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INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BY

RADHAKRISHNAN

VOLUME ONE

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As may be seen from the original programme printed in Erdmann's *History of Philosophy* under the date 1890, the Library of Philosophy was designed as a contribution to the History of Modern Philosophy under the heads: first of different Schools of Thought—Sensationalist, Realist, Idealist, Intuitivist; secondly of different Subjects—Psychology, Ethics, Æsthetics, Political Philosophy, Theology. While much had been done in England in tracing the course of evolution in nature, history, economics, morals, and religion, little had been done in tracing the development of thought on these subjects. Yet "the evolution of opinion is part of the whole evolution".

By the co-operation of different writers in carrying out this plan it was hoped that a thoroughness and completeness of treatment, otherwise unattainable, might be secured. It was believed also that from writers mainly British and American fuller consideration of English Philosophy than it had hitherto received might be looked for. In the earlier series of books containing, among others, Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetics*, Pfleiderer's *Rational Theology since Kant*, Albee's *History of English Utilitarianism*, Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, Brett's *History of Psychology*, Ritchie's *Natural Rights*, these objects were to a large extent effected.

In the meantime original work of a high order was being produced both in England and America by such writers as Bradley, Stout, Bertrand Russell, Baldwin, Urban, Montague, and others, and a new interest in foreign works, German, French, and Italian, which had either become classical or were attracting public attention, had

developed. The scope of the Library thus became extended into something more international, and it is entering on the fifth decade of its existence in the hope that it may contribute in this highest field of thought to that Intellectual Co-operation which is one of the most significant objects of the League of Nations and kindred organizations.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is a pleasure to know that a new edition of this book is called for. It shows that, with all its defects, it has helped to rouse interest in Indian philosophy. I have not made many alterations in the text, but have added explanatory notes intended to clear difficulties, and an Appendix which deals with some of the controversial issues in the field of Indian thought raised by the first volume. My thanks are due to the Editor of *Mind* for his courtesy in permitting me to use in the Appendix the substance of an article which originally appeared in his pages (April 1926).

In preparing this edition, I have been considerably assisted by the suggestions of my friend Professor M. Hiriyanna of Mysore.

May 1929.

PREFACE

THOUGH the world has changed considerably in its outward material aspect, means of communication, scientific inventions, etc., there has not been any great change in its inner spiritual side. The old forces of hunger and love, and the simple joys and fears of the heart, belong to the permanent stuff of human nature. The true interests of humanity, the deep passions of religion, and the great problems of philosophy, have not been superseded as material things have been. Indian thought is a chapter of the history of the human mind, full of vital meaning for us. The ideas of great thinkers are never obsolete. They animate the progress that seems to kill them. The most ancient fancies sometimes startle us by their strikingly modern character, for insight does not depend on modernity.

Ignorance of the subject of Indian thought is profound. To the modern mind Indian philosophy means two or three "silly" notions about *māyā*, or the delusiveness of the world, *karma*, or belief in fate, and *tyāga*, or the ascetic desire to be rid of the flesh. Even these simple notions, it is said, are wrapped up in barbarous nomenclature and chaotic clouds of vapour and verbiage, looked upon by the "natives" as wonders of intellect. After a six-months' tour from Calcutta to Cape Comorin, our modern æsthete dismisses the whole of Indian culture and philosophy as "pantheism," "worthless scholasticism," "a mere play upon words," "at all events nothing similar to Plato or Aristotle,

or even Plotinus or Bacon." The intelligent student interested in philosophy will, however, find in Indian thought an extraordinary mass of material which for detail and variety has hardly any equal in any other part of the world. There is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in the world that has not its parallel in the vast stretch that lies between the early Vedic seers and the modern Naiyāyikas. Ancient India, to adapt Professor Gilbert Murray's words in another context, "has the triumphant, if tragic, distinction of beginning at the very bottom and struggling, however precariously, to the very summits."[1] The naive utterances of the Vedic poets, the wondrous suggestiveness of the Upaniṣads, the marvellous psychological analyses of the Buddhists, and the stupendous system of Śaṁkara, are quite as interesting and instructive from the cultural point of view as the systems of Plato and Aristotle, or Kant and Hegel, if only we study them in a true scientific frame of mind, without disrespect for the past or contempt for the alien. The special nomenclature of Indian philosophy which cannot be easily rendered into English accounts for the apparent strangeness of the intellectual landscape. If the outer difficulties are overcome, we feel the kindred throb of the human heart, which because human is neither Indian nor European. Even if Indian thought be not valuable from the cultural point of view, it is yet entitled to consideration, if on no other ground, at least by reason of its contrast to other thought systems and its great influence over the mental life of Asia.

In the absence of accurate chronology, it is a misnomer to call anything a history. Nowhere is the difficulty of getting reliable historical evidence so extreme as in the case of Indian thought. The problem of determining the exact dates of early Indian systems is as fascinating as it

[1] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*. p. 15.

is insoluble, and it has furnished a field for the wildest hypotheses, wonderful reconstruction and bold romance. The fragmentary condition of the material from out of which history has to be reconstructed is another obstacle. In these circumstances I must hesitate to call this work a History of Indian Philosophy.

In interpreting the doctrines of particular systems, I have tried to keep in close touch with the documents, give wherever possible a preliminary survey of the conditions that brought them into being, and estimate their indebtedness to the past as well as their contribution to the progress of thought. I have emphasised the essentials so as to prevent the meaning of the whole from being obscured by details, and attempted to avoid starting from any theory. Yet I fear I shall be misunderstood. The task of the historian is hard, especially in philosophy. However much he may try to assume the attitude of a mere chronicler and let the history in some fashion unfold its own inner meaning and continuity, furnish its own criticism of errors and partial insights, still the judgments and sympathies of the writer cannot long be hidden. Besides, Indian philosophy offers another difficulty. We have the commentaries which, being older, come nearer in time to the work commented upon. The presumption is that they will be more enlightening about the meaning of the texts. But when the commentators differ about their interpretations, one cannot stand silently by without offering some judgment on the conflict of views. Such personal expressions of opinion, however dangerous, can hardly be avoided. Effective exposition means criticism and evaluation, and I do not think it is necessary to abstain from criticism in order that I may give a fair and impartial statement. I can only hope that the subject is treated in a calm and dispassionate way, and that whatever the defects of the book, no

attempt is made to wrest facts to suit a preconceived opinion. My aim has been not so much to narrate Indian views as to explain them, so as to bring them within the focus of Western traditions of thought. The analogies and parallels suggested between the two thought systems are not to be pressed too far, in view of the obvious fact that the philosophical speculations of India were formulated centuries ago, and had not behind them the brilliant achievements of modern science.

Particular parts of Indian philosophy have been studied with great care and thoroughness by many brilliant scholars in India, Europe and America. Some sections of philosophical literature have also been critically examined, but there has been no attempt to deal with the history of Indian thought as an undivided whole or a continuous development, in the light of which alone different thinkers and views can be fully understood. To set forth the growth of Indian philosophy from the dim dawn of history in its true perspective is an undertaking of the most formidable kind, and it certainly exceeds the single grasp of even the most industrious and learned scholar. Such a standard encyclopædia of Indian philosophy requires not only special aptitude and absolute devotion, but also wide culture and intelligent co-operation. This book professes to be no more than a general survey of Indian thought, a short outline of a vast subject. Even this is not quite easy. The necessary condensation imposes on the author a burden of responsibility, which is made more onerous by the fact that no one man can attempt to be an authority on all these varied fields of study, and that the writer is compelled to come to decisions on evidence which he himself cannot carefully weigh In matters of chronology, I have depended almost entirely on the results of research carried on by competent scholars. I am conscious that in surveying this wide field, much of

interest is left untouched, and still more only very roughly sketched in. This work has no pretensions to completeness in any sense of the term. It attempts to give such a general statement of the main results as shall serve to introduce the subject to those to whom it may not be known, and awaken if possible in some measure that interest for it to which it is so justly entitled. Even if it proves a failure, it may assist or at least encourage other attempts.

My original plan was to publish the two volumes together. Kind friends like Professor J. S. Mackenzie suggested to me the desirability of bringing out the first volume immediately. Since the preparation of the second volume would take some time and the first is complete in itself, I venture to publish it independently. A characteristic feature of many of the views discussed in this volume is that they are motived, not so much by the logical impulse to account for the riddles of existence, as by the practical need for a support in life. It has been difficult to avoid discussions of, what may appear to the reader, religious rather than philosophical issues, on account of the very close connexion between religion and philosophy in early Indian speculation. The second volume, however, will be of a more purely philosophical character, since a predominantly theoretical interest gets the upper hand in the darśanas or systems of philosophy, though the intimate connexion between knowledge and life is not lost sight of.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my obligations to the many eminent orientalists whose works have been of great help to me in my studies. It is not possible to mention all their names, which will be found in the course of the book. Mention must, however, be made of Max Müller, Deussen, Keith, Jacobi, Garbe, Tilak, Bhandarkar, Rhys Davids and Mrs. Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Poussin, Suzuki and Sogen.

Several valuable works of recent publication, such as Professor Das Gupta's *History of Indian Philosophy* and Sir Charles Eliot's *Hinduism and Buddhism*, came to hand too late for use, after the MS. had been completed and sent to the publishers in December 1921. The bibliography given at the end of each chapter is by no means exhaustive. It is intended mainly for the guidance of the English reader.

My thanks are due to Professor J. S. Mackenzie and Mr. V. Subrahmanya Aiyar, who were good enough to read considerable parts of the MS. and the proofs. The book has profited much by their friendly and suggestive counsel. I am much indebted to Professor A. Berriedale Keith for reading the proofs and making many valuable comments. My greatest obligation, however, is to the Editor of the Library of Philosophy, Professor J. H. Muirhead, for his invaluable and most generous help in the preparation of the book for the press and previously. He undertook the laborious task of reading the book in the MS., and his suggestions and criticisms have been of the greatest assistance to me. I am also obliged to Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, Kt., C.S.I., for his constant encouragement and the facilities provided for higher work in the Post-Graduate Department of the Calcutta University.

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