Chapter VI

The Rhetoric of Jnana Yoga

This chapter examines Sitanath Tattvabhushan's *Autobiography* published in 1942 as a discourse on *jnana yoga*, the path of wisdom for self-realisation. Babu Sitanath Datta, later known as Pandit Sitanath Tattvabhushan, was born in 1856 in Bengal and embraced Brahmaism during Keshub Chandra Sen's time. Though Brahmaism was established as a religion different from Hinduism, the reason for examining this text under *jnana yoga* is to demonstrate the affiliations the theistic stance of Tattvabhushan has with *Upanishadic* doctrines. Tattvabhushan shows the connection when he states in his autobiography that, "...the Brahma Samaj, which, though condemning and rejecting Idolatry, is none-the-less Hindu, nay more truly Hindu than other Hindus, as accepting and practising the religion taught in the highest Hindu scriptures, — the *Upanishads*" (Tattvabhushan 1942: 106). Tattvabhushan's contribution to Brahma theology was so significant that Pandit Sivanath Sastri in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj* points out that he "did excellent service for the spread of theological knowledge amongst young men" (Sastri 1974: 293). Further, David Kopf, in *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Mind* observes thus: "Of all the proponents of the theological position among the Sadharans after the Schism of 1878, none was more effective a spokesman and prolific a writer than Sitanath Tattvabhushan" (Kopf 1988: 80).

This chapter is divided into three sections viz., "Initiation", "Contemplation" and "Action". The first section examines the concept of *jnana* as it is widely understood and shows how it gained further dimension in the colonial period during which the author lived and wrote his treatise. This section will also examine the first part of the text where there is a demonstration of the symbiotic relationship between the race, milieu, moment and the author. The second section will examine the rhetoric of the author's
narrative of his years of philosophic contemplation in the text. The third section examines the service oriented life lived by the author as a Brahma. Tattvabhusan’s rhetoric of *jnana* in these sections contributes to nationalism since it puts up a strong resistance to Western intellectual hegemony in India.

I

Initiation

The term *jnana yoga* indicates knowing the self through the path of wisdom. The term "wisdom" cannot be easily defined. It stands for intellectual pursuit, reasoning, contemplation, insight, knowledge, and according to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, "accumulated philosophic or scientific learning and teachings of the ancient wise men". All these definitions are applicable to the way *jnana* is understood in Hindu Thought as well. In this study, *jnana yoga* is understood as the author's conscious and systematic pursuit of the philosophic teachings of wise men and women, ancient and modern, of the East and the West. "Philosophy" is here understood as "a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means" and as an "analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs" (ibidem). As Swami Sivananda points out, "If a philosophy is not practical or if people take only an academic interest in it, it gets into disuse and in time disappears. A practical philosophy is a living religion" (Sivananda 1959: 15).

The basis of faith in Hinduism has been explored through labyrinths of reason and insight into the self in relation with nature. The *Sankhya* system of philosophy explains the universe in terms of two principles viz., *Prakriti*, or the primordial substance of energy, from which all material forms and energies evolve and *Purusha*, or the spirit principle, which 'ensouls' or seeks embodiment in *Prakriti*, and thus gives rise to all the various forms of differentiation, from
atoms to man. **Vedanta** is principally the latter part of the **Vedas**, also known as the **Upanishads**, and concerns itself with the questions of 'the inquiry into **Brahman**', or the Absolute, and the manifestations of the latter in the phenomenal universe (Ramacharaka 1980: 53-70). Ramanuja's **Vishishtadvaita** (Qualified Monistic) school of Vedanta and Sri Sankara's **Advaita Vedanta** (Monistic or non-Dualist) school are nuanced deliberations on or interpretations of the **Vedanta** philosophy.

The rhetoric of **jnana yoga** is adversarial, inquisitive, and dissenting, and engages with opposing voices. The pursuit of **jnana yoga** in the colonial context and its recordings in an autobiography are hence important for recognising the **dominant** challenging forces at work in the era. In Tattvabhusan's times it is clear that agnosticism, **atheism** or scepticism and manifestations of its Western philosophical counterparts were dominant influences on educated young Indians.

As I have pointed out in Chapter Two, Brahmaism was the subject of experimentation from time to time. The giving up of the infallibility of **Vedantic** doctrines during Maharishi Devendranath Tagore's leadership, Keshub Chandra Sen's experiments with **bhakti**, **jnana**, **karma** and **raja yoga** were some of them. Consequently, the Samaj was subjected to several schisms because dissent became louder and louder, generation after generation, on various issues (right from basis of faith to government) as the century progressed. Though it was an intellectual movement the Samaj ironically got divided precisely on the issue of faith. Tattvabhusan points out that there was no Brahma leader who studied the philosophy of religion consciously in order to develop an **infallible** ideology. The division and subsequent decline in Brahma zeal is linked up with the idolisation of **leaders** like Keshub. The schisms impelled Tattvabhusan to recognise his special object in life and that was to write a philosophy of Brahmaism. The disenchantment with schisms in
the Samaj is the dominant strain in his autobiography. The author casts a critical eye on the uncertainties in Brahmaism:

When I saw all this, the special object of my life flashed before me. I felt that one who had been saved from doubt by a long study of philosophy, was called upon to write a philosophical defence of Theism, Brahmavada, and a systematic exposition of its sadhana, its practical realisation in life. The call grew clear and definite by and by. The truth and efficiency of Brahmaism must be shown, not merely by speaking and writing about it, but also by an earnest and strenuous life of sadhana. Thirdly, the wrong way in which Brahmaism had been preached by our leaders, the practical ignoring of our old Brahmavadi rishis—had created a gulf between the old and the new Theism. Deprived of a close touch with the high ideals set forth by the old sadhakas, our spiritual life is being impoverished year after year. The gulf between the old and the new Brahmaism must therefore be bridged over by the publication of the old scriptures and their brief exposition in a suitable form. The special object of my life appeared to me in this threefold form (Tattvabhushan 1942: 126-27).

Sitanath Tattvabhushan's quest for self-realisation through the path of jnana, as pointed out earlier, cannot be treated as independent of the advent of Western knowledge systems in colonial India. Tattvabhushan points out that during his college education "the only subjects of study tasteful to me were religion and philosophy" (50). He began his regular study of philosophy with Sir William Hamilton’s Lectures on Metaphysics.

The path of philosophical pursuit thus, in Tattvabhushan's times, was not confined any more to deliberations through the labyrinths of Sankhya, Dvaita and Advaita philosophies, and Eastern forms of theism, atheism and agnosticism. Instead it was to be inter-discursive and inter-textual in the wake
of challenges posed by exposure to trends in Western knowledge systems particularly classical Metaphysics and scientific thought, both based on conflict between faith (religion) and reason. In fact as his expositions reveal, Tattvabhushan began his systematic study of Philosophy through Western philosophers and later moved on to Hindu philosophy. In other words, Tattvabhushan's text reveals the felt dynamics between Hindu philosophy and Classical Western metaphysics, science and religion and ambivalence relating to 'rationalism', 'religion', 'faith', knowledge and intellect in the colonial context, prevalent among the intellectual elite in general, and among Brahmas in particular. The path of jnana, during the colonial period for a Western educated Indian, as one can shall see in the Autobiography, could not be a monologic pursuit. As Tattvabhushan's Autobiography shows, Brahmaism emerged out of the ambivalences of the colonial encounter. It is clear from Partha Chatterjee's Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World that the post-Enlightenment trends had a major role to play in raising questions regarding reason and faith the way it was prevalent in the West. This sense of dichotomy was central to every aspect of Western practice while in the East, the philosophical part of religion was the concern of the intellectually inclined. The common masses were more comfortable with the dvaita approach which manifested itself in bhakti. Swami Vivekananda has made an interesting observation on the dualism prevalent in one form or the other in all religions of the world. "The vast mass of Indian people are dualists. All the religions of Europe and western Asia are dualistic ... How is it possible that, under the rule of a just and merciful God, there can be so many evils in this world? This question arose in all dualistic religions...."(Vivekananda 1994: 105-6).

It is here perhaps that Hindu Philosophy has its origins in non-dualistic doctrines while Western Philosophy became predominantly based on the dual vision of matter and spirit. The agnostic, existential and atheistic stances in Western philosophy are in a sense reflective of certain stages in the Vedantic
inquiry though their points of references are remarkably different. A study of the history of the Brahma Samaj would show that it was the bhakti movement in the Brahma Samaj that drew the masses to its fold while questioning of the infallibility of Vedanta was the responsibility of the "intellectuals" who ultimately rejected it and busied themselves with the power of intuition. Intellectual pursuit of the self became even more problematic when held within the framework of schisms due to lack of foundation and clarity in the theological perspectives of the Brahma Samaj. Tattvabhusan’s autobiography shows a rather lonely and independent quest for a theological position which the Samaj could make its own. The autobiography unhesitatingly exposes the pretention and hypocrisy in Brahma intellectual culture.

Tattvabhusan’s narrative impels us to re-read the history of the Brahma Samaj and the trends of thought among the intellectual elite of the period and to identify the gaps that a dogmatic religion can leave behind. During the heydays of the Brahma Samaj social upliftment was carried out under the charismatic leadership of Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen. The formation of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, the birth of the New Dispensation all show the ongoing conflict due to the lack of an intellectually satisfying theological position. Interestingly, no charismatic leaders emerged after Keshub. Brahma historians like Pandit Sivanath Sastri see the Cooch Behar marriage controversy (when Kashub gave away his daughter in marriage to the Prince of Cooch Behar in contradiction of the Brahma principles) as the denouement of Brahmaism. Disenchantment with living idols like Keshab and the Maharishi (though ironically Brahmoism aimed at removing idolatry) and the repeated schisms find mention in Tattvabhusan's autobiography. Tattvabhusan's intellectual pursuit took a consolidated shape in his Philosophy of Brahmaism which has as its backdrop developments in the Brahma Samaj. As a Brahma missionary Tattvabhusan was also a karma yogi.
His personal leanings towards jnana coincided with the tendencies in the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

The *Autobiography* of Tattvabhushan becomes a document of resistance in a variety of ways. Besides his critique of the Samaj, he discusses the race, the milieu and the moment of his social location in Chapters 1-8, the discursive pattern in the development of his philosophical perspectives in chapters 9-12 and the period of his Karma Yoga as a gruhasta and Brahma activist in chapters 13-16.

We shall analyse the first eight chapters initially. Chapter One traces Tattvabhushan’s lineage to the Kayasta caste, "which, as Mr. Rameschandra Datta says, is the ruling caste in Bengal" (Tattvabhushan 1942: 1). There is an assumption of shared knowledge here because Tattvabhushan does not mention who Rameschandra Datta is. It is interesting to note that in the very first sentence, the author distances himself from being laudatory about his caste and lets it be uttered through “Mr. Rameschandra Datta”. This chapter also shows how central caste was to one's identity. Tattvabhushan emerges as some one who takes just pride in his ancestry, deeds, self-respect, assertion, self-abnegation and piety. While tracing his lineage Tattvabhushan speaks of his ancestor whose conflicts with the king resulted in the denial of “Kulin” status to their clan by the king. Tattvabhushan narrates this incident like a story, interspersed with dialogues in Sanskrit verses. These dialogues are reproduced as such in Devanagari script which creates a polyphonic and dramatic effect:

Ballalsen was then the ruler of Bengal. He is said to have founded the class of Kulin, then most highly qualified among the Brahmans and Kayasthas. The needed qualifications, nine in number are enumerated in the following Sanskrit couplet:

\[ \text{अभिलोक्ते विद्वानं लोकं सम्बन्धितं सेवा कुलदैर्गम} \]

\[ \text{विद्वानं सम्बन्धितं सेवा कुलदैर्गम म} \]
"Manners, humility, learning, stability (of habits), habitation, visiting holy places, devotion to religious practices, fixity of income, austerity, and charity,—these are the ninefold qualifications of a kula (high family)." The Datta of Bali seems to have possessed all these qualifications of a high family, but the fact that he denied that his ancestor had come to Bengal as a Brahmana's servant prevented Ballalsen from declaring him to be a Kulin. He is said to have told the king as his great ancestor might have said—

"Listen, sir, Datta is not anyone's servant. He came only as the companion of a Brahmana,—this is his introduction." Ballalsen refused to declare him a Kulin, while he acknowledged the right of the other four Kayasthas to the honour.... The so-called 'honour was not worth earning. But the whole story seems to be concoction. From other stories about Ballalsen, it seems my honoured ancestor had incurred the king's displeasure for some other reason (3-4).

It is interesting that the author chooses to quote at length a "concoction" when there are other reliable "stories". A true account of life perhaps should address popular misconceptions if that has to be disproved, defied or challenged. This is clearly an instance of how oral narratives gain nuances as they pass down ages and generations and substitute for written. "autobiography". Tattvabhushan thus seems to undertake the task of challenging the unsavoury on behalf of his ancestor. The chapter is also an ode to one of his ancestors who was a "remarkably kind and generous man named Data Gopinath....A poor low-caste man had killed a young son of Gopinath for a pair of bangles adorning his wrists. When the man was caught and the bangles brought to Gopinath, he said, 'the murderer must be a very poor man, as he killed the
child for this trifle. **Better** give away the bangles to him.' I am a distant descendant of this remarkable man” (4).

There are references here to "low" and "high" castes. Some of the references to "Sudras" or to "lower class" would strike the modern reader as objectionable and not becoming of a spiritually oriented writer. It is even more ironical that this was written by a well-known Brahma who was above class-caste distinctions. One can only say that caste was so central in those days that it was impossible for Tattvabhushan to refrain from mentioning caste while tracing lineage.

The second chapter traces the cultural ethos of the native village he hails from and their way of life. The organic, "salubrious life is narrated with a tinge of nostalgia. He draws a stark contrast between those days and the poverty-stricken, polluted living conditions of the villagers at the present time. He ends the chapter with a significant political statement: "In my childhood, I scarcely heard of want or poverty. Now one hears almost constantly of famine and sometimes even of death from starvation" (7).

Chapter three again portrays a better past as far as religious life among people was concerned: "religious faith and feeling were then far more common than they seem to be now" (8). However the underlying spirit of the description seems to be that the religious practices and rituals including the Sankirtan of the Chaitanya tradition of the period helped in promoting communal amity. Of the pujasconducted, Tattvabhushan has this to say:

The only good in them was that they brought together all classes of people,--even the Hindus and the Musalmans. The latter came in large numbers to hear the singing, the yatras, and the kavis. We reciprocated their brotherly feeling by attending their jaris during their Maharam. When their goyra was brought to our house, it was respectfully welcome, and our elders honoured it by presenting money to it in the same way as Hindu images are honoured.
Where are those happy days gone now? Hindus and Musalmans are going farther from one another every day and delaying their unification and independence (12).

This recollection of a better past throws light on the social and religious tensions of the period Tattvabhusan was writing in. The chapter also shows the author's reservations about modern education. He gives us a "feel" for the ambience and methodology of teaching at an earlier time. Here's a passage:

When the letters had been recognised, matra, the junction of vowels, was taught all at once, and not one by one. Phala, the junction of consonants, was taught in the same manner. This method seems to me decidedly better and far less tedious than the modern method. The first book I was given to read was Sisubodh, containing, among other things, a hymn to Ganga, Prahlad Chari tea, and Data Karna, the religious influence of which on the child-mind was deep and lasting, however modified it might be, by further and more liberal education (13).

Here we can trace the moment of the encounter between tradition and modernity, the transition from the religious to the secular and "liberal" education and their subsequent unsettling impact on Hindu colonial subject.

Chapter four titled "Parents and other Relations" once again reminds us that the joint family system was sacrificed to modernity. The chapter speaks of the traditional as an education in values, under the positive influences of elders in the family through observation and practice. Tattvabhusan however is silent regarding the sufferings of women during the period. He sensitively portrays the evil of slavery that prevailed in Bengal and particularly the sufferings of the dasi (female slave) in his references to Dudu, a woman slave who looked after the Datta household like a mistress and earned respect from family members. Tattvabhusan's oblique criticism of child marriage is manifested in his references to his step mother in this chapter: " My step
mother was sixteen or perhaps older when she was married. She soon realised her responsibility,—the difficult task of treating as her child a boy who was not her child" (27).

Tattvabhusan shows his sense of audience in the chapter, "Early School Education":

I give this rather long account of cordial relations between the Dattas of Sanghar and Charhamua, because it is something unique, and in order that the younger members of the two families may know one another and continue the cordiality which has hitherto existed between them (29).

It is clear that Tattvabhusan has a group of young English educated Bengali youth in mind as his audience.

Tattvabhusan introduces his spiritual mentor, Srinath Datta, who happened to be his cousin and his first teacher of Brahmaism (23). "Under the influence of his teaching I gave up my belief in Idolatry and became a worshipper of God. About the end of 1871 I came to Calcutta and lived under his constant influence. Shordy after, I joined a body of young Brahmas of which he was a member….I have since had many a guru, religious teacher, but for all of them I am indebted to this my first guru”(23).

From Tattvabhusan's autobiography, we can infer that Hindu (intellectuals viewed idolatry from a Western perspective. Idol worship does have philosophical underpinnings. The common masses in India with their rituals and worship and puja could inherently perceive (though not with any philosophical rhetoric) what people with Western standards could not. Even the Brahmos required community prayers, a church to congregate in and conduct worship. Nevertheless we see how these methods in Brahmaism as such worked as a response to Christianity and the Western cultural force of the period.
Tattvabhushan's account of his earlier encounters with the Samaj shows that it was a strong sense of "feeling" that attracted him to the Samaj.

On the very next day after my arrival at Dacca, Brahmamananda Keshavchandra went there, with Babu Trailokyanath Sanyal, to take part in the annual utsav of the local samaj....I was then only 13, and so unable to understand all that was said on the occasion. But I distinctly felt I was in a storm, a storm of feeling. The Bhakti movement was then going on and Kesav’s influence on the Samaj was at its best (31).

Tattvabhushan records the conversional influence of the Brahma rhetoric during his session:

One day, in the course of the utsav, he, at the request of Babu Bangachandra Ray, the then minister of the Samaj, narrated his conversion to Brahmaism and his early efforts to preach it. This narration made a deep and lasting impression on my mind (31).

The autobiography thus becomes a documentation of the insider's experience of Brahmaism and a record of the rhetoric of Brahma religion. The influence of Western acculturation on the system of education at the instance of the English educated elite in India is also documented in the autobiography:

The school was founded by Sj. Haranath Basu under the name of the "Boy's School", but from the beginning of 1872, it became an institution under the management of the Indian Reform Association founded by Kesav after his return from England. Three years hence, when Prince Albert Edward visited India, its name was changed into the "Albert School."(36).

Tattvabhushan at one place gives an objective portrayal of himself as an unassuming votary of the British Empire in his younger days:
On the day Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India, an open air meeting was held in the maidan to the north of the village to announce this declaration. Speeches were made by myself and two relations of mine. At the end of the meeting sweetmeats were distributed to all (47).

In the eighth chapter titled, "The Samaj, Sangat and Brahma Niketan", the author throws light on the Brahmo way of life. The careful grooming of prospective Brahma missionaries was taking place through a systematic, prescriptive lifestyle:

On the weekly meeting day they had to say how they had spent the week, whether their daily devotions had been fervent, whether they had regularly attended the Samaj services, the Sangat and the Theological School (under Kesav) and whether they had done anything seriously wrong. Everyone had to keep a diary and in that they had to record the substance of the Sunday sermon in the Mandir and that of the conversation which took place in the Sangat. Immediately after my joining the Chhota Sangat, I was asked by my fellow members, "What is the special object of your life?" (40).

The use of "had to" as imperatives in the above passage conveys the prescriptive nature of religious training that the young Brahmas underwent. But it is interesting that they were made aware of the philosophy that life has a goal and that one should identify the goal of life:

That every one has a special object to fulfil in his life, I had heard from my cousin when I was only twelve years old. The first question in the question-paper on Sadhana of the Brahma Vidyalaya conducted by the Maharishi and the Brahmananda was 'What is the object of your life?' Asked to explain this question, my cousin had said, that, "the general object of everyone's life is union with God,
but besides this general object, every one comes to the world to do some particular work. What this particular work is, every one has to find out by thought and prayer." This question about the special object of my life now came seriously before my mind (40).

Tattvabhushan's narrative foregrounds his cousin as a mature and independent thinker and Tattvabhushan as one who moulded himself under his influence. The other major influence was Keshub Chandra Sen. However, writing the autobiography several years after significant developments in the Brahma Samaj, Tattvabhushan subtly hints at future events of dissent in contrast to the sincere devotion of the young Brahmas during his younger years. The lines share with an informed insider audience quite subtly Keshub's later failings as a guru figure. There are pointed references in the autobiography to the attitudinal changes among the members of the Samaj in later years. These factors lead the reader to re-read the History of the Samaj in a different light altogether:

The fear of Guruism, the question whether a Guru is infallible or not, had not yet entered our minds. Our object was to cultivate spirituality with the help of an advanced spirit . . . That Kesav had consented to take charge of us, gladdened us so much, that we resolved to spend the whole night in prayer and hymns. We went to the College Square Park, which had no seats then. We spent several hours there in praying and singing and parted when the night was nearly over. I give these details, as they will explain the difference between the condition of the Brahma Samaj, specially of young Brahmas, of those days, and their condition at the present time (41-42).

As Pandit Sivanath Sastri's History of the Brahma Samaj shows us, the difference in the perspectives on religion within the Samaj, generation after generation since Maharishi's time had to a great extent adversely influenced its
growth instead of enriching it. The reason can be traced to the prescriptive and
dogmatic rhetoric and worship methods followed by the Samaj.

The chapters that depict Tattvabhusan's initiation into Brahmaism
show that after all it was not an unproblematic exercise. Members of the Hindu
community had varying perspectives on Brahmaism. Brahmas were ex-
communicated from their respective caste and Sitanath Tattvabhusan faced
the same fate. However Tattvabhusan also shows in the autobiography that
some Hindus believed that Brahmaism was not essentially different from
Hinduism in its basic tenets:

My uncle seemed to know, what many people did
not know then, and do not know even now, that
Brahmaism is taught in the Hindu Sastras. When his
eldest son and I embraced Brahmaism, we were
bitterly persecuted and continually vilified. He did
not join in this hostile treatment of us. This
surprised and displeased other members of the
family, so much so that they once remonstrated with
him concerning this. In reply to their question why
he did not take us to task, he said, ‘What shall I say
to them? The religion they profess is taught in our
sastras. Then turning to us he said, "What you
profess is indeed true, but, you should attend to
what is said of the wise...." I found that my uncle,
though advising us to respect custom, was not its
slave. It is slavery to custom, though knowing it to
be wrong, that leads people to persecute reformers”
(21-22).

The autobiography gives us an impression that the youth disenchanted with
superstitious practices Hindu religion could find an alternative in Brahmaism.
II

Contemplation

This section is an analysis of chapters X-XII of the autobiography. Tattvabhushan rightly identifies his aptitude for the study of religion and philosophy and systematically proceeds with it after procuring a teaching job. Jnana facilitates the quest of the self by impelling one to go beyond implicit faith. The chapters are a record of his progress in that direction. I shall analyse his contemplation as a documentation of resistance, which in turn contributes to nationalist thought.

Tattvabhushan, unlike Keshub and others, began by reading Western Philosophy. Tattvabhushan's studies in Western Philosophy was not unusual. The educated elite in Bengal increasingly turned to the West, even at times devaluing Hindu ideas and practices. What Tattvabhushan did was to first study Western Philosophy and then to see what precisely were the objections to Hindu values and to approach the whole question in an open unprejudiced way. He attempted to give a Theology to Brahmaism. In the process he exposes, the shallowness of thought and methodology of the Brahma leaders Tattvabhushan began with a study of Sir William Hamilton's Lectures on Metaphysics and became an admirer of Berkeley's Idealism. Tattvabhushan after reading Mill does a caveat to readers:

On reading his Three Essays, in which he says he sees no firm basis of Theism, I found that he had written it without reading the best works on the subject, so that though it would mislead the shallow and the thoughtless, it would do no harm to thoughtful and well-informed men (51-52).

Further search leads him to read the basis of Keshub's philosophical defence of faith based on "the so called Scotch Philosophy". The use of the expression "so-called" casts a critical glance at the way Scotch Philosophy was
understood by Brahmas to defend their theistic stance in a land already bestowed with philosophical wisdom. Reliance on such modes of current thought had its counter effects too:

According to them the ultimate cause of the world is an Unknowable Power. Thus the so called Scotch Philosophy, to which Brahma leaders like Brahmananda Keshsav Chandra Sen and many English thinkers also had looked up to as a philosophical defence of Theism, ultimately came to that Agnosticism which swayed English thought for several decades (52).

This finding in his course of study makes Tattvabhushan realise a number of failings on the part of the Brahma leaders as spokespersons of a new religion. Tattvabhushan also feels that they took no note of the intellectual trends in the social set up of the period while preaching their religion. Tattvabhushan realised that Brahmaism was also inching towards establishing Theism on the basis of mere faith. For those who looked beyond implicit faith even Brahmaism, that attacked idolatry on the basis of rationalism, could not provide a basis for religion. However Tattvabhushan holds that it was not as though an answer was unavailable. But no one was inclined to look beyond and address questions regarding religion and faith from the point of view of an agnostic or an atheist. Tattvabhushan undertakes this task all by himself. Tattvabhushan also boldly indicates through the force of his findings that Brahmaism became something like an uncritical trust in the Brahma leaders:

Agnosticism, either of the Comtist or Spencerian species, reigned supreme among the educated classes of India in the seventies and eighties of the last century. But the Brahma leaders took no notice of this, far from making any attempts to meet. It seemed from what they said in their discourses and addresses that they had found a basis for religious faith which
was above philosophy, which was untouched and untouchable by it. But by reading their writings and having close talks with them I could find no such basis in their views. That Philosophy includes all thoughts and beliefs, the logical as well as the intuitive, if the two could possibly be separated, they did not know, and their recent followers also do not know.... Whenever the need of philosophical thought and study is urged, the invariable answer from these gentlemen is, "How could Jesus and Muhammad who were not philosophers, have such a burning faith in God?" It is the old appeal to prophetic authority though not confined to one man, book or school. Brahmaism, except in a very few, has not yet become a free religion. Its trust in 'great men' is unshaken. No wonder that the current creeds, founded on blind belief, are still triumphant. However, mere appeals to faith had, for me, failed forever. So I grappled forcibly with the Agnosticism which I found among the thoughtful. In trying to see its errors, I studied first Martineau, secondly Berkeley, and thirdly British Neo-Hegelianism (52-53).

The reason for Hinduism's abiding presence despite various cultural invasions is basically because it has been able to constantly critique itself. The Vedanta, Advaita Vedanta, Vishishtadvaita, Mimamsa, Nyaya and Vaisheshika are all reflections of Hinduism's critical perspectives on itself. They stand for variegated paths of or processes of God-pursuit within jnana yoga. They have been rendered in a logical, argumentative, dialogic and persuasive rhetoric describing (and not prescribing) various possibilities of intellectual and intuitive conclusions on the nature of existence. As Swami Sivananda points out in one of his lectures, "Do not for a moment imagine that the Upanishads are abstruse philosophical dissertations on the nature of Supreme Brahman or on the creation of the universe: no, no...... they tell you what the Self is and how to realise It?" (Sivananda 1959: 15). Brahmaism, as we shall see in both Tattvabhushan's and Pandit Sivanath Sastri's opinions, by discarding the
Upanishads failed to device a time-tested methodology and encourage free-thought. In the process, it became prescriptive and failed to entertain dissent. Schism was the direct outcome of such a stance.

One must admit at this point that to analyse Tattvabhusan's philosophical inquiry meticulously documented in the tenth and eleventh chapters, one has to be a student of Philosophy oneself. The documentation serves as a good guide for those who are interested in pursuing comparative study of Philosophy — Eastern and Western. At this point I wish to move on to examine the manner in which the development of thought over the years of his Philosophical inquiry has been represented in the eleventh chapter. The author writing the autobiography years after his meticulous inquiry could not possibly recollect the details of all the books read, individual responses to each and the formulation of ideas and one's own conclusions drawn at that point of time. Moreover, observations might have undergone significant changes as well. When philosophical quest becomes the basis of self-definition, how does one record those details in an autobiography? The eleventh and central part and also the longest chapter in Tattvabhusan's autobiography provides an answer. This chapter comes as an anthology of excerpts from his diary entries during the period of his inquiry and is a telling account of the seriousness of his life's objective to seek God beyond "mere faith". Both in form and content, chapter XI can be read as adding a new dimension to the act of writing autobiography and the author's mode of communicating his perception of the self.

In this chapter, the authorial voice recedes and allows the reader to meet the persona of the author as a diarist from 4 October 1886 to 17 July 1936. These fifty years of meticulous study and philosophical inquiry presented objectively by the author are significant for various reasons. First while we laudatorily remember Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen, popular figures of the Brahma Samaj, history fails to let us perceive such fine minds whose independent spirit of inquiry contributed to a cultural and
intellectual dialogue between the East and the West. It is not surprising if we have never had Philosophers after Adi Sankara to authoritatively quote from. We hesitate to Boldly apply the philosophical perspectives of Adi Sankara or others to various fields of knowledge (for the simple reason that these are considered religious philosophy and hence non-secular) while we continue to study, and with great pride, quote Western philosophers in academic circles. Tattvabhusan's autobiography shows how he was let down at various intellectual circles when he came up with his treatises like *Brahmajijnasa* and *Philosophy of Brahmaism*.

The diary embodies the dialogue Tattvabhusan initiates between various schools of thought both within Eastern and Western Philosophy and between Eastern and Western Philosophy. Tattvabhusan's philosophical sketches in the diary in fact is a representation of many voices and thought processes at work in the India during the period. Tattvabhusan has achieved what perhaps Kesu, the Maharishi or Rammohan Roy failed to achieve and that was finding a strong philosophical base for *Brahmaism* after a thorough and considered study of the philosophies of the East and West. Tattvabhusan's findings remain anachronistic for the reason that Brahmaism's popularity dwindled once the charismatic spell of its leaders was broken. Moreover, the centrality that religion enjoyed during the pre-colonial days particularly till the early twentieth century in people's lives is absent now. Science has taken over. Indeed Tattvabhusan's lectures entided *Philosophy of Brahmaism* address science and religion as analogous, not dichotomous, to each other.

Diaries and journals, as Olney points out, are written "to the moment rather than from a retrospective time and stance." Drawing insights from postmodern theory, Olney also observes that ideas about the "self are constructs rather than eternal truths and that diaries and journals may be read as modes of signification, as linguistic representations derived from the many discourses available at a particular historical moment (Olney 1988: 128-29)."
Tattvabhushan's diary entries intertwine social and personal aspects to such an extent that the author's perception of the self is linked to the larger cause of the Samaj. The "self in Tattvabhushan and other texts examined in this study is realised not as the centre but as a part of the whole world-drama or "construct" of the mind. Here for instance, the diary entries in themselves work as a resistance narrative as he meticulously studies and challenges certain Western philosophical perspectives which had begun to influence the Western educated elite. Here the authorial self is not the centre, but a part of the larger cause. The chapters and diary entries spanning 50 years of Tattvabhushan's study strike us at the outset as an exhaustive bibliography of theistic philosophy that also provides an insight into the methodology of reading and investigation into such a discipline. Here is an example:

...I grappled forcibly with the Agnosticism which I found among the thoughtful. In trying to see its errors, I studied first Martineau, secondly Berkeley, and thirdly British Neo-Hegelianism.

To understand the last named school of philosophy, one must comprehend first the philosophy of Kant. With this object in view I took up first Sterling's *Text-Book to Kant* (Tattvabhushan 1942: 53).

Such a bibliography provides an insight into the intellectual inclination of such readers in colonial India. Moreover as pointed out earlier it throws light on the argumentative rhetoric that attempts logically to deduce a thesis from a questioning stand. It is a seeker's consistent dialogue and argument with texts in the absent-presence of their authors. Further, the diary entries provide glimpses into the persona of the autobiographer in his multiple roles as a diarist, reader, learner/seeker, reviewer, interpreter and critic of the books he studied:
October 4, 1886. Comments on books read.—Have read the following:—(1) Hume's Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, (2) his Treatise on Human Nature (with the exception of the third part), . . . The weakness of Hume's philosophy is most clearly seen in his attempt to explain personal identity, as J.S. Mill does more unambiguously afterwards. Seth's book is very pleasant reading, but I have learnt little from it, - a very tantalising book. Seth tries to show that the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is a most strange hallucination, but he utterly fails....He [Stoke] wants to establish a sort of Dualism as against Hegel, but goes not a step farther from the Hegelian standpoint except in the use of a few paradoxical and almost unmeaning expressions" (57-58). . . . to me, any account of philosophical theories which is not critical, fails to be interesting and instructive in the fullest sense (85).

In other words, in this chapter there is an interesting interplay of the multiple voices of the author himself as an autobiographer, diarist, reader, critic and philosopher. Moreover, as is clear from the above quotation, the many voices of the authors and philosophers he has read find their voices in his entries. Some of the entries even quote at length, passages from the books he has read with documentation. The authorial voice makes a selection of entries. He gives only "extracts from the diary of this period of my life,...."(57). Though the sense of public audience is absent, the entries anticipate future reference by the diarist himself. As the entries address his own thinking processes, the dialogues between the self as a diarist and the self as a reader cannot be missed:

However, I must now study modern Vaishnavaism more thoroughly than I have done before. I think of carrying out an intention which comes into my mind now and then, — that of undertaking a critical examination of Vaishnavaism both in its ancient and modern forms (67).
This also helps in reiterating certain points of view in the diarist's memory. The entries also record his changing perspectives. The act of reading is recorded as an experience:

However, my Krishna studies this year matured my already formed view of the mythical character of Krishna, and I feel great satisfaction at this. . . . From my Sankhya and Yoga studies I got a much clearer idea of these systems than I ever possessed. (60-61).

Tattvabhushan as a debater in his course of inquiry, critiques the works that represent Oriental texts. Such an observation works as a caveat to the uninitiated and as a representation of texts within texts. For instance after reading Rhys David's American Lectures on Buddhism and The Creed of Buddhism by an anonymous author, he evaluates the latter:

It proves in a remarkable way what was once revealed to me in a dream and its interpretation, namely that Buddha is the very impersonation of the religion of the Upanishads. Rhys David and Paul Carus are both shown to be misinterpreters of Buddha so far as they make him out to be an Atheist or Agnostic (59-60).

From the author's rather minute account of the Mimansists, — Jaimini, Kumarila, Prabhakara, etc., — they seem to be philosophers in the true sense, and not mere Ritualists, as Europeans like Max Muller represent them to be (84).

Tattvabhushan clearly emerges as one who is in quest of a philosophical basis for faith. After examining the agnostic, and the atheistic forms of philosophical discourse, he also identifies certain so-called religious philosophical perspectives that end in irreligion. Referring to Bosanquet's perspectives in The Principle of Individuality and the Destiny of the Individual he notes in the diary:
This unsatisfactory conclusion, at which the author arrives, seems to be due to the absence of any religious life, properly so called, in him, and indicates the decay of real religion in the higher philosophical circles of England (65).

He also compares this with Monism and feels that the fate of Monistic philosophy in India has also been the same. This is a view he records in 1919 and years later, he re-discovers Monism in a new light altogether as we shall see later. Another perspective that comes through significantly is regarding the mechanistic view of the universe which he does not agree with:

[June Sorley's] The materialistic or mechanistic view, however, is given the credit of explaining the order of nature so far as it concerns the conservation of energy. But when we pass from the quantitative to the qualitative aspect of nature, the mechanistic explanation fails. Of life and mind it offers no explanation whatever (78).

The dates provided from the diary entries also help us to identify quite often the dominant strain of thought not only in the author as a reader but also among the intelligentsia during that period. For instance, the influence of Einstein's Theory of Relativity on the thinkers of the period in Europe is clear in some of the texts he has read. In response to Haldane's Reign of Relativity he writes:

By "relativity" the author means the degree of truth attaching to conceptions formed at various standpoints, for instance those from which the various special sciences deal with reality. The treatment of Einstein's views on the relativity of space and time which are said to have revolutionised modern Physics and led to a rejection of Newton's views, is quite new to me (70-71)
The entry shows Tattvabhushan's access to this knowledge in the year 1923, much after Einstein in fact proposed the theory in 1905. The concept of the "static Absolute" outside the "real world" proposed by some of the Western thinkers like Bosanquet based on dualism can be seen intuitively challenged by Tattvabhushan in his diary. He seems to agree with Jones's criticism of such a view based on relativity:

In his eighteenth lecture he first criticises Mr. Bradley's opposition of religion and philosophy, showing that knowing may be incomplete, but not, on that account, erroneous. Jones illustrates the co-existence of unity and difference by reference to social and religious experience, and shows Bradley's Absolute is not a real unity. Jones's chief contribution to the criticism of Bradley and Bosanquet is the exposition of the relativity of change and eternity, the impossibility of anything static, and the representation of the Absolute as a process (73).

The linkage between Modern Physics and Western Philosophy was then perhaps yet to be built up and popularly known. It is in this sense that one sees Tattvabhushan's inquiry anticipating Yogananda's rhetoric which we shall consider in the next chapter. The entries show him as one who has reservations about Vaishnavism, particularly its sensuous character. His frequent encounters with the Bhagavadgita are noted in the diary and do reflect the Western perspectives on Vaishnavism. However, towards the end of the entries we find him slowly recognising its spiritual message through convincing interpretations of the Bhagavata.

As a reader he is sensitive to style and language and also to the rhetoric of philosophy. There is ruthless criticism of the shallowness of style and lack of clarity in thought of some writers. In this sense, his criticism throws light on some of the famous intellectuals of the period whose works have been widely
recognised. The entries also reveal the fact that Tattvabhushan was also a prolific writer: "February 10, 1929. The literary labours of the year did not leave much time for study" (92). This is however made clear in his subsequent chapters that throw light on his activities as a Brahma. His study also reveals his extreme sensitivity to the rhetoric of philosophy and the nexus between words, meaning and thought:

Berkeley's argument he [Pringle-Pattison] calls 'circular', but he does not, as he evidently cannot, show it to be so. His only argument seems to be that though the object is necessarily related to the subject in knowledge, it need not be so out of knowledge. But 'out of knowledge' is a mere phrase without any conceivable meaning (74-75).

The entries also show that he read and formed opinions on Vivekananda, and Tilak's interpretation of the Gita. He holds that Tilak however fails to take note of the historical findings regarding the time of composition of the Gita. The next chapter titled “Vedantism and Brahmaism” recapitulates the findings in Tattvabhushan's study. He had pre-conceived notions regarding Hindu philosophy particularly the Upanishadic doctrines as lacking "method". It is interesting to note that Tattvabhushan returns with zest to the Upanishads after he finds parallels in Neo-Hegelianism which of course provided a "method". The strength of the Upanishads is that it leaves the seeker to find and adopt one's own "method" even allowing for dissent. Had the Upanishads provided a "method" it would have become effete. The author realises this:

When I had adopted Absolute Idealism as my philosophical creed, led to it by the Kantian method of criticising experience and the Dialectical Method of Hegel, I felt that Vedantism, of which I had got an idea from the Vedantic works just named, was very much like western Idealism inspite of its want of method. This feeling led me to a fresh study of
Vedantism — a study much deeper than I had already gone through. Besides other things I studied the twelve principal Upanishads, the Gita and the Brahmastras with the help of Acharya Sankara's commentary on the ten Upanishads, Acharya Sankarananda's commentary on the Kaushitaki and the Svetasvatara, and the Bhagavadgita and the Brahmastras with Sankaracharya's commentaries on them. I also read what Acharya Ramanuja has said in his commentary on the Brahmastras against Sankara's Mayavadi (Illusionist) exposition of the Vedanta. All this convinced me that the Brahmavada, Theism, of the principal Upanishads, which constitutes the Vedanta in the primary sense, is fundamentally identical with what I understand and accept as Brahmaism (104-5).

The spiritual quest of the author takes him on a philosophical odyssey through various schools of thought, both Eastern and Western. The eleventh chapter is central and constitutes the essence of his quest for self-realisation through jnana. The author's identity crisis, torn as he is between his Hindu origins and his Brahma convictions was in fact the impulse to carry out this quest. Tattvabhushan points out in the last chapter of the autobiography that he was, after his faith in image worship was shaken, influenced by his cousin and other Brahmas. It is to be noted that his anxiety did not end there. He was then only a "prayerful Brahma" (123). He had had not inquired into the proofs of Brahmaism. His general object in life, of realising God, became clear in his fourteenth year. "I wanted to know, and not merely to believe in, the God I worshipped" (123). Tattvabhushan rightly identifies the distinction between having "faith" in God and "knowing" God. As regards "faith", no Brahmas he met were able to enlighten him:

They had no serious doubts about the truth of Theism, and what light they wanted on the subject they found in the writings of the English and American Theists, Theodore Parker, Francis William
Newman and Miss F.P. Cobbe. I studied their works carefully and with pleasure, but found them shallow and unsatisfactory. They were not philosophers in the proper sense, but they did me the service of introducing to me some eminent philosophers whom I might and did study philosophy with profit. The Brahma leaders of those days seemed to know and admire only the Scotch Philosophers, Reid and his followers. Kesavchandra spoke of Sir William Hamilton as "the greatest of thinkers." The revolution created by Hume's thorough-going Scepticism seemed quite unknown to our leaders. They had not been aroused, as Kant was, from their 'dogmatic slumber' (123-24).

Tattvabhusan points out how this dogmatic slumber even among the widely acknowledged "learned men" of the Samaj became detrimental to the growth of the Samaj. This convinces him as to the reason why "so many well educated people of the country did not join the Samaj. Apparently they regarded current Brahmaism to be as dogmatic as current Hinduism and saw no reason why they should leave the old society for the new" (125). Tattvabhusan expresses his indignation regarding the indifference of the Samaj members towards agnostic and sceptical attitudes prevalent among the young people of India which in fact needed to be combated through a competent convincing philosophical rhetoric. The resistance among the followers of the "great men" in the Samaj towards a philosophical inquiry into Brahmaism had in fact stifled free thinking in the practice of religion. This dogmatic slumber in the limited sphere of religion in fact led Tattvabhusan to recognise and carry out his special object of life - that of writing a philosophical defence of theism in a systematic manner. The use of the expression "defence" is important for he has in mind the necessity to address, argue and persuade those who were influenced by the enemies of religion - agnosticism and skepticism that developed out of a limited and lopsided exposure to Western thought. It is important that he does this after
intellectually traversing these dissenting positions and not with a pre-judicial concept of the existence of any God-head. In articulating such trends of the period and by critiquing the indifference of the Brahma leaders and followers the autobiography becomes a document of resistance to the intellectual hegemony of the West. It is also a resistance text by the very fact that he establishes, in recording his years of deep study, that there is a rational ground and method for theism, that it is possible through the same tool employed by the agnostics, skeptics and atheists to know God. The most shocking finding for him is that the Brahma attitude of holding themselves up as non-Hindus was detrimental to cultural upliftment. As in many such spiritual quests which leave one with a unity of vision, Tattvabhushan's quest too makes him realise that the basis of Hindu faith and the spirit of Brahmaism are the same. The self is realised through this vision.

Tattvabhushan points out that the rejection of Vedantism by the Samaj under Maharishi's leadership,

"hid led to a neglect, on the part of the Brahmas, of our ancient scriptures, and was thus discouraging scholarship and causing spiritual sterility. It had also created an unnecessary gulf between the old and and the new society, leading many Brahmas to call themselves non-Hindus and cease from taking a just pride in the glorious literary and spiritual achievements of the Hindu race (106).

Tattvabhushan critically perceives that the Maharishi had committed a great mistake by rejecting Vedantism as the religion of the Samaj. If we were to examine the history of the Brahma Samaj, and see the reason for discarding Vedantism, it is in fact flimsy. Sivanath Sastri's History of the Brahmo Samaj shows that the younger generation of the Samaj, particularly the rationalists wanted public renunciation of the doctrine of Vedic infallibility following the anti-
Christian agitation of 1845. The inquiry into the doubts raised by rationalists had in fact been peripheral:

Doubts had arisen, . . . and these doubts were further confirmed by what the four Brahmins, educated at Benares, said with regard to the Vedas themselves. As soon, therefore, as the clouds that had gathered around the brow of the leader began to clear off, complaints became audible . . . . Devendranath also, after a personal visit to Benares in 1847 to meet the Benares Pandits and after prolonged enquiries, began to entertain doubts as to the reasonableness of that doctrine (Sastri 1974: 68).

Tattvabhushan after his philosophical pilgrimage argues that the Upanishads do not appeal to the Vedic Mantras or the early rishis as authorities to be implicidy followed. Their appeal, he says "is to reason and experience and they differ among themselves a great deal" (Tattvabhushan 1942: 106). Further he argues that "the acceptance of a historical religion implies the acceptance of its fundamental principles, and not acknowledging the correctness of all that is taught in the scriptures" (105). He quotes the examples of Adi Sankaracharya and Rammohan Roy who treated the scriptures with a lot of freedom in their practice of religion. Tattvabhushan's sense of loss and disenchantment at the sad turn of events due to lack of thorough understanding of the scriptural methods and the consequent cultural demoralisation that Hindus and Brahmos suffered in a colonial context cannot be ignored. Tattvabhushan's odyssey shows that it was the rationalist's own mistaken understanding of "reason" and "rationality" that led to the questioning of scriptural "authority". The Maharishi's failure to undertake a considered dialogic examination of what was popularly perceived by the young generation of "rationalists" as "rational" and what they perceived as "irrational" in scriptures had in fact led to the sorry state of affairs and subsequent reliance on "intuitive religion". The irreversibility of
time, history and events is something that looms large before the readers as we come to this chapter of the autobiography. Despite Tatvabhusan's brilliant expositions the Brahmas who belonged to other dispensations of the Samaj, as Kopf points out, did not accept his views:

Tatvabhushan's crusade made him the target of abuse from religiously inspired Brahmos, who began to accuse him of representing "the rise of scholasticism in the Brahmo Samaj". Sitanath was singled out as the philosopher wishing to replace "our generation of faith with the solid rock of logic. Through him and those like him, dry intellectualism has crept into the Brahmo ideal" (Kopf 1988: 82).

There is another side to this:

Much of this criticism seems to have come from the New Dispensation branch of Brahmos, who were quick to point out that sterile intellectualism differed little from secular humanism. But in fact, the younger generation of Keshubite Brahmos did support Tatvabhushan because they too saw the need for a Brahmo theology. Though the Keshubite philosophers were more inclined to use theology to find a compromise between "faith and reason", their approach to the problem was philosophic, and the end they sought was not that different from Tatvabhushan's (82).

III

Action

Chapters thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen of Tatvabhushan's work convey his view of work being worship. Tatvabhushan's period of karma yoga in fact coincides with his period of jnana yoga. He was a teacher, lecturer, a Brahma and a gruhasta. Like most Brahmas of the period, he too married a widow of 16 years of age when he himself was 29. Years after her death, he
married a Brahmika. He was also involved in missionary work, twice at the "Cocanada" Brahma Samaj (now Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh). The autobiography also provides glimpses of other people involved in the Samaj activities and also the erstwhile royal family that patronised their efforts, particularly the Maharaja and Maharani of Pithapuram, Andhra Pradesh who were known for their philanthropy. Tattvabhushan's narrative shows how language differences during missionary work in the Godavari District acted as a barrier in facilitating a wider reach and also engagement with people who did not know English. His engagements in a multi-lingual culture and his ambivalence towards the role of English in that context cannot be missed:

I need hardly say that everything had to be done in English except in the case of the singing. Mrs. Chaudhuri's hymns were fairly understood in these places owing to a large admixture of Sanskrit words in them which are common to both northern and southern India, and were very much liked. The services and the lectures, which were in English, must have been fully understood (Tattvabhushan 1942: 117, emphasis mine).

Then came the reading of poems in Telugu, 'the Italian of the East,' by four poets. I could understand nothing of these poems, but nevertheless I felt them to be extremely sweet (120, emphasis mine).

The last chapter shows the convergence of his general object of life with the special object of it:

I waited long for the revelation of God's will as to the special object of my life, and it was as late as my 27th year when I began to feel after it. The feeling gradually became clear, and now, in my 87* year, when my life-work is done, and life may close any day, I may perhaps confidently say that I have not made a mistake about it. The revelation has come
quite naturally. There is nothing mystical about it. It came out of a want deeply felt (122).

Tattvabhusan's appeal to the intellect becomes clear when he resists any possibility of attributing "mysticism" to this inner call. Tattvabhusan closes with a feeling of accomplishment regarding the task he had undertaken. However he does leave a message for posterity when he criticises the dogmatic slumber of the Brahmases. He is confident that Brahmaism will become the future religion of the world if people were to follow up the earnest and strenuous life of sadhana holding forth brhamavada and bridging the gulf between the old and new Brahmaism which he had initiated through his life and writings. Tattvabhusan's autobiography ends on a note of withdrawal. He withdraws behind the screen of time and leaves a vision of hope for the future.

Though Tattvabhusan's autobiography does not come under the category of the autobiographies by enlightened masters like Yogananda, Ramdas and Purolit Swami, there is no doubt that he was a spiritual man. He was also not a popular figure like Gandhiji, nor did he have the charismatic stature of Brahma leaders like Rammohan Roy, the Maharishi or Keshub Chandra Sen. However one needs to realise after reading Tattvabhusan that charisma is not the sole criterion of leadership. Fully aware of his own shortcomings and never wanting to become popular or dissenting, Tattvabhusan's criticisms are constructive in nature. Tattvabhusan's "truths" are yet to see the light of day. Despite the disenchantment with the course of events he had a strong desire to unite Brahma creeds through a unifying vision of wisdom. Such leaders unsung by history would live through their autobiographies. In fact such documentation show how the nation carried itself forward through trying moments of western intellectual hegemony. Jnana yoga is a consistent inquiry carried out in an argumentative, dialogic, inquisitive rhetoric within oneself and between oneself and other opposing or similar modes of thought. Adi Sankaracharya's Advaita Philosophy that won over his
intellectual adversaries and rejuvenated decadent Hinduism reflects the context, argumentation and dialogic aspects of his pursuit of jnana yoga. Even his parakaayapravesha (leaving one’s body to enter another) into the lifeless body of a king was in pursuit of a knowledge forbidden to sannyasins only to equip himself adequately and then to disprove authoritatively his adversary's point of view. Tattvabhusan's autobiography also shows that perhaps Brahmaism was not understood even by its progenitors in its fullest spirit. The mode and method of its pursuit was not identified reasonably enough to stand the test of generations of varying intellectual inclinations like atheism, agnosticism or skepticism. The long years that Tattvabhusan had to spend carefully studying varying philosophical perspectives treading unknown paths shows much remained to be done within Brahma tradition. His path of inquiry and rhetoric shows how he traversed all these dissenting labyrinthine fields of thought to reach his conclusions. It is this insistent dialogic method in his philosophical pursuit that makes this autobiography a document of effective resistance to Western intellectual hegemony and a contribution to nationalism. Tattvabhusan also strikes a fine balance when his jnana yoga provides him a spiritual vision of the relationship between individual and society. The following lines from his Brahmajijnasa, will prove this point:

**Ethical** development is an idea of expanding conscience and consciousness. The individual develops by extending his morality to include domestic life, tribe and nation, humanity (universal brotherhood) and beyond humanity the Universal Father or Universal Source of which humanity itself is a partial manifestation (qtd. in Kopf 1988: 80).
Notes

1 Gandhiji also pointed out that we cannot do without idol worship in some form or the other. "Why does a Mussalman give his life for defending a mosque which he calls a house of God? And why does a Christian go to a church, and when he is required to take an oath, he swears by the Bible? Not that I see any objection to it. And what is it if not idolatry to give untold riches for building mosques and tombs? And what do the Roman Catholics do when they kneel before Virgin Mary and before saints, quite imaginary figures in stone or painted on canvas or glass? Even so, it is not the stone we worship, but it is God we are worshipping in images of stone or metal, however crude they may be" (Gandhi 1969: 105).

2 "We can begin to conceptualize diary and journal as we expose the manifold meanings, silences and discontinuities in the texts, and question the assumptions about experience and identity that the texts ratify and challenge" (Olney 1988: 128-29).

3 Even Derrida's view of meaning as relative, a view that challenged logocentrism in Western metaphysics, seems to have a strong bearing on Einstein's Theory of Relativity.