, R.C. 1960. *The Classical Accounts of India*. Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay Publishers.

———. [1960] 1967. Hindu-Muslim Relations. In R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*. Vol. 6. *The Delhi Sultanate*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 615–39.

Marshall, Peter James (Ed.), 1970. *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCrindle, J.W. [1876] 1926. *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, London.

———. [1901] 1971. *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*. (reprint). Amsterdam: Philo Press.

Rajamanickam, S. 1972. *The First Oriental Scholar*. Tiruneveli: De Nobile Research Institute.

Rāmāyaṇa. [1912–1920] 1983. *Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmikī, with the Commentaries Tilaka of Rāma, Rāmāyaṇaśiromaṇi of Śivasahāya, and Bhūṣanā of Govindarāja*. (reprint Delhi). Bombay.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Sharma, Shri Ram. [1940] 1962. *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (2nd ed.). Calcutta.

Smith, William Cantwell. 1964. *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*. New York: Mentor.

Somaśambhupaddhati. 1931. (ed. K.M. Subrahmaṇyaśāstrī). Devakottai.

———. 1947. Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies No. 73. Śrīnagar.

Sontheimer, G.D. and H. Kulke (Eds), 1989. *Hinduism Reconsidered*. Delhi: Manohar.

von Stietencron, Heinrich. 1983. Die Göttin Durgā Mahiṣamardinī: Mythos, Darstellung und geschichtliche Rolle bei der Hinduisierung Indiens. *Visible Religion. Annual for Religious Iconography 2: Representations of Gods*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 118–66.

———. 1988. Voraussetzungen westlicher Hinduismusforschung und ihre Folgen. In Eberhard Müller (Ed.), "...*aus der annmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit*". *Tübinger Studien zum 18, Jahrhundert*. Tübingen: Attempto, pp. 123–53.

———. 1989a. Hinduism: On the Proper Use of a Deceptive Term. In G.D. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (Eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*. Delhi: Manohar, pp. 11–27.

———. 1989b. Geplanter Synkretismus: Kaiser Akbars Religionspolitik. In P. Antes and D. Pahnke (Eds), *Die Religion von Oberschichten*. Marburg: Diagonal-Verlag, pp. 53–72.

Wezler, Albrecht. 1983. Bemerkungen zum Inklusivismus-Begriff Paul Hackers. In Gerhard Oberhammer (Ed.), *Inklusivismus: Eine indische Denkform*. Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien. 61–91.

Windisch, Ernst. 1917. *Geschichte der Sanskritphilologie und indischen Altertumskunde, Erster Teil*. Grundriss der Indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde I, 1b. Strassburg: Trübner.

v. Wurmb. 1779. *Merkwürdigkeuen aus Ostindien, die Länder-Völker-und Kulturgeschichte betreffend*.

Ziegenbalg, Bartholomäus. 1926. *Ziegenbalg's Malabarisches Heidentum* (ed. W. Caland). Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wettenschappen.

'The Only Real Religion of the Hindus'

Vaiṣṇava Self-representation in the
Late Nineteenth Century[1]

Vasudha Dalmia

While we have increasingly come to recognize that what today goes by the name of 'Hinduism' essentially constituted itself as late as in the nineteenth century, there are several questions which remain to be answered in detail for, although there has been a general consensus that the Hindu reform movements responded to the challenge posed by the encounter with the West, the response of the more traditional formations has yet to be taken into account adequately. How, in fact, did the many stands of the religion, which were to be subsumed under the collective category *sanatana dharma* articulate their stand while rising to the task of presenting a cohesive front at the national level? What were the strategies evolved to contain and integrate the divergent streams, to name only the most prominent, the various Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva designations, all and any of which could claim dominant status within the fold of *sanatana dharma*? What were the changes that came about in this process of cohesion?

There were, in fact, many points of departure for the variant representations of Hinduism, as it was being articulated in the second half of the nineteenth century, each of which claimed equal validity. We can distinguish at least four groups, all of which interacted decisively with each other. There was, first, the missionary conceptualization of Hinduism, which by the mid-nineteenth century exercised immense influence, since it was closely allied with the power of the British colonial authorities. Second, there were the Hindu reformist versions, which responded to the missionary invective and which based their claim to authority on the direct access to what the individual groups respectively considered the original fountainheads of the religion. Third, there was the Orientalist narrative, which claimed to be disinterested and which had the authority of scientific verifiability to back it. And finally, negotiating its way through all these, there was the stand taken by those who claimed to represent the 'orthodox' brand of Hinduism, proclaiming its *sanatanatā*, its primeval, perennial character, as the validating instance.[2] Of course, neither of the four representations of Hinduism mentioned was in itself entirely homogeneous. Yet in retrospect, it is possible to see the common grounds of each of the groups as well as—and this is one of my central theses—the intricate interaction which took place between them.

The self-representation of the *sanatana* collective as the traditional core group of Hinduism which was left untouched by Western missionary conceptualizations, has, too easily been accepted at face value. Yet, what crystallized as the *sanatana* position at the end of the nineteenth century, was, in fact, part of a process of interaction with the discursive formations which challenged it (the missionary and the Hindu reformist) or with those, in which it sought and found support (the Orientalist explications). There could, obviously, be no such thing as a single *sanatana* position. In order to do justice to the various articulations which sought some kind of cohesion, there would be a need to conduct detailed regional studies which could together offer a survey of the situation on the subcontinent as a whole.[3] The articulation of the Vaiṣṇava position in Banaras, which evolved over a period of a decade and a half, seems to have had supra-regional significance for a variety of reasons. It emanated from the sacred city of Kāśī, which as the centre of sacral authority, continued to exercise immense influence. It coincided in important aspects with the findings of the Orientalists. This gave it an authorization to deploy even more effectively the strategies it had evolved in order to subsume other Hindu formations. The initial effort was to consolidate the Vaiṣṇava position—there had to be some kind of a consensus within, since the Vaiṣṇavas were themselves a heterogeneous lot—to seek an equation with 'Hinduism' at large, historically and theologically.

In this essay I make an attempt to trace, in as concrete detail as possible, the Vaiṣṇavas as represented by the followers of the

Puṣṭimārg in Banaras. The focus thereby will be on the stand articulated by Hariścandra (1850–1885), the city's primary literary figure, educa-tionist, publicist and patron of the arts, as speaking from within the ranks of the city's merchant establishment and as attached pro-minently to various public institutions. By the end of the eighteenth century, Banaras had established its position as one of the most important trading and banking centres in North India. Hariścandra belonged to the city's commercial aristocracy, the Naupaṭṭī Mahājans, bankers who rose to prominence in the troubled period before the final collapse of the Awadh navābī and the formal take-over of the province by the East India Company. They early negotiated an alliance with the British. Hariścandra himself was an honorary magistrate of the city, till his voluntary resignation. He was on terms of easy friendship with the Mahārājā and it is said that he contributed greatly to the expansion of the Rāmlīlā of Rāmnagar by devising the dialogues of the Līlā. He played a leading role in the cultural life of the city and there are accounts of the gathering of poets and of pandits which he organized. He was not only in contact with the local British officials and Orientalists, he also maintained relations with the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta, kept track of their publications and knew and corresponded with the Society's secretary, Rājendralāl Mitra, a venerable scholar and an ardent Vaiṣṇava. This was in addition to the societies and school he founded and the three journals he edited.[4]

One of the many roles which Hariścandra played, and which has not received the attention and documentation it deserves, was that of a leader with religious authority and affiliations. This only becomes apparent when attention is focused not only on the works collected in the Granthāvalīs, but also on the many news items, comments, reports and creative pieces from his journals. However, my attempt to reconstruct the process of articulating and formulating the new amalgamation of Vaiṣṇavatā into a Hinduism of subcontinental dimension will not be limited to an investigation of Hariścandra's personal development and insights alone. Rather, I will attempt to document and analyse the process of articulating a collective and popular stand as it took place in the interaction between a wide section of public voices and instances.

I will present a short account of the missionary conceptualization, since it did provide one essential grid for all socio-religious debates

in the nineteenth century, before going on to trace and reconstruct the three phases, as I have been able to isolate them, in the evolution of the Vaiṣṇava self-representation as the central strand of Hinduism. The first phase covers the activities of ostensibly traditional formations, the Puṣṭimārg Sampradāy and the Kāśī Dharma Sabhā, where the concern was with defending and defining the veda purāṇa vihit ārya dharma, the dharma of the Ārya as authorized by the canonical Vedas and Purāṇas. At the close of this phase there was the first expression of the need to present a united religious front to the British in the country. In the second phase, in an effort to respond adequately to the needs of the times, a new, more encompassing Vaiṣṇava association, the Tadīya Samāj, was established. The features which made for the cohesion of the Vaiṣṇava sampradāys were a new emphasis on monotheism and bhakti as the common devotional mode. In the meantime, a dialogue, however polemic in nature, was going on with the Ārya Samāj. Here, certain features which were considered essential to Hinduism as a whole, of which image worship is one central characteristic, were defined and defended. I will touch upon these briefly. In the third phase, bhakti as a devotional form common to all true Indian religiosity and monotheism as proper to it, crystallized and was represented as the essential feature not only of Vaiṣṇavism, but of pan-Indian Hinduism. Further, an effort was made to articulate and explicate the unbroken historical development of Vaiṣṇavatā, Vaiṣṇavism, as forming the core of it, from the most ancient times. At this stage, granting and even maintaining the differences, a certain parity was sought with Christianity and even with Islam. This was a process which took place in interaction with the Orientalists, though the features stressed and foregrounded in the Vaiṣṇava tradition were by no means derived from the Orientalists alone. Before going on to the third phase, then, I will delineate the Orientalist representation of Hinduism from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and the view that the Vaiṣṇavas were the central core.

CHRISTIAN PERCEPTIONS OF HINDUISM

There was, of course, a wide variety of Christian denominations at work on the subcontinent, but there was a certain common base of

self-perception which determined their view of Hinduism and Hindu schools of philosophy. Monotheism was one central article of Christianity and the propagators of the faith saw their own monopoly of monotheism as absolute:

The doctrine of the oneness of God and with that the rejection of the existence of any other absolute uncreated principle beside this one good God as the Creator of all reality different from Him, and as the Lord and partner of the Old Testament and New Testament's history of salvation, and as the heritage of the Old Testament and the express and fundamental confession of the New Testament, has also always been express and fundamental creed of the church from the Apostle's Creed...

Therefore monotheism in Christianity is the confession of the possibility and the reality of the direct encounter of the created being and the absolute God, as He is in Himself, that is, not taken a philosophical truism, but the formal anticipation (already in the Old Testament) of the Christian doctrines of revelation, grace, God's self-communication, in which the economic [externally active] Trinity of the manifestation of God is the disclosure and gift of the internal Trinity. Therefore monotheism remains fundamental to Christianity itself.[5]

It is obvious that the monotheism posited here stands in absolute polarity not only to polytheism, but also to pantheism (as against 'all reality that is different from Him') and monism (as mere philosophic knowledge of the Absolute). In the Indian case, it meant unconditional rejection of not only the many gods of Hinduism, as of course all forms of image worship, but it also meant that the monism of Śaṅkara and the concept of the impersonal brahman of Vedānta, were to be condemned outright as erroneous. As will be seen later, it was possible subsequently for at least a segment of Western Orientalists and missionaries to propose themselves that a very acceptable variety of monotheism had flourished in India, not only in vedic antiquity, but also in the most modern times. Yet, by and large, the Christian attitude remained unflinching in its rejection of the vast polytheistic excess of the Hindu error.

Though certain similarities with the religious thought of the Hindus were recognized by the missionaries, it was the differences which were considered decisive. Pantheistic belief, as encompassing all of the natural creation, was seen as leaving no space for morality. The creator as conceived of and realized in Christianity was ever active, ever wakeful, ever moral as against the all-encompassing

'anonymous godliness' of pantheistic-monistic Hinduism. Alexander Duff, one of the most militant representatives of the Christian faith on the subcontinent, delineated the situation as follows in his *India and India Missions, Including Sketches of the Gigantic System of Hinduism, Both in Theory and Practice* (1839):

Of all the systems of false religion ever fabricated by the ingenuity of fallen man, Hinduism is surely the most stupendous—whether we consider the boundless extent of its range, or the boundless multiplicity of its component parts. Of all systems of false religion it is that which seems to embody the largest amount and variety of semblances and counterfeits of divinely revealed facts and doctrines.... There is *omnipotence*; but bereft of creative energy, it is limited to the power of education and fabrication. There is *omniscience*; but it is restricted to the brief period of wakefulness, at the time of manifesting the universe. And so of other natural attributes. Instead of possessing *moral attributes*, the Supreme Spirit is represented as assuming, when he awakes, certain *generalised active qualities*, which admit of being predicated of *fire*, or *air*, or *water*, or any other *material* substance, as well as *spirit*! What a contrast to all this do the statements of the Bible exhibit! (204–5).

The Hindus, in their muddled groping for truth, also possessed the doctrine of incarnation. The god of Christianity could be seen to very nearly resemble the Hindu *avatāra*, yet this was the gigantic pitfall of near truth.

Further, idolatry or image worship was the other main bone of contention. It was not only the nature of the personal god of the Hindus, but also the visualization and worship of this god in a myriad fanciful forms which were severely castigated. The Hindu schools of philosophy were condemned as equally erroneous. The missionaries also repeatedly brought forward the historic verifiability of the incarnation of their god and the miracles he performed as against the vast mass of undateable, i.e., historically foundationless religious literature of the Hindus. Their ancient records were so interwoven with legend and fantasy, 'that the finest microscopic intellects of Europe, after patient and long-continued examination, have been well nigh baffled in the attempts to discover what is fiction and what is fact' (1868: 4), thus wrote the Revd. M.A. Sherring in the introduction to his well-known book on Banaras. Without any kind of evidence which made the respective schools historically locatable in any definite framework of thought, the philosophic speculation rampant in Hinduism could in no way measure up to the achievements of

European philosophy. Thus, both reason and historical evidence failed to make an appearance in Hindu thought and practice.

First Phase: Regional and Supra-Regional Institutional Affiliations: The Sampradāy and the Dharma Sabhā

In the early period, i.e., from 1869 onwards when Hariścandra first began to publish, there were no strategies to cope with the need to define the nature of the theological links of the individual sampradāys—or sects as they were increasingly called in the nineteenth century—with each other. The early writing of Hariścandra is expressive of the pious Vaiṣṇava going through the exercise of composing devotional verse to Kṛṣṇa in the traditionally prescribed mode specially favoured in the Puṣṭimārg sampradāy. At the same time there is the voice of the passionate young partisan defending the cause of sanātana dharma by participating in and steering the activities of the Kāśī Dharma Sabhā. It was possible to belong to a sampradāy which could be none other than sectarian, and thus by definition exclusive of other sects, without in any way defining how it was to be placed in the larger context of sanātana dharma. At the level of ācāra, social observance and ritual functions, all followers of sanātana dharma could recognize the authority of the Dharma Sabhā, an institution which claimed subcontinental influence. Ācāra could be recognized as one binding factor, yet in an age where rites and rituals were increasingly being questioned, it could not be overemphasized for rituals could also diverge and divide. What held the Hindus together at the theological level? In the theology of the Puṣṭimārg as developed by Vallabha and his followers, Hariścandra was later to find the seeds for an expansion which could claim to coincide at this level with the broad stream which was sanātana dharma.

Though Vallabhācārya himself had been situated in Banaras, as also his son Viṭṭhal for certain periods, the intervening centuries had seen little sampradāy activity. It was due entirely to the efforts and energy of the charismatic Girdharjī (1791–1840) that the Puṣṭimārg once again gained prestige in the area. The ritual and

community festivities of the newly expanded Gopāl mandir (1829), the temple of the sampradāy, which was situated in Chowkhamba, the recently cleared residential area of the Naupaṭṭī Mahājans, was to knit the community even more close together. Girdharjī was both an aesthete, who was thoroughly versed in the elaborate sevā ritual of the sampradāy, as well as a theologian of standing, who had contributed to the explication of the tenets of his tradition.

Vallabha's system was one which could be viewed both as purely monistic or as monotheistic, depending on the aspect chosen for emphasis. He propagated an advaita, a monism that claimed to be śuddha, purer than that of Śaṅkara himself. Vallabha's Śuddhādvaitavedānta taught that brahman was immanent and transcendent at the same time but that māyā was a power of brahman and thus identical with him. It was through this māyā or avidyā that brahman manifested himself as many and in diverse forms. The world was thus real, being a real manifestation of god. As the all-pervasive, as the controller of all qualities, brahman was both saguṇa and nirguṇa, that is, with and without attributes. Kṛṣṇa as saguṇa brahman was god in his primary and essential form (ādimūrti and mūlabhūta). He was not only the absolute, but also a personal manifestation.

The realization of god was not possible through the ordinary methods of perception but only by god's grace, which was the seed of bhakti or devotion. In the individual, this grace manifested itself as bhakti. Mokṣa or final emancipation could only be achieved through bhakti or firm and unflinching devotion to god. Though bhakti was sādhanā, or the means of accomplishment, and mokṣa the final goal, yet it was sādhanā which was considered the superior stage. Devotees, who had not attained the state of bliss which was brahman, but enjoyed god with all their senses, even if they were ordinary householders, were better than the jīvanmuktas or those who had achieved liberation during their lifespan on earth. Though Vallabha, on the one hand, expressly propagated advaita, monism, on the other, he just as expressly exalted the state of bhakti, where in fact the bhakta remained in a state of separation from his god, artificially maintaining a duality as it were, in order to enjoy the vicinity of the beloved.

Hariścandra's early poetic composition consists largely of devotional verse connected with the sampradāy. The earliest existing

compilation of *padas*, *Bhakta sarvasva*, published by the Medical Hall Press in 1870 describes and celebrates in detail the auspicious markings on the soles of the feet of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and Vallabha, with all the variations as handed down by the various traditions of the *sampradāy*. The *prastāvanā* records with due humility that the verse was composed for the delectation of Vaiṣṇavas, or those who were themselves coloured in the hue of love. The young poet pleads that the shortcomings of the composition should be tolerated, making due allowance for the restless stirrings of youth (*bāl-cāpalya*).[6] The next long compilation *Prem-mālikā* covers the broad spectrum of devotional poetry, as it is preserved and handed down in the classical verse of the *aṣṭachāp* poets, as well as in the Mārvārī tinged Brajbhāṣā verse of Mīrā. Hariścandra's verse remained affiliated to the tradition of the *sampradāy*, with which he continued to identify closely. This close affiliation at once linked him along with his family and community to the vast network of the *sampradāy*, the temples and the connected merchant communities in the Bombay Presidency, Bengal, the states of Rajputana and, of course, the Braj area.

Apart from the Puṣṭimārg, there was one other institution of note, with the activities of which Hariścandra was closely connected. In the years 1871 and 1872, when he was just launching out on the second year of his later renowned journal *Kavivacansudhā* (hereafter *KVS*),[7] there were frequent references to the various transactions of the Kāśī Dharma Sabhā. The precise constitution of the Sabhā does not seem to have been laid down definitively. Rather, it seems to have been an informally constituted body. Sahāy ([1905] 1975: 89) provides information indicating that it dealt with matters pertaining to *dharma*, whereby one primary concern, apart from organizing festivities, seems to have been the dispensation of *vyavasthās*, ordinances. Kāśī claimed to have enjoyed this special authority since time immemorial, and indeed, individual *paṇḍits* of standing had long been issuing *vyavasthās*. The authority apparently stemmed from the local reputation of the *paṇḍits* involved. The Mahārājā doubtlessly sought to give the whole a more organized structure. Through his patronage, he participated in the authority of the Sabhā and as far as it touched on his interests, he doubtlessly sought to steer its activities. Leading figures in the city were also included in its activity. Hariścandra was the *kāryasamapādak*, which could be described as

'executive secretary'. The head *paṇḍit* of the Mahārājā, Tārācaraṇ Tarkaratna, who was a *nyāyī*, was chief advisor on all occasions needing his kind of authority and intervention. In its efforts to promote *dharma*, the Sabhā also encouraged Sanskrit learning and held examinations. But the Sabhā was most of all concerned with matters pertaining to ritual and ritual status, which meant constant reference to the authority of the canonical texts. The assumption thereby was that *sanātana dharma* which was sought to be upheld, was a clearly definable entity, which could be governed by the rules and regulations devised by the Dharma Sabhā, which, in turn, referred to the corresponding ordinations in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. There are frequent reference to a *śruti-smṛti sammat dharma*, of a *dharma* in agreement with these, in the cause of the *vedadharmāvalambī*, those adhering to the *dharma* of the Vedas.[8] Whatever they ruled as valid, claimed authority for the length and breadth of the subcontinent, though often there were internal differences regarding the details of interpretation.

By and large in this first phase, the activities of the Sabhā were taken earnestly, for they defined and maintained the centre. They regulated issues and, when necessary, relegated to the margin, rather than totally negate, the groups concerned. They did not reject even the Brāhmos, who were themselves not defined as outside the pale of the canonical law, yet they pushed them to the periphery, in that their marriage form was not recognized. Later, the same was seen in relation to the Ārya Samāj. The Sabhā, however, was testimony to the fact that there was the postulate of a *sanātana dharma*, which encompassed the *sampradāys*.

What formed the centre, what were the forces which could be considered inimical to the formation as a whole? Hariścandra and his contemporaries were aware of the need for a religion which cohered internally, in the face of immense pressures from without. In an early editorial in English, 'Public Opinion in India' (*KVS* III, 14: 9 March 1872)[9] the writer deplores the fact that the Hindu religion is split into various groups. Now in the national cause, and this is a dimension which is constantly present, it is important to have one voice which can be raised against the colonial power, for public opinion is a powerful political tool. Much remains to be done, '...before we can have a public opinion in its true sense'. The writer lists the causes which prevent public opinion from being articulated

coherently. Apart from the inherent lack of confidence in present-day Hindus, it is the multifarious castes and creeds 'with their numerous forms of religion' which prevent a united stand, which alone can demand and expect a hearing from government.

Hence it is desirable that religion, which has gone to such a degree of corruption now, should be looked after with much care and concern by the Indians. Unless there be a general desire to shake off the trammels of superstition, the regeneration of India cannot be aimed at. Let the religion of India be *the* religion that can govern the millions of her subjects without any let or hindrance. Let the dark shadows of sectarianism be vanished by the rays of Western civilisation and let one and all of us combine together to look over national customs and habits from the Catholic point of view and let the unity be the basis of that grand super structure of national improvement which every civilised nation has in its possession.

What is going to bring about this unification, how are 'the dark shadows of sectarianism' going to be banished? Obviously an internal process of consolidation is called for, before there can be any question of national regeneration. There was, as yet, no radical formulation of the role of Vaiṣṇavas, though all the signs of the later articulation were already present, as we will shortly see.

SECOND PHASE: ASSIMILATIVE TENDENCIES AND MEASURES OF CONSOLIDATION

The founding of the Tadīya Samāj in 1873 was in many ways a momentous event. Hariścandra was unquestionably aware that the *sampradāy*, whatever its claims to the centrality of its teaching, could on the whole be designated as little more than a sect within the larger Vaiṣṇava tradition, which itself was but one strand, however overarching, within the vast body of Hinduism. With the establishment of the Samāj, there was an effort to consolidate the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*, and in a way which conformed to and met the needs of the present. Of all the data available for evaluating the work of the Samāj, there is first, a *pratijñā patra*, in the nature of a manifesto, undersigned by Hariścandra and dated Bhādra śukla II, saṃvat 1930 (1874), followed by a list of members,[10] and finally the manuscript of the minutes of the various meetings of the Samāj for the year 1874, preserved by Giriścandra Chaudharī in the family house at Chowkhamba.

The first two articles in the *pratijñā patra*, manifesto, stressed the monotheism[11] of the members, henceforth known as *tadīyas*. They would worship Śrīrādhāraman alone and even in the event of the greatest of calamities, would not seek the refuge of another. Their monotheism would not be led astray by the representation of the divinity as a pair. The next article specified, therefore, that the *tadīyas* would see no duality in the *yugalasvarūpa*, that is, in the divine pair, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Next, the question of the relationship to the other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys* was considered. Amongst the Vaiṣṇavas the *tadīyas* would observe no distinction of *jāti* (it is not clear whether caste in the narrower sense is meant or whether the difference amongst the *sampradāys* as such is referred to). Amongst the several *ācāryas* of the Vaiṣṇavas, they would sustain belief in one, their own *ācārya* respectively, though they would never censure or refute the rest. They would recognize the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgvatapurāṇa* as their *satyaśāstras*, truly authoritative works. Further, they would propagate the spread of pure *bhakti*. They would never commit any act which would lead to the disclosure of what should remain esoteric—a reference to the significance of the *rāsa* ritual, and certainly also suggesting the undesirability of the publicity which the Maharaja Libel Case received. Finally, a vow of solidarity. If any of the rules were broken, the concerned member would make a confession of it before the others and ask for forgiveness.

That there had always been a strong link between the various Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*, besides much borrowing, as, for instance, of the *bhakti rasa* aesthetic as developed by the Gaudīyas, was a fact which none would have disputed. However, it was the very closeness which necessitated the need to demarcate and emphasize the significance of the differences. Now it was the affiliation which was to be expressly reconfirmed. Not content with merely defining the contours alone, such as all newer formations, the Tadīya Samāj sought to extend its influence. There was to be proselytizing activity as well; though, as far as I have been able to ascertain, Hariścandra was never involved in active missionary work other than what he hoped to achieve by formulating a programme and by the publication and popularization of key texts. In doing so, he was to formulate a position which was to make a national synthesis of Hindu religions, at least theoretically, feasible.

The central function and role of Vaiṣṇavism was to be developed systematically in the translation and commentary of the *Bhakti sūtras*. This was to allow Hariścandra to maintain the position and tenets of his own *sampradāy* intact, within a fold which was expansive enough to include others. It is thus no coincidence that when he launched on the ambitious venture of a literary supplement to the *KVS*, the first issue of the literary journal, *Harischandra's Magazine* (August 1873) carried his translation and commentary to the *Śāṇḍilyabhaktisūtra*, which was rapidly being recognized as one of the major *bhakti* texts of this period.[12] It was yet another interpretation of the *sūtras* in the interest of the Puṣṭimārg doctrines, yet this was in itself classic practice.[13] What was new was the all-India character and significance attributed to them. In the dedication, *bhakti* was pitted expressly against the *advaita* monism of Śaṅkara, whereby the emphasis was not on the difference that Vallabha had with him on the score of the placing of *māyā* in his doctrine; this *māyāvād*, as it was called denigratingly, had been attacked often enough in the history of the *sampradāy*, it was *advaita* or monism as a whole, which was to be uprooted in the name of devotional love to a personal god. The philosophical approach at large and monism in particular were being shorn of legitimation. The *sūtras*, which were interpreted consistently to accord with the doctrine of the Puṣṭimārg, were being introduced to exclusively propagate the *prem mārg*, that is, the path of love.

A much more elaborate venture than the early treatment of the *Śāṇḍilyasūtra* was the translation and commentary of the *Nāradabhaktisūtra*.[14] The *upakrama* or preface needs to be considered in some detail, since Hariścandra used a most sophisticated vocabulary:

The *mūlagranthas*, canonical texts, of us Āryan people have not found propagation in *bhāṣā*, the language of the people. This is the reason why such disparity prevails all over the place. The greatness of the manifold gods and goddesses, seeing the evil of *brahmahatyā*, killing a brāhmaṇ, in the smallest misdeed and in the pettiest of deeds, the merit attached to performing the most massive sacrifice, the knowledge of *aham brahma* and the insistence on *upadharmas*, subsidiary dharmas, after having abandoned the *mūladharma*, original dharma, all these have led to the disappearance of the true *dharma* from Bhāratvarṣ. The people of this country have occupied themselves with disparate *dharmas* and turned away from the maker of the world, who has caused us to be born, given us the joys of the world, the knowledge of good and evil and shown

us his true way. If one had seen it as one's first duty to engage in rituals within the frame of *bhakti*, devotion, to him, then there would have been nothing to impede it [dharma]. Instead, subordinate ritual became primary and the primary concern became subordinate. Hence all Bhāratvarṣ turned against god and was torn asunder, which was the main cause of its downfall. Can a people or a country which has turned away from god prosper? [Our] *Dharma* has become so lifeless and so slender that simply touching it or even [throwing] a palmful of water [over it] can annihilate it...

In order to make the way of *dharma* prosper several *ek iśvarvādī ācāryas*, monotheist teachers, have propagated purified and unconstrained *dharmas* and several people have been initiated in these *mārgs*, ways. But even these people have become so engrossed in the external appendage of behaviour and thought, that their *dharma* is of no use at all. Either *iśvarvādīs*, theists, will be totally outcast from Hindu society or they will be so suppressed by *karmamārga*, the way of works or the ritual-way, that they will be *bhaktas* or devotees in name alone.

It is to remove this obstacle that this text was [first] caused to be revealed. Herein it has been freely proclaimed that only love is god's divine way. Though this text has been written in the mode of the Vaiṣṇavas, the enterprise is in the interest of all *bhaktas*, devotees, of god. Let the devotees of foreign dharmas such as the Christians regard Kṛṣṇa as their *nirguṇa*, attributeless, god; the Vaiṣṇavas of course are taken care of; the Śaivas should consider Viṣṇu as but one name of Śiva and the Brāhmos should regard Hari as but a variant designation of Brahma; the Upāsanā and Ārya should consider it their own *tattva*, essence and the Sikhs should see within it the path of their own guru, and similarly the people of the *Bhakti mārg* should view it as their very own wealth. If on account of this the sheer ritualists, polytheists and the vedantins should have occasion to curse me, I shall consider myself gratified.

...Love in an unconstrained, simple way the world into which the supreme lord has caused you to be born, the *jāti* or clan with which you are connected and the country in which you find yourself, and seek your highest father, highest guru, your most revered god and beloved by means of love alone. No other means exist.

I have cited this at length because unobtrusively as this happens, I think that here a very important process has been brought to an initial conclusion. Several strands, which had been evolving for some time, and not in Hariścandra's personal development alone, have been woven together here. The impressive part of the enterprise is that it comes from the pen of a devotee who has very strong ties with his own *sampradāy* and who continues to be rooted in the *bhakti* and *sevā* of his own community. He cannot be classed as alienated from his own culture and tradition, as disregarding or denigrating it, so that he should instead opt for transcendence. Yet, he manages to

achieve a level of abstraction in his thinking which allows for an inclusion of different religious communities. He posits *bhakti* as the original and all-pervasive religious mode of the country—a *bhakti* which was prevalent everywhere. He sees it as a unifying instance, but his mention of the several *ācāryas* later indicates that he does not seem to be viewing it as monolithic. He sees a process of decay, but he never suggests discontinuity. In spite of the fact that *bhakti* as a mode of worship was later to disintegrate into several paths, some of which finally veered away from *bhakti* and though this ultimately led to the general lack of an enlightened religion, which, in turn, was to lead to the slow disintegration of the country, it still possessed the potential to unify faith.

Apart from stressing the overarching importance of *bhakti* as the *mūladharma*, there is a new emphasis on monotheism. It is noteworthy that Hariścandra uses neologisms, *ek īśvarvādī* for monotheist, as also *bahubhaktas* for polytheists. The latter are regarded as diverging from the true path in any case and there is no place for them in the new scheme of things. That new phrases, which are obviously translations, are coined, points clearly to the fact that the dialogue is, though at a tangent, with the missionaries themselves, who never tired of pointing to the excesses of polytheism and the absolute superiority and invincibility of their own brand of monotheism. Their very terms are taken up and, in a sense, thrown back at them. The difference is that though devotional love to a personal god is also the centrally posited doctrine here, it continues to differ from the Christian variety, since the personal god does remain variable, there being no absolute fixation on Kṛṣṇa. In spite of the emphasis on Kṛṣṇa, he is in some sense replaceable, since those of other creeds are not asked to desert their gods but to realize that their god is none other than Kṛṣṇa. What is sought is equivalence with the recognition of other faiths. The purely emotional *bhakti*, the path of love, can claim parity with the Christian doctrine of love as well. Astonishing, however, is that by virtue of this parity it seems easy for the author to include the Brāhmos and the Āryas, who have no such emphasis on worship and attachment to a personal god, within his fold as well. At this stage, it further needs to be emphasized that there is no need to posit a *bhakti* movement, since the whole is viewed as a continuum, and since there was and always has been a

mūladharma, from which there have been grave divergences, but which has never completely receded. Both *nirguṇa sampradāys* such as the Sikh and *saguṇa* such as the Vaiṣṇavas themselves are included without any scruples into this fold. However, there is tradition underlying this, for the seventeenth century hagiographical compendium, the *Bhaktamāl* itself, had shown an equally syncretist trend in this respect.

The tone is unmistakably nationalist and patriotic, there is a clear reference to the *svadeśī* aspect, which validates one's own tradition as the only truly acceptable. The dimensions of this monotheistic *bhakti* are consciously larger than those ever posited before. The term *ārya* is all encompassing, as also Hindu, though the last interestingly enough, is used in a larger social context, in the combination *Hindū samāj*.

It is worth noting that it is the erotic Kṛṣṇa (as the commentary will further emphasize) who challenges and offers the comparison for all the other devotional figures, not the more distant and dignified figure of Viṣṇu. However, for Hariścandra, there can be no hesitation in invoking this Kṛṣṇa of the Braj countryside and the *gopīs*, since none can be more elevated. In the *samarpaṇ* or dedication, Hariścandra once again emphasizes *bhāva bhakti*. The language is ecstatic in the best tradition of *viraha*, the state of separation from the beloved which is so exalted in *bhakti* poetry. Lamenting the lack of communication with his lord, the writer is led to protest:

Pyāre, kyā isī daśā meṁ raheṁ? Nāth, kyā ve din ab durlabh ho jāeṁge? Hāy, un pavitra āsuoṁ se kyā ab hṛday siñcit nahiṁ hogā? (585).

(Beloved, shall we continue to remain in this state? Lord, will those days become rare to attain? O woe, will those pure tears not moisten your heart?)

Essentially, the commentary, apart from making the text accessible with a Hindi translation, which is after all the primary aim, serves to provide a good deal of information on the theology of the Puṣṭimārg to the uninitiated.[15]

However, for all this, though Hariścandra remains rooted, he does not remain confined to a consideration of his tradition alone. He seeks to find a central place for it in the larger Hindu tradition, where an important first step is the linkage with the other major Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*. 'Vaiṣṇava Sarvasva' is an important prose piece, which

narrates the origin and spread of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*. Begun in 1876,[16] it is part of the trend which has set in: that of consolidating the Vaiṣṇava stand, as well as to gradually prove that in relation to the other streams, it is the most powerful and the most authentic. The origins of the other streams are described and then explained and subordinated and thus discounted.[17] The second part or *uttarārdha*, published three years later, consists of lists of the *śiṣya paramparā* of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*. The text is important for it seeks to bring together the four *sampradāys* in such a way that they are strung into a narrative that includes and disqualifies the Buddhists, the Śaivas, the Vedāntins as springing from the latter, and the Jains as atheists to finally culminate in the four *ācāryas* who taught and spread the knowledge of devotional love. In a lyrical, mythological vein, without undue polemics, there is then both an ordering of tradition as well as a consolidation. George Grierson was to cite the text later, in order to affirm this very solidarity of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys* and their predominance in the religion of the Hindus.[18]

As a first step, then, there was an effort to consolidate the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys* themselves and to give them a new direction, in that social reform was henceforth to be regarded as a part of the Vaiṣṇava agenda as well. This took place from the mid-1870s onwards in a consolidated form, as it was represented by the activities and publications of the newly formed Tadīya. Later, there was some effort, as developed in 'Vaiṣṇava sarvasva', to locate this Vaiṣṇavism centrally in the broader stream of Hindu religions and philosophy and to order and place the other traditions in relation to it. Further, there was a new emphasis on monotheism, for which the term *ek iśvarvād*, obviously a new coinage, was used. Thus, there was an emphasis on Kṛṣṇa as the personal god to be worshipped but no exclusive claim was made for the sole and absolute legitimacy of Kṛṣṇa worship. Equivalents were sought with other sects and religions, including the Christian and the newer Hindu formations. However, the different religious formations were not asked to abandon their gods, rather they were to be seen as but other forms of Kṛṣṇa. Further, this worship was to consist of *bhakti*, an emotional devotion, which needed no philosophical argument to uphold it. *Bhakti* was to remain entirely a matter of faith and it was Kṛṣṇa, so

derided by the missionaries for his excesses, for his sport, for his wanton childhood and youth, who was centrally reinstated as the deity fittest to receive the love and worship of his devotees.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF VAIṢṆAVISM AND THE BHAKTI MĀRGA AS THE ONLY REAL RELIGION OF THE HINDUS: THE ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE

The stand of Hariścandra and his contemporaries concerning the centrality of the Vaiṣṇava tradition in their conception of Hindu *dharma* and the increasing emphasis on *bhakti* as a transcendent category (which stood in some contradiction to the elaborate ritual of the *sampradāy* to which Hariścandra pledged such fervent allegiance since early youth) was by no means an isolated effort to legitimize their own local and regional position. Their views coincided with a dominant stream of thought and research, as it was crystallizing in Western Indology in the second half of the nineteenth century, so that the two mutually confirmed each other and, to some extent, even expressly sought mutual legitimation, though admittedly with variations and some inevitable contradictions.

The developments in Indological research and thought, which sought for similarity with the Christian West, had its antecedents in the eighteenth century beginnings of Indology as a discipline which was founded upon the belief in the common ancestorship of the Indo-Germanic or, more neutrally, Indo-European peoples. Obviously, it stood in direct contradiction to the missionary stand, which was concerned with establishing difference, while emphasizing otherness, in order to legitimize the need for proselytization. However, mid-nineteenth century Indologists, both German and British, joined by a new variety of dedicated British civil servants such as Grierson and Growse, who had the scholarship as well as the practical experience of and sympathy for the country, could similarly remain loyal to the Christian cause, in that they used the similarities that they posited, as a very sound basis for hollowing out the Hindu resistance to Christianity. The Orientalist representation of Hinduism, which with some adaptations was accepted by Indian scholars such as Rājendralāl Mitra and R.G. Bhandarkar, had far-reaching

consequences for the Hindu self-perception at large. In order to understand and estimate the unfolding of what I have called the third phase in the thinking and writing of Hariścandra, it will be necessary to follow the parallel developments in Western Indology at some length.

The identification of Viṣṇu as a primary and central deity of the Hindu pantheon goes at least as far back as Friedrich Schlegel, who in his *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808) identified him with the sun, which was monotheistically worshipped by the Vedic tribes, clans not yet designated by Schlegel as Āryans. Schlegel held this worship to be an anticipation of Christian revelation. The thesis that there was a kind of Vedic ur-monotheism, was later taken up and elaborated by Max Mueller, who built it into his fully-fledged conceptualization of the Āryans as the people destined by history to conquer and rule the world.[19] This is the line of thought to which Rājendralāl Mitra contributed as well, albeit from an Indian perspective, which glossed over the indignities reserved for the subsequent development of the Āryan race on the Indian subcontinent in the Western understanding of the process.

It was Albrecht Weber, however, who from the mid-nineteenth century onwards devoted his research to establishing the specific connection between the pastoral child god Kṛṣṇa and Christ. Apart from the similarity of the nativity myth, which in the case of Kṛṣṇa he proved to be a later addition to the purāṇic narrative and thus a clear borrowing from the Christian, he proposed that the *śvetadvīpa* episode in the *Mahābhārata* be read as the Indian discovery of the mode of worship of the personal god peculiar to Christianity (1857, 1868). These findings were made available to the English reading public in India in the pages of *The Indian Antiquary* from the 1870s onwards (1874). It was here that the English translation of the preface to F. Lorinser's German translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* appeared. Lorinser cited Lassen as evidence for what he now took as proven, that the *Bhagavadgītā* was composed in the third century after Christ. He then went on to show the parallels to Christian thought, the 'strong infusion of ideas and sayings taken over from Christianity' (1873: 283) by juxtaposing passages from the *Bhagavadgītā* to those he considered as corresponding in the Christian Gospel. He was obviously inspired by Weber, whom he quoted frequently. The

Bhagavadgītā was identified as a Vaiṣṇava text, proclaiming the Vaiṣṇava doctrine of *bhakti*, and seeing the hero Kṛṣṇa as an incarnation of the supreme deity, Viṣṇu.

Growse in his *Mathura, A District Memoir* (1882) expressly drew attention to the similarities between the doctrine and practice of the sect of the Vallabhācāryas and that of the Christians, thereby at least implicitly allowing that Christianity did not utterly do away with rites and rituals, which the missionaries so decried in other religions:

A child is Krishna-ed (christened) while still an infant by the Gosāin's putting on its neck a string of beads and repeating over it the formula called the Ashtākshar Mantra, sri Krishna saranam mam (deus adjutorium meum), but before the neophyte can claim the privilege of full communion, he has to undergo a rite similar to that of the confirmation, and at the age of twelve or thereabouts, when ready to take upon himself the responsibilities of life, he dedicates his career by a solemn dedication (samarpana) of all that he has and is to the God of his devotion... (286).

Growse went on to develop the thesis that the consecration to god of the body, soul and substance, as also of thought, word and deed was sufficient to hallow the smallest action in life and was at the same time the most effective way of preservation from all evil; 'this is the doctrine of Christianity, and it may be deduced from Vallabhācārya's revelation without forcing the sense out of a single word' (287).

With the *Bhagavadgītā* classified as a Vaiṣṇava text, with the warrior-hero Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata* integrated into the composite figure of the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa personal god, with the later *Purāṇas* finding acceptance as elaborating upon the myth as influenced by Christianity at various stages, with the doctrine and practice of the later Vaiṣṇava schools such as that of the Vallabhācāryas being expressly identified with that of the Christians, it was left to Monier-Williams to piece together the evidence which was being offered by individual scholars into a grand narrative of the Vaiṣṇava religion as a continuum which stretched from the Vedas to the present. This summation could be considered historically sound, authorized as it was by a fully-fledged philologist with knowledge and insights into the various strata of textual tradition. Not all of this was Orientalist reading, much of it was part of the Vaiṣṇava tradition itself. However, the peculiar formulation that it acquired was very much a part of the Orientalist enterprise. Beginning with Monier-Williams' contributions, the

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society became the forum for this discourse. In an essay (1881) which dealt with modern theistic reformers in India such as Ram Mohan Roy, Monier-Williams proclaimed his belief that monotheism had been known in India since the Vedas, and that even the most pronounced forms of pantheism in the country rested on the fundamental doctrine of god's unity. This thesis was to find a clearer enunciation and a more elaborate formulation a year later in an essay devoted entirely to the Vaiṣṇava religion (1882). The only designation, which the Hindus themselves recognized, was *ārya dharma*, which Monier-Williams translated as the āryan system, the term *dharma* comprising religion, law, caste and usages of all kinds. He saw four different phases in the development of this religion: Vedism, Brāhmanism, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The first, the earliest form of Āryan religion, was the worship of the deified forces of phenomena of nature. Brāhmanism grew out of Vedism. 'It taught the merging of all the forces of nature in one universal spiritual Being—the only real entity—which, when unmanifested and impersonal, was called Brahma (neuter)...' (291). This system had two main phases: the ritualistic and the philosophical. Though Buddhism intervened, there was a resurgence of Brāhmanism subsequently. The great medieval reviver of ritualistic Brāhmanism was Kumārila, and of philosophical Brāhmanism, Śaṅkara. For the present, Monier-Williams considered Brāhmanism to be rather a philosophy than a religion, since its root dogma was the belief in one infinite all-pervading impersonal spirit, supposed to underlie everything in the universe. The great mass of Hindu thinkers were then practically pantheists, but they confined themselves to believing in one impersonal spirit, who, by association with illusion, became one supreme personal god (Parameśvara). Śaivism grew out of Brāhmanism. Śiva was all to his worshippers, the one personal god and the one impersonal spirit at the same time. The figure of Śiva, growing out of the Vedic gods Rudra and the Maruts, personified the dreadful natural forces of destruction and the mighty forces of fertilization, of self-mortification and penance, of learning and meditation but also of the occult power of magic. This formulation allowed Monier-Williams, on the one hand, to view Śaivism as a monistic philosophy and, on the other, not as a religion and certainly not as monotheism, since though consisting of the worship of one

deity, it was not worship of a benevolent personal god. It was, in practice, demonolatry and mother-worship, inspired by the fear and dread of the forces of dissolution (292–3). It was only the socially degraded who worshipped Śiva, and they were in any case few in number. Śaivism, Monier-Williams came to the rather tendentious conclusion, was 'too severe and cold a system to exert exclusive influence over the generality of minds' (295).

Vaiṣṇavism grew out of Śaivism. In fact, Vaiṣṇavism was a necessary consequence of Śaivism. It was a turning away from its pantheism, from its philosophical dualism, from its demonolatry and mother-worship. It was a merging of Brahmā and Śiva in the god Viṣṇu—who was originally a personification of the sun. Who could

doubt that a more genial, human and humane god was needed, a god who could satisfy the yearnings of the heart for a religion of faith and love, rather than of knowledge and works? Such a God was Viṣṇu. The God who evinced his sympathy with mundane suffering, his interest in human affairs, and his activity for the welfare of all created things in his frequent descents (avatāra) on earth, not only in the form of men, but of animals and even plants and stones... It is the only real religion of the Hindūs (295).

Vaiṣṇavism alone possessed all of the

elements of a genuine religion. For there can be no true religion without personal devotion to a personal God—without trust in Him—without love for Him... it could accommodate itself to other creeds and appropriate to itself the religious ideas of other systems... It could look with sympathising condescension on Christianity itself, and hold it to be a development of its own theory of religion suited to Europeans (296).

And it was worth noting that Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were both kṣatriyas—both were kings and heroes. Thus, they were proper objects of worship for the warrior race of Āryans.

It was left to Grierson, however, to formulate the theory of *bhakti* as the overarching principle which encompassed the most diverse streams, as, in fact, the 'religious system current over a large portion of India' (1907: 311) and further, to posit a *bhakti* movement in medieval India, unitary in character, which carried the message of love to all the corners of the subcontinent and to see it as the gift of Christianity. His thesis—which for lack of concrete evidence could only remain diffuse, though it was maintained all the more vehemently for that— was that the Syrian Nestorian Christians, who had maintained a

flourishing community in India from the third century onwards, had over a period of time introduced to the inhabitants of the country the concept which the Indians termed '*bhakti*'.[20] Hinduism had consisted originally of two concurrent aspects: first, a Vedāntic belief in a passionless, impersonal supreme deity from whom souls were kept apart by ignorance; and second, a belief in numerous subordinate gods and demons. In both ways, the ultimate release came only by knowing oneself and knowing god. Even Viṣṇu, in spite of his incarnations, was an impersonal god (313).

Suddenly like a flash of lightening there came upon all this darkness a new idea. No Hindū knows where it came from, and none can date its appearance; but all the official writings which describe it and which can be dated with certainty, were written long after the Christian era. This new idea was that of *bhakti*. Religion was now no longer a matter of knowledge. It became a matter of emotion. It now satisfied the human craving for a supreme *personality*, to whom prayer and adoration could be addressed; in as much as *bhakti*, which may be translated by 'faith' or 'devotion', requires a personal, not an impersonal, God... (313–14).

The first works dealing with *bhakti* were written in Sanskrit so that European scholars were, therefore, to a certain extent familiar with its theory. Grierson saw in the *Śāṇḍilyasūtra* a direct transmission, albeit coloured by current Indian philosophical theories, of the Christian doctrine of faith. It was a doctrine which revolutionized Hindu religion. He viewed Rāmānuja and Viṣṇusvāmī as the founders of the modern Bhakti mārg, but it was Rāmānanda whom Grierson saw as the revolutionary proponent of the doctrine of *bhakti*. This, in fact, was Grierson's main contribution to the grand narrative of Vaiṣṇava monotheistic worship as it had apparently evolved from the earliest times into the very present: he emphasized the importance of *bhāṣā* literature in its formation, his assumption thereby being that it was, like Christianity, a religion of the people. There were many other similarities. All castes were admitted to the communion Rāmānanda dispensed, he also had 12 apostles. Grierson relied, as the chief source for his information, on the seventeenth century hagiographical text in Brajbhāṣā, the *Bhaktamāl*, which in its own attempt to encompass *bhaktas* of the most different shades and hues, cast a net wide enough to include all the popularly known saints and poets.[21]

In his appendix, listing the titles of the works consulted, Grierson mentioned, apart from Śāṇḍilya's *Bhaktisūtra*, and the Braj hagiographies, the works of the late Hariścandra of Banares, as he had found them in the collected edition of his works (*Hariścandrakalā* 1897).[22]

In his article on the 'Bhakti mārga' in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (1909) Grierson formulated his last authoritative stand on the historical development of Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*, as reflected in the many articles he himself had written over the years and as certainly enriched and modified by successive research and the need to integrate all this. It was no longer a conglomerate but a well-defined way, which, for all its modernity, could be traced back to antiquity.

Grierson saw the four chief *sampradāys* of the Vaisnavas as the four churches of the reformation. It had, as he emphasized, been specifically stated by Bhagavata writers, that they formed one church, and that the differences wee only apparent. This church had suffered much persecution. It was said to have been extirpated by the Jains and to have been resuscitated by a certain Nivasa. For both the last statements Grierson mentioned in his notes as evidence the 'Vaisnava Sarvasva' by Hariścandra, whom he described as a Bhagavata writer. Grierson admitted that regarding true Siva *bhakti*, which was professedly a cult of Siva or his incarnations, very little was known, and the subject deserved more attention than it had hitherto received. Whether finally Vaiṣṇavism was designated as monotheism, or with regard to the philosophy informing it, as monism; whether Hinduism as a while was to be seen as dominated by Vaiṣṇava monotheism or be described as rank polytheism, the designation finally favoured seemed to be a matter of ideological choice and intent.

THIRD PHASE: VAIṢṆAVISM AS THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS, COEQUAL WITH CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD RELIGIONS

In 'Īsū Khṛṣṭa aur Īśa Kṛṣṇa' which was first published in *Hariścandracandrikā* in January 1879,[23] the East-West equivalences were dealt with in some detail. The essay remained incomplete, since

only the part leading up to the title theme was published. However, the context in which it was conceived, betrays the general tenor and little doubt remains as to the thesis Hariścandra would have proposed. He takes recourse to the lines of one of his own poems, 'Bhārat Bhiksā' (2, 8–12: May–September 1875), as the opening general maxim: *'bhārat bhuj bal lahi jag racchit, bhārat sicchā lahi jag sicchit'* (the world found protection in that it took strength from the arm strength of Bhārat, it received education in that it took instruction from Bhārat). Though the present lot of the country was bemoaned in the poem,[24] *Bhārat Janani* (Mother India), who spoke these lines, remembered other times, when Indian kings ruled the earth and when India led the world spirituality. All branches of knowledge came originally from India. This dictum was to be applied to all the major themes. The first assertion that the writer then made was that *samāj ki unnati kā mūl dharma hai—dharma* lies at the root of societal progress. The missionaries had claimed that it was the religion of the Hindu which was responsible for the poverty, corruption and decay of the country. Hariścandra maintained that since it was at the root of all activity, he was going to abandon other topics, to proclaim in all freedom that the religious teachers the world over had constructed their respective gods, deities, religious books, ethics and their very character in the reflection of Bhāratvarṣ. All religions which were and are in vogue had followed either the Vedic or the Buddhist example.

In his essay, Hariścandra discussed the different myths of genesis, which he saw as borrowed in their entirety from Manu. Then there was the legend of Josaphat, which was but the tale of the Bodhisattva, which on its way to the West had changed its apparel. Even the concept of the transmigration of souls was something that the Greek philosophers had learnt from India. The similarity of the deities of the Hindu pantheon, their characteristic features and iconography, with those of the Greek and Romans pointed clearly to a borrowing by the West; thus Durgā–Minerva, Krṣna–Apollo in their common descent from the sun, and Indra–Jupiter. Hariścandra was obviously paving the way for the grand discussion of the Krṣna–Christ theme. It was obvious that he was going to turn the tables on Albrecht Weber and those who followed in his footsteps. Since no doubt was left about the links between the figure of Christ and Krṣna, it was a

question of perspective, as to who was to be seen as inspired by whom. Indian Orientalists, such as Bhandarkar (1874), disputed particular assertions, and furnished proof of the existence of the figure of the pastoral Krṣna prior to Christianity, but for whatever reason, they never set out to systematically refute the whole body of evidence regarding the Christian origin of the Krṣna *bhakti* cult as constructed by Weber and succeeding Orientalists. However, popular writers such as Hariścandra, who nevertheless had a claim to scholarly authority, were to have no scruples in maintaining the reverse. Christ himself, as Hariścandra was about to declare, judged by the tenor of the preceding pronouncements, was a figure inspired by the teaching of the East. What consternation and indignation such an assertion would have caused can only be imagined, since Hariścandra did not proceed to elaborate upon the theme. Grierson, however, had no compunctions in once again reversing the direction of the influence posited, by citing this very essay of Hariścandra's to serve his own purpose.

In 'Vaiṣṇavatā aur Bharatvarṣa' (*Granthāvalī* III: 789–802) published in the last year of his life, in 1884, Hariścandra made an ambitious attempt to gather and weave together the diverse threads which went into the making of Vaiṣṇavism and present them as an intrinsically coherent historical continuum. Thereby, his main concern was to demonstrate that Vaiṣṇavism was not only the central core of Hinduism,[25] but also in its teaching and practice, it held the most promise for the future development of the country, since it could ever purify and regenerate itself. In its social aspects, he maintained, it had always accommodated change.

He began his exposition with the proclamation that India's oldest faith was Vaiṣṇavism. The Āryan people were the first to embrace civilization and they were the *dīkṣāguru*, the initiating preceptors, of the world in *dharma* and in *nīti*, state polity. At that time, the Āryans perceived the sun to be the most beneficial and life-generating of the elements of nature, therefore they first worshipped him as Sūrya-Nārāyana and knew just this one god. *Isīse āryoṁ meṁ sabse prācīn ek hī devatā the aur isī se us kāl ke bhī ārya vaiṣṇav the* (789). (Therefore, in the most ancient period, the Āryans had just one god and all the Āryans of this period were Vaiṣṇavas). This is the original monotheism of the Āryans.[26] Mueller had spoken of this as the natural

(as against revealed) religion of the people, which spontaneously responded to the one power which was felt to be manifested in nature.[27] Hariścandra was to take over the term in translation, this sun-Viṣṇu worship was the *prakṛt mat* of the country.

He first deals with Viṣṇu's claim to supremacy as against Rudra's. European Orientalists view Rudra as a non-Āryan or Tamilian deity, for which they put forth eight reasons. Though Mueller's *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859) is often invoked as testimony, the main source for the historical information was Rājendralāl Mitra's *The Antiquities of Orissa* (1875).

Hariścandra concern was to demonstrate the continuity of the *prakṛt mat*, the natural religion through all the pre-historical and historical epochs. He concentrated on the Vaiṣṇavas alone. The Āryans had known Viṣṇu in their original abode in Central Asia, before parting ways with the Iranians. Rājendralāl Mitra had divided the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism into five stages, which Hariścandra similarly classified as follows:

1. *The Age of Vedas.* There are many hymns to Viṣṇu in the *Rgveda.* He has no special sovereignty over any of the elements. However, Durgācārya, in his comment on the *Nirukta*, has identified Viṣṇu with Āditya (the sun), which has also been accepted by later tradition.
2. *The Age of the Brāhmaṇas.* Viṣṇu ceases to be associated with the sun and appears as a distinct god with a definite personality. He becomes a member of a new theogony and assumes a different role.
3. *The Age of Pāṇini.* The knowledge of the Kṛṣṇa incarnation, his worship and *bhakti* become widespread. In fact, they antedate Pāṇini. Hariścandra simply maintains that though ritual forms changed, in the last event *bhakti* was considered the best of all forms of ritual worship, *ant meṃ sab pūjan ādi se us kī bhakti śreṣṭha māni gayī* (794).
4. *The Age of the Purāṇas.* Even though Vaiṣṇavism remains primary, a host of other connected faiths emerge. However, even in the Śākta and Śaiva Purāṇas, the deities worshipped could not be entirely separated from Viṣṇu. The 2,000 year old images of the incarnations of Viṣṇu were found to be installed

by the Bhāgavatas or Vaiṣṇavas. So instead of disputing the antiquity or modernity of these, it would be well to consider the causes of the change.
5. *The Present Age*, which is heir to these developments. Hariścandra does not elaborate further, though Mitra had discussed the formation of the modern Vaiṣṇava *sampradāys*.

Thus, in India, the orientation provided by the Vaiṣṇava faith was the most spontaneous and natural one (*prakṛt mat*) just as all over the world, devotion is the primary path, for instance, in the Christian, Muslim, Brāhmo and Buddhist faiths. Though also devotional, Buddhism in emphasizing asceticism, penance and the performance of meritorious deeds is much more akin to the *smārta* tradition within Vaiṣṇavism. The deeds (*caritra*) of Jesus are much like Kṛṣṇa's, as has been dealt with at length in a separate treatise, and the Christian gospel has borrowed largely from the life of Kṛṣṇa. If we have shown the Christian faith to have followed the Vaiṣṇavas, Hariścandra maintains, then Islam in following Christianity has also followed the Vaiṣṇavas. Hariścandra's universalism does not seek to absorb all other pos-sibilities. Though Vaiṣṇavatā was the first in the field, as it were, he primarily postulates the correspondences which finally make the variations in the names of the supreme god of the respective faiths irrelevant.

In the concluding paragraph, having arrived at contemporary social issues, Hariścandra has no compunction in shifting from a discussion of the *Vaiṣṇava* faith to the *Hindu* faith. It has been explained at length, the author maintains, on what firm foundation the *Vaiṣṇava mat* is established and how generous its proportions are. It is important to remain grounded in this knowledge. All those who bear the name of Hindu, whatever their internal differences, must unite, so that *ārya jāti meṃ ekā ho*, there be unity in the Ārya race/people/ nation, dropping thereby all the denominations with which they designate their faith in order to participate in the progress of the *prakṛt mat*, natural religion. Here, Vaiṣṇavism is once again reinforced without being explicitly named, for he has variously proved that it is the *prakṛt mat* of the country.

The categories he employs have more or less clear functions: Āryans, whenever the ancient heritage is invoked, Hindus as

descendants of these and reared on Hindu milk—a principally all-inclusive cultural-political category[28]—and finally, within the diversity of faiths, which proliferated on Indian soil, and as forming the core of tradition, the most steadfast, with an unbroken tradition, with the capacity to accommodate change, that inner core, that path of love, Vaiṣṇavism.

On the one hand, this Vaiṣṇavism, in its pristine monotheism which in reacting to it had absorbed much from the missionaries, could hold its own against Christianity and Islam. It was similar to them but it superseded them, since it was from Kṛṣṇa that the figure of Christ himself had originated, the equivalences having long been established by the Orientalists, there was no need to go into the details again. On the other hand, so dominating had Vaiṣṇavism been through the ages, so capable of change and rejuvenation that it could afford to nod in approval at the Ārya and Brāhmo Samāj without losing its bearings. The religion of the Āryas was a world religion which claimed equality, if not superiority, in spite of the present downtrodden state of the country, with the other world religions, the foremost of these being, of course, Christianity.

CONCLUSION

Hariścandra had started out unselfconsciously in the expression of his religiosity in that he, at first, stressed allegiance only to his own sampradāy, while at the same time participating in the activities of the Dharma Sabhā which claimed nationwide jurisdiction. However, he and his contemporaries, in that they rose to meet the challenge of Christianity and the newer formations such as the Ārya Samāj, very soon realized the necessity of devising strategies to weld together the different strands which they, along with the missionaries and Orientalists, could view as none other than 'sects' of Hinduism. The readings of Hinduism, whatever the final nature of their differentia-tion, shared thus a common basis as also to some extent, the same criteria—monotheism and bhakti as the personal devotion to a personal god—as the highest form of religion. In the course of the complex process of interaction with other discursive formations, the Vaiṣṇava tradition—henceforth there was to be wide reaching

con-sensus that it was at its base monotheistic—with the four medieval sampradāys at its core, projected itself as the central strand of Hinduism. Monier-Williams had proclaimed Vaiṣṇavism to be the only true religion of the Hindus. The Śaivas were denigrated as being either a merely philosophical (monist) religion or disgustingly orgiastic in their mode of worship. With the support of selected Orientalist constructions, it was possible to devise a historical framework for the Vaiṣṇava tradition, which could now be traced back to the oldest Vedic period, which flowed with some setbacks and deviations into the medieval bhakti movement, in itself the pinnacle of all that had come before. This last was the contribution of Grierson. Hariścandra, however, unlike Grierson, never posited a bhakti movement, which was in any sense monolithic. He perceived Vaiṣṇava bhakti as the all dominating principle which provided the vital link in the case of the main Vaiṣṇava sampradāys. Hence, the Vaiṣṇava claim to lead.

Hariścandra's Vaiṣṇavatā, rooted as it was in a specific sampradāy, remained bound to community and ritual, it had not cast off its moorings. It was from this point that it rose to meet and co-mingle with other streams, first within Vaiṣṇavism at large, then with other varieties of Hinduism. It did so by proclaiming its monopoly of monotheism and bhakti devotionalism. With this definite strand constructed as the thread binding the present with the past and as stretching as the unifying principle into the future, it was possible to subsume the newer formations. Hariścandra, as being rooted in his own community, could afford to allow for the differences, the concern with finding common points, at this stage did not necessarily mean reducing the tradition concerned to these common points alone. It subsumed others, but it did not ask for total submission to the form of worship practised, for instance, in his own sampradāy. Tensions were admitted and they were admissible, since those advocating unity had a secure footing within their own tradition. There was thus, at this stage, little effort to homogenize entirely. Yet Hinduism as a body was at no time other than a loosely strung conglomerate of religions, which had in the modern Vaiṣṇava self-representation gained an ideological foundation as well. It occupied the central space in the national religion of the Hindus, of which territoriality had necessarily also become one binding feature.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Angelika Malinar for her patience in going through the drafts of this essay and for her perceptive critique. I would also like to thank Heinrich von Stietencron and Srilata Raman for their insights and suggestions.
2. The Hindi terms for Hinduism in this period are *Hindū dharma*, *śāstra-śruti-smṛti-ukta dharma, veda purāṇa vihit ārya dharma* and in one solitary instance *hindūpan*. There is also *Hindū-dharma-vāle* (to distinguish Hindus from Indians at large) and *vedadharmāvalmbī*.
3. The essays by Conlon (1992), Hudson (1992) and the Leonards (1992) are a welcome step in this direction.
4. The structures of authority in which Hariścandra was enmeshed made his articulation more than merely personal and represented more than the stand of the Puṣṭimārg alone. Linked as it was to Rājendralāl Mitra and the Orientalists, it came to represent the Vaiṣṇava position in North India. I have dealt at greater length with the linkage of the structures of authority elsewhere (Dalmia 1997).
5. I cite here a twentieth century formulation by a catholic theologian, that of Karl Rahner (1962) in his article on the subject. The article summarizes the nineteenth century discussion, and it is valuable in our context, since it expressly articulates the points which the missionaries repeatedly brought up in their polemics against the religions of the Indian subcontinent. In one point, however, Rahner diverges somewhat from the nineteenth-century scholarly theological discourse, which tended to marginalize—rather than emphasize, as is here the case—the trinitarian aspect. Yet, the concept of the Trinity had always been central to the dogma of the Christian church, both the catholic and the protestant, and in so far Rahner can be understood as articulating the consensus on the subject. Further, in the nineteenth century debates with other religions, especially when monotheism formed one central point of attack, the trinitarian aspect was not to be excluded, since it was often brought up by the opponents. However, it cannot be denied that the emphatic equation of the economic trinity with the internal is part of the more recent discussion, for in the present century the scholarly discussion was to be revived by Karl Barth, in whose theology the Trinity once again occupied a central position. Rahner was to perform the same task for catholic theology. I am grateful to Helmut Dopffel for help in the translation from German as well as for making me aware of the breadth of the discussion involved.
6. *Samagra:* 1.
7. It was, in effect, a new journal, for it appeared in a new guise (*nayā ābharaṇ*); it was more than an organ for the voice of poets, it had also new social and political functions.
8. The term Hindu, according to a survey of older Bengali Gaudiya texts as carried out by O'Connell, was only used when the question of maintaining the borderline between those considered within this group and those who were clearly alien (Muslim) was concerned. The occasion to do this was only provided in the context of ritual. According to O'Connell, Hindu *dharma* 'seems to indicate certain actions of a customary and ritual sort which are the rights of Hindus and Hindus only to perform. But there is to be found no explicit discussion of what "Hindu" or "Hindu dharma" means in any of the texts surveyed' (1973: 340). This was clearly also largely the case with the domain the Sabhā administered, though now there were groups, such as the Brāhmo Samāj, which could only be regarded as borderline cases.
9. It is not certain whether from the pen of Hariścandra. The language is somewhat halting, the slightly ponderous idiom could be that of Kāśīnāth from Sirsā. Yet if not Hariścandra's, it certainly contains views which he subscribed to. It is an early formulation of the ideas contained in a later essay 'Vaiṣṇavatā aur Bhāratvarṣa' (1984), which is discussed in the last section of this paper.
10. Both documented by Sahāy ([1905] 1975: 82–3).
11. The term *ek iśvarvād* is not used here, it was to appear in a slightly later document. However, the emphasis that only one god was to be worshipped indicates an awareness of the monotheism discussion which was to surface more expressly later.
12. Ballantyne (1859: v) had already noted the importance of the work in providing a terminology which came close to the Christian and which could thus be used successfully by Christian missionaries in their work. The work was later to be noted and commented upon for its closeness to Christian thought by Grierson, who, in turn, referred to the translation and commentary by Hariścandra.
13. Muralidhara, a pupil of Viṭṭhala, had also written a commentary on the *Sāṇḍilyasūtra*. Cf. Dasgupta (1975: 380). The text considered here is the *bhāṣā bhāsya* or the Hindi commentary of the *Sāṇḍilyasūtra* which appeared in the opening number of *Harischandra's Magazine*, to be published a little later separately as a booklet entitled *Bhaktisūtravaijayantī* (Māgha śukla 5, saṃvat 1930). It has been included in *Granthāvalī* III: 517–44.
14. The bare translation of the text was published in *Harischandra's Magazine* (1, 5) as early as February 1874. The later, more elaborate commentary, was both published separately in book form as well as in the summer issues of the *KVS* in 1876. The text considered here is the *Granthāvalī* III version (581–642) which reproduces the book version.
15. The drama *Candrāvalī* (1876) deals with *bhāva bhakti* which can be considered the heart of *bhakti* theology, making thereby Brajbhāṣā genre of *rāslīla* accessible in literary Hindi. Candrāvalī, along with Lalitā, has a place of importance in the Vallabha pantheon; in Nāthdvārā her birthday is celebrated two days before Rādhā's, on *bhādra śukla ṣaṣṭhamī*. The play is a celebration of the traditional *sakhya bhāva* and it is with Candrāvalī's love for Kṛṣṇa that Hariścandra identifies himself as a *bhakta*.
16. The '*pūrvārdha*' or first part was published in the *Hariścandracandrikā* 2, 8–12: May–September 1876, the '*uttarārdha*' or final part in 6, 10: 1879.

17. The tactics were well known and had been practised for centuries in the purāṇic tradition.
18. The references are to be found in the following sections.
19. See Dalmia (1997) for references and for further expansion on this theme.
20. Both Monier-Williams and Grierson regarded the Syrian Christians of the South as the main source of influence in the formation of the later Hindu concept of *bhakti*. The earlier belief that the figure of Kṛṣṇa and the entire early history of the *bhakti* concept stemmed from Christianity had been discarded, for Bhandarkar and others had furnished proof of the pre-Christian existence of both the Kṛṣṇa myth and the composition of the *Bhagavadgītā*. However, there continued to be speculation as to the exact source of Christian influence. See, for instance, Kennedy (1907).
21. Grierson was intimately acquainted with the text. He had translated and commented on large stretches of the *Bhaktamāl* (1909, 1910).
22. The following works were cited: *Caritāvalī* (Lives of Rāmānuja, Śaṅkarācārya, Jayadeva, Vallabhācārya, Sūradāsa), *Vaiṣṇavasarvasva* (A History of the Early Vaiṣṇava Sects), *Vallabhasarvasva* (A History of the Sect Founded by Vallabhācārya), *Yugulasarvasva* (Accounts of Kṛṣṇa's Companions in Gokula), *Tadīyasarvasva* (The Nāradīya *Bhakti Sūtras,* with a Translation and Commentary in Hindi), *Bhaktisūtravaijayantī* (The Śāṇḍilya *Bhakti Sūtras*, with a Similar Translation and Commentary), *Īśu Khṛṣṭa aur Īśa Kṛṣṇa.*
23. 6, 7: *Granthāvalī* III: 783–8.
24. The poem celebrated the visit of the Prince of Wales to the country, it was a variation, as Hariścandra himself specified, of the poem on the same theme by the Bengali poet, Hemchandra Bannerji.
25. The two terms he uses are: *Hindū mat, Hindū nāmdhārī*. Interestingly enough, they occur only at the end of the essay, once the central thesis has been led up to, as it were.
26. Quoting *Ṛgveda* X. 121, Max Mueller had said, 'the idea of one God is expressed with such power and decision, that it will make us hesitate before we deny to the Āryan nations an instinctive monotheism' (1859: 521). Mueller had been rigorous in his advocation of this monotheism in the Veda, not just in this one hymn: '...there is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky hidden by passing clouds' (512).
27. For a discussion of the nineteenth century conceptualization of 'natural religion', particularly as envisaged by Max Mueller, see Kohl (1986).
28. Elsewhere Hariścandra has described the Hindus thus: '*Ham hindū, hindū ke beta, hindūhi ko paya pāna kiyo*', i.e., we are Hindus, progenies of Hindus, we have drunk the milk of Hindus. This is from the poem 'Jain Kautūhal' (1873, as available in *Samagra*: 39) which was written in order to defend himself when the visit to a Jain temple led to a public outcry. The Jains were for him as much Hindus as the Vaiṣṇavas.

References

Ballantyne, James Robert. 1859. *Christianity Contrasted with Hindu Philosophy: An Essay in Five Books, Sanskrit and English: With Practical Suggestions Tendered to the Missionary among the Hindūs*. London: James Madden.

Bhandarkar, R.G. 1874. Allusions to Kṛishṇa in Patanjali's Mahabhāshya. *The Indian Antiquary* III: 14–16.

Chandra, Sudhir. 1984. Communal Elements in Late Nineteenth Century Hindi Literature. *Journal of Arts & Ideas* January–March.

Conlon, Frank F. 1992. The Polemic Process in Nineteenth-century Maharashtra: Vishnubawa Brahmachari and Hindu Revival. In Kenneth W. Jones (Ed.), *Religious Controversy in British India. Dialogues in South Asian Languages*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 5–26.

Dalmia, Vasudha. 1997. *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Hariśchandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Dasgupta, Surendranath. 1975. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. 5 Vols. Vol. IV: *Indian Pluralism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. (First published Cambridge, 1922).

Duff, Alexander. 1839. *India and India Missions, Including Sketches of the Gigantic System of Hinduism, Both in Theory and Practice* (reprint 1988). Delhi: Swati Publications.

Dutt, R.C. 1888. *Early Hindu Civilization*.

Farquhar, J.N. 1914. *Modern Religious Movements in India* (reprint 1977). Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Glasenapp, Helmuth von. 1934. Die Lehre Vallabhacaryas. *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* 9, 3: 268–330.

Grierson, George A. 1907. Modern Hinduism and its Debt to the Nestorians. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 311–35.

———. 1909. Bhakti-Marga. In James Hastings (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburg: T. & T. Clark. Vol. II: 539–51.

———. 1909/1910. Gleanings from the Bhakta-mala. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1909: 607–44: 1910: 86–109, 269–306.

Growse, F.S. 1882. *Mathurā, A District Memoir* (reprint 1979). Delhi: Asian Educational Services.

Hariścandra. 1975. *Bhāratendu Granthāvalī. Pāhlā Khaṇḍ* (cited in the text as *Granthāvalī* I) (2nd rev. ed.) (ed. Śivaprasād Miśra 'Rudra' Kāśikeya). Banaras: Kāśī Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā. (First ed. Brajratnadās, 1950).

———. 1935. *Bhāratendu Granthāvalī. Dūsarā Bhāg* (cited in the text as *Granthāvalī* II) (ed. Brajratnadās). Banaras: Kāśī Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā.

———. 1954. *Bhāratendu Granthāvalī. Tīsrā Bhāg* (cited in the text as *Granthāvalī* III) (ed. Brajratnadās). Banaras: Kāśī Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā.

———. 1987. *Bhāratendu Samagra* (cited in the text as *Samagra*) (ed. Hemant Śarmā). Banaras: Pracārak Granthāvali Pariyojanā, Hindi Pracārak Saṃsthān.

———. *Harischandrakalā.* 6 Vols. 1897. Bankipur: Khadgavilas Press.

———. *Hariścandracandrikā* 1. II–IV. 15: August 1874–September 1879.

———. *Harischandra's Magazine* I. I. 7/8: October 1873–April, 1874.

———. *Kavivacansudhā* III–III. 25: August 1871–August 1872; VII. 34–VIII. 45: May 1876–September 1877; N.S. XV.15–XVI. 30: November 1883–February 1885.

Hudson, D. Dennis. 1992. Arumuga Navalvar and the Hindu Renaissance among the Tamils. In Kenneth W. Jones (Ed.), *Religious Controversy in British India. Dialogues in South Asian Languages.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 27–51.

Jones, Kenneth W. (Ed.), 1992. *Religious Controversy in British India. Dialogues in South Asian Languages.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kennedy, James. 1907. The Child Krishna, Christianity and the Gujars. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 951–91.

Kohl, Karl-Heinz. 1986. Naturreligion. In Richard Faber and Renate Schlesier (Eds), *Die Restauration der Götter. Antike Religion and Neo-Paganismus.* Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. 198–214.

Leonard, John and Karen Leonard. 1992. Viresalingam and the Ideology of Social Change in Andhra. In Kenneth W. Jones (Ed.), *Religious Controversy in British India. Dialogues in South Asian Languages.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 151–78.

Lorinser, F. 1873. Traces in the Bhagvad-Gītā of Christian Writings and Ideas. From the Appendix to Dr. Lorinser's Bhagvad-Gītā (Breslau, 1869). *The Indian Antiquary* II: 283–96.

Lütt, Jürgen. 1970. *Hindu Nationalismus in Uttar Prades.* Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag.

Mitra, Rājendralāl. 1875. *The Antiquities of Orissa.* 2 Vols. Calcutta: Published under orders of the Government of India (reprint 1961 Calcutta: Indian Studies Past and Present, Distributors: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya).

Monier-Williams, Monier. 1881. Indian Theistic Reformers. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (N.S.) XIII: 1–41.

———. 1882. The Vaishnava Religion, with Special Reference to the Śikshā-patrī of the Modern Sect called Svāmī-Nārāyaṇa. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (N.S.) XIV: 289–316.

Mueller, F. Max. 1859. *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, So Far As it Illustrates the Primitive Religion of the Brahmans* (reprint 1968). Banaras: Chowkhamba.

O'Connell, Joseph T. 1973. The Word 'Hindu' in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Texts. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93: 340–4.

Rahner, Karl. 1962. Monotheismus. In Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (Eds), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche.* 14 Vols. Vol. 7: 566–70. Freiburg: Herder.

Sahāy, Śivanandan. [1905] 1975. *Hariścandra.* Lucknow: Hindī Samiti, Uttar Pradeś Śāsan.

Sastri, Sivanath. [1911/1912] 1974. *History of the Brahma Samaj* (2nd ed.). Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. (First published in 2 Vols.)

Schlegel, Friedrich. 1808. *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier.* Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer.

Sharma, Krishna. 1987. *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement: A New Perspective. A Study in the History of Ideas.* Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Sherring, M.A. 1868. *The Sacred City of the Hindus: An Account of Benares in Ancient and Modern Times.* London: Trübner.

Weber, Albrecht. 1857. Die Verbindung Indiens mit den Ländern im Westen (geschr. im April 1853). In *Indische Skizzen. Vier bisher in Zeitschriften zerstreute Vortäge und Abhandlungen.* Berlin: Ferd. Dümmler's Verlagsbuchhandlung. 69–124.

———. 1868. *Über die Kṛishṇajanmāshṭamī (Kṛishṇa's Geburtsfest).* Berlin: Buchdruckerei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

———. 1874. An Investigation into the Origin of the Festival of Kṛishṇajanmāshṭamī. *The Indian Antiquary* III: 21–25, 47–52.