Chapter 5

Upadhyay’s Interpretation of Catholic Identity

Introduction

Upadhyay’s interpretation of Catholicism, as in the case of Hinduism, goes through various evolutionary stages. We can group these into four stages, each one characterized by a significant shift in perspective. It must be noted that these changes in Brahmabandhab’s perspective entail continuities as well as discontinuities in the sense that while some perspectives are carried on to the next phase in an amplified form whereas other perspectives undergo mutations. Given the micro perspective of investigation involved, a diachronic method is adopted in this chapter. The chapter consists of four sections corresponding to the four evolutionary stages of Upadhyay’s interpretation of Catholicism and they are as follows: (1) Upadhyay as a Catholic apologist (2) the phase of Upadhyay’s Hindu-Catholicism (3) Upadhyay’s critical appraisal of Christianity and (4) Upadhyay’s Catholic faith during his nationalist engagement.

1. First Phase: Upadhyay as Catholic Apologist

The first phase of Upadhyay’s engagement with Catholicism begins with his baptism in 1891 during which he actively engaged himself as an apologist for his newfound religion and this phase lasted till 1896. There are three significant aspects to be noted during this phase: (1) Upadhyay’s religious activism (2) his interpretation of mission and (3) his hermeneutics.

1.1 Upadhyay’s Religious Activism

Soon after he became a Catholic Bhavani engaged in a vigorous religious activism which consisted in the defense of Catholic religion and a critique of various religious groups. He gave a number of lectures on various topics and published some tracts during this period. A significant aspect of his religious activism was the beginning of the journal Sophia (monthly) in 1894 which became a springboard for Bhavani to express his views on a number of religious issues. Two broad categories can be found in Upadhyay’s critique of religious groups: (1) Protestantism and (2) Hinduism. Within Hinduism Upadhyay targeted two groups: (a) Neo-Hinduism and (b) traditional Hinduism. Neo-Hinduism consists of various
reformist or revivalist groups within Hinduism such as (i) Theosophy (ii) Brahmoism and (iii) Arya Samaj. Upadhyay criticized certain aspects of traditional Hinduism such as (i) Advaita Vedanta (ii) doctrine of karma (iii) rebirth and (iv) what Upadhyay termed as Hindu 'polytheism.' In the articles dealing with Protestants, Arya Samaj and Theosophy we find Upadhyay's style more aggressive.

1.2 Upadhyay's Critique of Protestantism

Upadhyay's critique of Protestantism can be seen in four articles entitled “Was Luther a Reformer?” in *Sophia*. These articles owed their origin to a lecture given by Rev. Abigail, the Principal of C. M. S. High School in Karachi in 1892. According to Animananda these lectures had been thoroughly Protestant and anti-Catholic and Bhavanicharan thought it his duty to respond to these lectures with his own lecture. It was against this background that Upadhyay’s article appeared in *Sophia* (1895) in serialized form of four parts. These articles appeared under the title “Was Luther a Reformer?” in the January, February, July and September issues of *Sophia*. This serialized article reveals Upadhyay’s perspectives as a Catholic apologist. It is a frontal attack on Protestant beliefs and practices mainly focusing on the acts of commission and omission of Luther. Upadhyay seems to have been quite pleased regarding his critique of Luther and the Protestants.

---

1 This aspect has been already dealt with in the previous chapter.

2 According to Animananda, Bhavanicharan gave a lecture in which he made a spirited attack on Luther. Now it was Abigail’s turn to refute Bhavanicharan’s charges. During the lecture Abigail challenged Bhavanicharan who was not present for the lecture but when he came to know about it, accepted it. In the next lecture of Abigail Bhavanicharan went with Fr. Misquetta. During the lecture charges and counter charges were flung at each other by Abigail and Bhavanicharan in an atmosphere which was not entirely Christian. Both brought out tracts defending their respective positions and attacking the position of the opponent. Animananda, *The Blade*, 50-51.


4 Upadhyay wrote to his friend Khemchand from Hyderabad (Sindh) on 21st July, 1893: “My dear Khemchand, From your letter to Parmanand it appears that you have been a little dispirited owing to the unfair attacks on our Protestant brethren. You should rather rejoice that they are giving us opportunities to show to the public how sublime and consistent the doctrines of the Catholic church are. Has not Mr. Abigail made himself a laughing stock?” Source: *Varia* on Brahmarbandhab Upadhyay, Goethal’s Archives, Calcutta.
1.3 Upadhyay's Critique of Theosophy

Upadhyay wrote several articles and gave a number of lectures against Theosophy. Animananda notes that "no opponent was dealt with more fiercely by Upadhyay than Theosophy and its head, Mrs. Annie Besant." According to Animananda, "Upadhyayji believed that Annie Besant had neither understood Hinduism nor Christianity." In a letter written in 1895 to Theosophist Annie Besant, Upadhyay describes the reasons why he left Hinduism and Brahmoism and accepted Catholicism. After his conversion to Catholicism Upadhyay was quite enthusiastic about his new religion which he sought to share with others; it was an enthusiasm which often bordered on militancy. In fact, in his letter to Annie Besant, Upadhyay wrote that he was 'intoxicated' by the new knowledge about the 'destiny of man' provided by his Catholic faith. The same letter gives us glimpses of Upadhyay's enthusiasm and his state of mind: "I am restless day and night. I yearn to make known to my countrymen this glorious privilege which has been conferred upon them by Almighty God and make them accept the Christian and Catholic faith whose sole object is to befit man to attain to his

---


6 Italics in the original. Animananda, The Blade, 61.


8 Upadhyay wrote: "I am a Kanauj Brahman by birth. My original name is Bhavani Charan Vandyaa-Upadhyaya (Banerji), but I am now known as Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab (Theophilus). As a genuine Brahman, I was, while very young, agitated by the desire to know God (Brahmajijnasa), I was proud of my great ancestors, of their Yoga and Brahmavidya (Divine Science), but gradually I came to know that their Supreme Being is an impersonal being, that He is identical with my own self. I felt a natural aversion towards such a doctrine. I left the Hindu fold and joined the Brahmo Samaj which repudiated Advaitavad (Pantheism), But the ideal of the Brahmo Samaj failed to satisfy my cravings. Its highest ideal is to see God only as related to and manifested in His creatures. God Almighty, the Author of my being, in His inscrutable ways, has, at last, brought me to His true fold, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which teaches that the destiny of man is to see Him whose Being is Knowledge and Love, for whom to be is to act - to see the Infinite, self-satisfied Act, having no need of a finite term as Its resultant." Upadhyay Brahmabandhab, "An Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant," Hyderabad (Sindh) November 6, 1895, Sp-M. Julius Lipner and George Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-II, 451.
supernatural end..." In the same letter he stated that he was working for the ‘dissemination of the Catholic faith’ in Sindh and some Hindus seems to have accepted Christianity. However, this had brought about some dissatisfaction among the Hindus who had invited Besant to Sindh. Apparently, Upadhyay wanted a public debate to be held with Besant, of all things, on the topic of ‘the Infinite and His relation to the finite.’ The letter contains Upadhyay’s invitation to Besant for the debate:

I...invite you to a public discussion with me on the above subject (the Infinite and His relation to the finite). I am a Brahman by my present and first birth, and you (Annie Besant) profess to have been a Brahman in your last birth. It is a Brahman’s duty and a Brahman’s privilege to hold religious discussions. Therefore, I venture to approach you with my humble invitation.

He writes in the same letter that though he is not a great man, he is ‘strong in the strength of a faith illuminated by the intellect of St. Augustine, and St. Thomas, exalted by the seraphic ecstasies of St. Francis and St. Bonaventure, and sanctified by the blood of countless martyrs.’ Apparently, Annie Besant declines Upadhyay’s invitation for the public debate. Animananda informs us that ‘Upadhyayji then pursued her as a greyhound chases a stag, from place to place, and delivered lectures against Theosophy in Madras, Bombay, Lahore, Karachi, Sukkur, and Hyderabad, Sindh.”

1.4 Upadhyay’s Critique of Arya Samaj

Upadhyay wrote a number of articles in which he targeted many Arya Samaj doctrines and beliefs. In one of the earliest articles in Sophia the notion of salvation propounded by


10 In his letter to Besant Upadhyay wrote: “The conversion of a few respectable Hindus and the apprehended conversion of a few others have greatly agitated the Hindu community of Hyderabad (Sindh), In their Anxiety the Hindus have invited you here to deliver lectures for the purpose of arresting the progress of the Christian and Catholic religion.” Upadhyay Brahmabandhab, “An Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant,” Hyderabad (Sindh) November 6, 1895, J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-II, 450.


Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, comes under Upadhyay's scrutiny in a detailed manner. According to Upadhyay, Dayananda 'teaches that there is fall from the state of salvation, that the saved souls of one cycle are sent again to the next cycle to the newly created universe and are made liable to sin and subject to birth and death.' Moreover, Dayananda "quotes a *mantra* from an Upanishad, a *sutra* from Vedanta and a verse from the Gita and flatly rejects them as wrong! His ground for rejecting them is that they are contradictory to the Vedas and to reason." Upadhyay goes on to 'examine the reasons by means of which Svami tries to subvert the doctrine of everlasting salvation.' He takes the topic of salvation in the context of Dayananda again after ten months. In this article Dayananda's notion of salvation as only a 'temporary' state comes under attack once more. Dayananda's rejection of all scriptural evidences which are contrary to the Vedas come under Upadhyay's scrutiny and criticism.

Upadhyay also criticized Dayananda's doctrine of 'Niyoga' which appeared in his book *Satyarth Prakash*. This doctrine allowed a woman to have 'temporary connection with other men if her husband happens to be absent from home for three years for the purpose of earning livelihood, or a man to have intercourse with other women during the pregnancy of his wife.' After having described Dayananda's Niyoga doctrine, Upadhyay writes: "We sincerely apologize to our readers for having shocked their sense of modesty by unveiling...

---


before their eyes, with its filthy details, this horrible but prominent teaching of the Arya
Samaj.**

1.5 Upadhyay's Appraisal of Brahmoism

Though Upadhyay wrote on Brahmoism,** he did not target it like Theosophy or Arya Samaj.
In the process of becoming a Catholic Upadhyay had given up his Brahmo religious
perspectives: “As a Brahmo he [Upadhyay] is a thorough eclectic. All religions are true and
his work is to shew [sic] the harmony among them all. In 1891 he is a Roman Catholic and
his eclecticism dies along with his faith in Brahmoism.”

He had witnessed the gradual disintegration of Brahmoism in front of his eyes. In 1894 he noted that the Brahmo Samaj is
being torn into various groups holding different positions ranging from rationalism to
pantheism.*** Lipner notes the tone of Upadhyay’s writings on Brahmoism: “On the whole,
Upadhyay looked back on this movement, now irredeemably splintered in membership and
doctrine, more in sorrow than in anger.”

1.6 Upadhyay’s Interpretation of Mission

During this period Brahmabandhab articulated on the nature of Christian mission. For
Upadhyay, given the missionary nature, the Church is duty bound to proclaim the message of
Christ in its entirety. He asks: “Can a missionary omit the dogmas of his religion, or treat
them as of minor importance, or palliate them, or select from them those that are more to the
taste of all, and leave the rest? No, if he be faithful to Christ he cannot. He has to teach what

---

19 Upadhyay’s chief writings on Brahmoism and on Keshub Chunder Sen in chronological order are as follows:
22 J. Lipner, Brahmbandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 166.
Christ taught."\(^{23}\) Upadhyay points out that Christ has commissioned his messengers 'to announce all his doctrines, the hard as well as the sweet, and has made the humble acceptance of them by faith the necessary condition of salvation.'\(^{24}\) He writes: "It is, therefore, matter of the utmost importance that the messenger of Christ does not adulterate or mutilate the Gospel, since eternal happiness depends on it; else he becomes a traitor to his charge and an impostor to his hearers, whom he deceives by not telling them the full words of Christ."\(^{25}\) According to him, 'Christ knew that his preaching was not palatable to many and he foresaw that it would ever be so... And still he insisted upon his doctrine as the only way to heaven.' "What right," asks Upadhyay, "then, can a Christian missionary have to keep back some doctrines of Christ which are hard? Certainly, that the Hindus do not like such doctrines, is no excuse to the missionary to be silent on them."\(^{26}\)

It is important for us to note that soon after his acceptance of Catholicism Upadhyay had been highly critical of some of the aspects of traditional as well as neo-Hinduism. Some of these critiques of Upadhyay of Hinduism are reflected in his understanding of Christian mission. For instance he writes: "The teaching of Christ is in direct opposition to the Hindu doctrine of transmigration, of the eternity of soul and matter, of the multiplicity of gods and incarnations, and the missionary cannot help emphasizing this opposition, if he be true to his task."\(^{27}\) Having clarified the inherent opposition between the teaching of Christ and some elements of Hinduism Upadhyay makes a distinction between loving people and loving their 'false' doctrines: "Christ's religion is a religion of love; he wants his followers to love all, also those who are not of his fold. But to love a person is one thing, to love his doctrine another; Christ has taught us to love men, that is, their persons, but not their false doctrines."\(^{28}\) For Upadhyay "the truths of Christ are above national likings and dislikings; they are the same for all nations. The church must announce them to all as they are. Without dogmas the Christian


\(^{24}\) B. Upadhyay, "Dogma and Theology," *J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I*, 44.


faith would be a house without walls and foundations, a tree without roots, or, to use a Biblical expression, a field without seed."29

In 1894 Upadhyay proposed the establishment of a central mission with itinerant missionaries who would travel all over the country with a view of confronting ‘principal teachers of Pantheism, Theosophy and other anti-theistic religions and hold public discussions with them.30 In Upadhyay’s view, ‘the itinerant missionaries should be thoroughly Hindu in their mode of living. They should, if necessary, be strict vegetarians and teetotalers, and put on the yellow sannyasi garb.’31

1.7 Upadhyay’s Hermeneutics

During this phase of religious activism, Upadhyay focused on some significant principles of hermeneutics which he would use in later years to base his Hindu-Catholicism. In the first place, he made the distinction between supernatural and natural religion. For Upadhyay, Catholicism is a supernatural religion whereas Hinduism represents natural religion. If the truths of Hinduism belong to the natural plane, for Upadhyay, Catholic faith belongs to the supernatural realm. Being a supernatural religion, for Brahmabandhab, Catholicism is the custodian of revealed truths.32 For Brahmabandhab Catholicism ‘is the only true religion revealed by God to man... A man must surrender himself absolutely to her and uncompromisingly reject everything that is contrary to her teaching is he desires to save his soul.’33

According to Upadhyay Catholicism represents the highest form of Theism: “If we look around we find true Theism, though it is the religion of natural reason, nowhere but in the bosom of the Catholic Church, where it is jealously guarded by her divines and philosophers.”34 In fact, theism becomes one of the key ‘points of contacts’ between

Hinduism and Catholicism, because Upadhyay insisted in several articles that Hinduism does possess theistic truths. According to him, we need to sift through the Hindu thought and retrieve these sublime thoughts which are present in them.

Catholicism, for Upadhyay, is a universal religion. He points out that ‘the truths of Christ are above national likings and dislikings; they are the same for all nations.’ In Upadhyay’s thought, being a universal religion, Catholicism takes on the customs and traditions of each culture. He writes: “It matters very little whether the follower of Christ wears a turban or a topi. The Catholic Church has never taught her converts to give up national customs and habits which are not expressive of superstition.” It is on these theoretical foundations which are present in the seminal form during this stage that Upadhyay would base his Hindu-Catholicism.

2. Second Phase: Hindu-Catholic as Hyphenated Identity
The second phase of Upadhyay’s engagement with Catholicism begins from 1896 and lasts till 1900. During this stage Upadhyay’s main concern consists in presenting Christianity through Hindu categories. This phase is marked by (1) his search for categories (2) efforts in establishing a Catholic math at Jabalpore in 1899 and (3) his articulations about the relationship between Catholicism and caste system. In this section we also focus briefly on Catholic hierarchy’s response to Upadhyay.

2.1 Upadhyay’s Search for Categories
One of the early articles of Upadhyay which deals with the question of categories is titled “The Hymn “Ka” in Sophia monthly (1896). This Sukta or hymn (10.121) is of the tenth mandala (section) of Rigveda and entitled “Ka.” Upadhyay explains: “Ka” in Sanskrit means the interrogative “who.” Each mantra (verse) of this sukta ends with the query: who is that deva [god] whom we should worship with oblation? – and hence the title.” This article is pivotal as far as Brahmabandhab’s search for suitable categories is concerned, for he writes:

Our chief object is to point out to our readers the sublimity of the conception of the Supreme Being contained in the above hymn. We are Christians; we believe in one

Almighty God without a second. We are inveterate foes of Pantheism and polytheism. Still we can chant the Sukta "Ka" in unison with the rishis of old. In this hymn we see how the Word of God fills the whole world and enlightens all persons, whatever time or place they may belong to.\(^{38}\)

Upadhyay's conclusion refers to the points of contact between Hinduism and Christianity: "At any rate it can be safely concluded from what has been stated above that in the Vedas are found a very sublime conception of one supreme Being, the idea of divine generation somewhat resembling the Christian doctrine of divine Sonship, and an account of the sacrifice of the first-begotten of God the virtue of which supreme act is far-reaching."\(^{39}\) This article is significant in the sense that moving beyond the notion of Vedic Theism in general Upadhyay now begins to see specific 'family resemblances' or points of contacts between Hinduism and Christianity.

### 2.2 Catholic Faith and Philosophical Foundation

Another article of Upadhyay which deals with the question of Hindu-Christian synthesis is titled "Hindu Philosophy and Christianity" (1897). The first question he asks in the article is whether philosophy can help in any way a revealed religion which is fixed and all-inclusive. His answer is in the affirmative. According to Upadhyay, philosophy can serve a revealed religion, not by adding or subtracting any doctrine, but by making explicit what is contained in it implicitly 'to satisfy the demands of the developed intellect of man.' Secondly he asks whether any system of philosophy served the Christian revelation. To answer this, Upadhyay notes that the 'philosophy of Aristotle has done the same service to Christianity as the genial warmth of the sun and the nourishing moisture of water do to a plant.' He clarifies the role of philosophy within the framework of the evolutionary nature of the Catholic Church: "The Christianity of the Catholic Church is always the same in substance, in its coordination of parts, in its inviolable integrity, but it develops itself, its possibilities become realities, like a living organism. And it is admitted on all sides that its present developed form is, humanly speaking, largely due to the influence of Greek philosophy." After having built up his arguments logically and historically he asks the third question: 'Can then, Hindu philosophy be of any use to Christianity?'\(^{40}\)

---

Upadhyay’s ‘conversion’ to Advaita of Sankara in 1898 marks an important transition in his approach to Hindu tradition. From this point onwards he tries to reinterpret various Hindu beliefs such as Creation, sin, salvation, karma, maya and rebirth. More importantly, Upadhyay tries to see similarities between some of these Hindu beliefs and Christian doctrines. In other words, from now onwards, Upadhyay’s efforts consist in showing that many of the true Hindu beliefs are compatible with those of Christianity. In the process he tries to steer clear of ‘false’ interpretations of Hinduism.

Some of the articles written by Upadhyay in 1898 in Sophia reflect his growing concerns regarding the urgent need of making Catholicism accommodative to Hindu ways of thinking and living. For instance, in March Upadhyay points out that “converts to Catholicism in general cling to their Indian social customs and change only their religion.” Upadhyay writes: “Religion and caste are quite different and the Catholic Church does not interfere with purely social customs that are not against the law of God.” It is significant to note that for Upadhyay, caste system, which is purely a social custom, is not ‘against the law of God.’ According to Brahmabandhab the converts to Catholicism “should preserve their social customs, their dress and their good manners, their habits of cleanliness and their natural temperance and simplicity, in a word, that they should give no room for the accusation so often repeated that ‘to become a Christian is to be denationalized.’”

2.3 Catholic Matha
Expanding on the seminal ideas written nearly four years earlier about the establishment of a ‘central mission,’ Upadhyay wrote in Sophia (May 1898) about the need to establish a Catholic Monastery in India. Brahmabandhab was convinced that “India will be conquered and brought under the redeeming yoke of the Catholic Church by itinerant monks.” He writes: “Our missionary experiences have gradually led us to the conviction that it is the

sannyasi (monk) alone who is capable of presenting to our countrymen the mysteries of the Catholic faith." He envisages two types of sannyasis namely, the contemplative and the itinerant. On the one hand, the contemplative monks ‘will show by their steady contemplation of the infinite Goodness that it is possible to live the life of God on earth and repair by their self-immolation the injury done to human nature by the ravages of sin.’ On the other hand, the ‘itinerant monks will issue forth from this central Matha and carry the torch of the Catholic faith to the darkest nooks and corners of India.’ According to Brahmabandhab, the proposed Matha ‘should be conducted on strictly Hindu lines. There should not be the least trace of Europeanism in the mode of life and living of the Hindu Catholic monks.’ Moreover, the ‘parivrajakas (itinerants) should be well versed in the Vedanta philosophy as well as in the philosophy of St. Thomas.’

In January 1899 issue of Sophia Brahmabandhab wrote about the plans regarding the new monastery and proceeded to implement the project. Upadhyay chose Jabalpore to begin his Ashram experiment. In the beginning of 1899 Upadhyay, Animananda and one novice Shankarji were seen going barefoot through the streets of Jabalpore. According to the suggestion made by the bishop they went out begging and each one cooked his own meal and observed the customs of his caste. All slept on the floor without pillow and dressed in simple ways. These three were joined by two Brahmin boys, cooks by profession. From morning four to night ten prayer, contemplation and study kept them busy. During the Lent of 1899

48 B. Upadhyay, “The Casthaliac Matha,” Sp-M (May 1898), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 207-209. In an earlier article, Upadhyay had coined a new word for ‘Catholic’ which he explains as follows: “The Sanskrit words ka and sthala mean “time” and “land” respectively. If we join the two words and form an adjective we get the compound kashthaliaka, which means “pertaining to all times and lands.” Hence Kashthaliaka or Catholic faith is a faith which extends to all ages and climes.” B. Upadhyay, “The Clothes of Catholic Faith,” Sp-M (August 1898), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 205.
49 See the five letters (all typescript) written by Upadhyay on this matter: (1) Letter written by Upadhyay to Bishop Pelvat (Nagpur) from Jubbulpore on 14th February, 1899; (2) Letter written by Upadhyay to Bishop Pelvat (Nagpur) from Jubbulpore on 15th February, 1899; (3) Letter written by Upadhyay to Bishop Pelvat (Nagpur) from Jubbulpore on 16th February, 1899; (4) Letter written by Upadhyay to Bishop Pelvat (Nagpur) from Jubbulpore on 17th February, 1899; (5) Letter written by Upadhyay to Bishop Pelvat (Nagpur) from Jubbulpore on 19th February, 1899. Source: Varia on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Indian Library and Research Society Archives.
Upadhyay went to a hill and fasted for forty days. A little food was taken only after the
nightfall; it consisted of a little rice without any salt prepared by Upadhyay himself.51

As we had already noted, at this point in time, things were not going according to
Upadhyay's plans. Delegate Apostolic, Zaleski was not favorably disposed to Upadhyay and
his projects. Animananda informs us that after the initial enthusiasm, the Ashram project did
not go all too well and the two members of the monastery were left to themselves. Upadhyay
returned to Jabalpore after a few months (most probably toward the end of 1899) and closed
down the monastery.52

2.4 Caste as Christian Social Identity
European missionaries had been highly critical of the caste system and such a posture,
according to Upadhyay, went against the receptivity of Christianity by Hindus.53 How does
Upadhyay negotiate the relationship between caste and Christianity? At this point it is
important to recall the distinction made by Upadhyay between natural and supernatural
religion. For him, as a revealed religion, Christianity deals with supernatural truths and has
nothing to do with social realities. In other words, Christianity as religion has nothing do with
social structures. As to whether the attitude of the Catholic Church towards caste distinctions
is compatible with the principle of universal brotherhood, Upadhyay delineates the following
points (1900):

The Church does not attach any sort of sanctity to any person because of his or her
birth, nor make any distinction between the Brahmin and Shudra converts in regard to
spiritual privileges. The latter are taught just the same truths and partake of just the
same ministrations as the former. And the offices of Purohita (priest) and acharya
(Bishop) are open to both alike. The Church does, however, allow converts from
different castes to observe their distinctions as to interdining, intermarrying and the

51 Animananda, The Blade, 80.
52 Animananda, The Blade, 80-81.
53 Forrester notes the prevailing atmosphere of late nineteenth century Christianity: By the late nineteenth
century there was a segment of Indian Christian opinion which was strongly critical of the missionaries,
particularly for their lack of understanding and sympathy for Indian culture and indigenous expression of
Christian faith and their hostility towards the great surge of national feeling. Some of this criticism was
directed against the missionary line on caste, which was interpreted as an aggressive attack on Indian social
structure which totally lacked an understanding of the merits of the caste system and really had nothing except
the probably even more undesirable western class system to put in its place. Duncan B. Forrester, "Indian
Christians' Attitudes to Caste in the Nineteenth Century," Indian Church History Review, Vol. VIII, No. 2
like. At the same time she does not prevent them from dining together or contracting blood relations.  

After having detached the spiritual from the social dimension, Brahmabandhab goes on to delineate the implications of Hindu social customs as follows:

If a Brahmin marries a Shudra woman he forfeits none of his rights in the Church. But he may be socially excommunicated by his fellow Brahmin converts, in which case again the Church does not interfere. The question now is: Is it the duty of the church to enforce interdining and intermarriage as sine qua non of universal brotherhood? And should she interfere when a man is deprived by his castemen of the right of social intercourse with them?  

In the same article he insists that among Christians "distinction is also to be made between the caste system as originally organized and the system as now prevails." Parrying the allegation that the class and caste distinctions have led to India's rise and fall, Upadhyay writes that 'there were other concurrent factors influencing the destinies of nations for good as well as evil. Care should be taken not to attribute more to caste than is justified by facts.' Upadhyay is highly critical of those who want to break the Hindu caste system. His overarching concern is translating Christian faith and practicing it on 'the platform of Hindu life and living and Hindu thought and thinking.' Upadhyay clarifies this thinking on the relationship between caste and Christianity as follows:

We especially advise Christian converts not to be over-hasty in the matter [of breaking caste system]. Unfortunately they are, as a rule, imbued with the European spirit of Christianity. The religion of Christ is fixed, immutable and does not admit of addition and subtraction. But its influence, so far as society, politics, literature, science and art are concerned, varies with racial differences. Europeanism should not be considered to be the invariable, necessary product of Christianity.

After advising the Indian Christians not to break the caste codes Brahmabandhab gives the following warning:

No mistake could be more fatal to progress than to make the Indian Christian community conform to European social ideals because Europeans happen to be prominent in the Christian world. So long as the Christians of India do not practice their faith on the platform of Hindu life and living and Hindu thought and thinking, and elevate the national genius to the supernatural plane, they will never thrive.  

In several articles Upadhyay justifies Hindu caste system by comparing it to the Jewish social exclusivism. Upadhyay asks: “Can a Christian condemn the Jewish law forbidding, as a rule, all social intercourses with the gentiles? Why were the Jews separated socially from other races and tribes?” Upadhyay’s answer to these questions is the following: “To protect them from spiritual deterioration they were sternly fenced off from all contaminating intrusions.”

Upadhyay draws the parallel between the Jewish and the Hindu social exclusivism in the following manner:

> If our Christian converts would care to study the Veda or its translation by profound oriental scholars and not depend upon this or that missionary for knowledge of facts, they will find that the Aryans excluded the non-Aryan Shudras on the same principle as that which led to the total alienation, even in matters of eating and drinking, of the Israelites from other people.

To understand Upadhyay’s position on Jewish exclusivism we need to note three assumptions. First, for Upadhyay, the Jewish social exclusivism is divinely ordained and therefore it should not be tampered with. Secondly, since it is divinely ordained, it is ‘salutary.’ Thirdly, since Jewish social exclusivism is divinely ordained, a Christian is obliged to defend it. Thus on the basis of these presuppositions Upadhyay concludes: “A Christian who is obliged to defend the separation of Jew from Gentile cannot condemn the exclusion of the Shudra from the Aryan fold. And once you admit that the Jewish spirit of aloofness was salutary you are forced to acknowledge that there could be healthy divisions within Aryan pale.”

From what we have seen so far, it becomes clear that in Upadhyay’s interpretation of Christianity caste is a central category. It is central not only for his conception of Hindu nationalism but also for making Catholicism relevant in India. However, we need to note that

---

in the late nineteenth century the Christian perception on the relationship between caste and Christianity was deeply divided. Given the racial and racist proclivity of Upadhyay which seems so natural to his overall thought, whether he could have approached the caste system in any other manner than he did, is an open question.

2.5 Upadhyay and Catholic Hierarchy
As we had noted in previous chapters Upadhyay's writings and ashram project were not met with ecclesiastical approval. However, the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda left one option to Upadhyay, namely, to close the Ashram and go in person to Rome and present his case to the pope. At this point he thought of going to Jerusalem for a pilgrimage and then to Rome with a view of obtaining approval from the Pope for his scheme. There are striking similarities between Upadhyay's and Robert De Nobili's (1577-1656) thinking on adaptation. Upadhyay was quite familiar with the efforts of the Italian Jesuit priest Robert De Nobili who had become a Sannyasi in Madurai. The inculturation methods adopted by De Nobili in the seventeenth century had met with opposition from orthodox Catholic priests who sent angry petitions and protestations to Rome. But the Jesuit superiors of De Nobili and Cardinal Bellarmine in Rome defended De Nobili. Moreover, De Nobili himself wrote a brilliant apology to defend his method by citing the examples from the time of Gregory the Great, who had approved of adaptations in the conversion of the

63 Animananda, The Blade, 82.
64 De Nobili donned a long ochre garment, and wore a turban and wore the sacred thread. He smeared his forehead with sandal paste. Above all, he abstained from all meat, fish, egg and had only vegetarian food prepared by a Brahmin cook. He left the mission house where other missionaries stayed and began to live in a hut. De Nobili had already learned Tamil within seven months of his stay. He found a Brahmin at the risk of his life, to teach him Sanskrit, thus becoming the first European to master Indian languages and Vedas. He hoped to master the Vedas and to use Indian philosophical language as a medium of conveying Christian theological truths. He had a dream of setting up a school of Indian philosophy to train priests. He suggested that Sanskrit should be used as the liturgical language instead of Latin. He lived among the Brahmins as a Brahmin, strictly observing the taboos and practices of that caste. De Nobili represents a creative and original adaptation of Christianity in India. See, De Smet, “Robert de Nobili and Vedanta,” Vidyajyoti, Vol. 40, pp. 363-371; John Correia-Afonso, The Jesuits in India 1542-1773 (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1997); Jerome D'Souza, S. J., The Church and Civilization: An Appraisal of the Church's Relations with Secular Cultures, (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1967) 82 ff.
65 De Nobili allowed Hindus “to retain some of the practices of their caste - their choice of food and ways of serving and eating; the wearing of the sacred thread, the use of tilak on the forehead and of sandal paste on the body, the daily “ritual” bath, etc. He gave them prayers and hymns in their own language and did away with the custom of teaching them Portuguese and imposing Portuguese names upon them. In the purely religious sphere he introduced one change which was to have consequences exactly like those which were caused by the honours to the dead which Ricci had permitted to his converts. De Nobili, knowing the unconquerable repugnance of the Hindu to touch the saliva of another person, decided that in the baptismal rite the appheta could be omitted. With these adaptations and innovations De Nobili began to receive converts from the higher castes in increasing numbers,” Jerome D'Souza, S. J., The Church and Civilization: An Appraisal of the Church's Relations with Secular Cultures, 84.
barbarians of Europe. Pope Gregory approved De Nobili’s method in 1623 in *Romanae Sedis Antistites*. Thus, the pope had indeed intervened and responded to appeals pertaining to inculturation in India on a positive note.

We can reconstruct what transpired between the Church authorities and Upadhyay from the letter of the Apostolic Delegate, Rev. P. Kierlies to Fr. Turmes, S. J., written on June 5, 1945:

1. In June 1898 Archbishop Dalhoff of Bombay asked Zaleski’s advice about Upadhyay’s project of training Catholic Sannyasis.
2. Mgr. Zaleski strongly opposed the project, asking Dalhoff to inform Upadhyay accordingly.
3. On 16 August 1898 Zaleski informed Rome about the matter.
4. On July 1, 1900 Mgr. Zaleski called the attention of Archbishop Dalhoff to the periodical “Sophia” which had resumed publication as a weekly in Calcutta. On 11 August, 1900 the Vicar General of Calcutta was also informed of Mgr. Zaleski’s mind on the matter; but there is no request that Upadhyay should resign from Sophia.
5. Mr. Banerjee’s (Upadhyay) letter dated September 1, 1900 informed the Apostolic Delegate that Mr. Banerjee was ceasing to be editor of Sophia in submission to the Apostolic Delegate’s views on the subject.
6. On October 7, 1900 Upadhyay wrote to Zaleski explaining that he was resuming the editorship of Sophia and asked a censor to be appointed.
7. On June 20, 1901 Zaleski extended the prohibition against Sophia to the Twentieth Century.
8. On behalf of K. Nan, owner of the Twentieth Century, attorney-at-law, J. C. Dutt wrote to Zaleski asking the withdrawal of the Delegate’s letter, under threat of legal proceedings.

---

66 De Nobili wrote in *On Indian Customs*: “For should you condemn those laws as a complex whole on the score that they are regarded, albeit falsely, as received on a superstitiously divine authority, by the same token you must condemn well nigh all the laws derived from non-Christian states and in large measure still in force even in our day; you must condemn all the Paprian laws which to a great extent were either confirmed or written by Numa, as well as ten out of the twelve tables of Rome and those transcribed from the tables of Draco, of Solon and Cuvengy. The same holds true for the assembly of the Areopagus, for the kings and ephors of Sparta, for the senators of ancient Rome, for whom the legal profession meant that they were dedicated by men and priests.” Roberto de Nobili, *On Indian Customs*, ed. S. Rajamanickam (Palayamkottai: De Nobili Research Institute, 1972) 45.

67 “Taking into consideration human weakness as much as it is permissible without sin and without scandal, desirous of favour the conversion of those peoples who do not wish to give up the tuft of hair, the cord, the baths, the sandal paste which indicated their nobility of caste and office, and after diligent study and discussion...by Our Apostolic authority we allow, to the Brahmans and others to be converted., the use of cord and the tuft of hair. The sandal paste which as an ornament of the body is further permitted., and so are the baths for health and cleanliness.” Quoted by Jerome D’Souza, S. J., *The Church and Civilization: An Appraisal of the Church's Relations with Secular Cultures*, 85.

68 See, the letter written by the Apostolic Delegate Rev. P. Kierlies to Fr. P. Turmes, S. J., on 5th June, 1945 from Bangalore. Source: *Varia on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, Goethals Indian Library and Research Society Archives. In the same letter, Kierlies observed: “In retrospect one cannot help feeling that the case might have been handled differently on both sides.”
3. Third Phase: Upadhyay's Appraisal of the Church

The third phase in Upadhyay's engagement with Catholicism begins from 1900 and lasts till his return from Europe in 1903. Upadhyay, till his enforced silence in theological matters and his gradual disillusionment with Church authorities, remained a staunch Catholic apologist. Against the backdrop of anticolonial nationalism, Upadhyay saw the question of Indianized Christianity as intrinsically related to the issue of searching for Indian cultural ethos and traditions. His main concerns during this phase are (1) the state of Christianity in India (2) Indian Christianity and national life (3) the issue of Indian hierarchy and (4) Christianity and Indian identity.

3.1 The State of Christianity

One of the chief concerns which occupied Upadhyay's attention was the stagnant state of Catholicism in India.*' He expresses his concern in the following way: "I hold as a Christian that the religion of Christ and His apostles is for all men and for all ages and climes. But how is it that it does not thrive in India? There it stands in a corner, an exotic, stunted plant, with poor foliage, showing little or no promise of blossom."** He admits that there are 'conversions of famine-stricken children of non-Aryans not within the pale of Hinduism,' and goes on to add that these acquisitions 'are on a very insignificant scale.'*** Most probably those Upadhyay refers to as the 'famine-stricken children of non Aryans not within the pale of Hinduism' were the tribals and the so called untouchables. Given the framework of Upadhyay's racial thinking, the 'insignificance' which he attributes pertains not only to the number alone but also the social stratum from which they come, namely, the non-Aryans. In Upadhyay's estimation "the social and spiritual state of the converts themselves does not present any hopeful prospect." He describes the state of affairs as follows:

Three hundred years have passed away and not a single flower of a saint has blossomed in India to adorn the altar of God. There has been not a single theologian, not even one philosopher who has made any impress of reason on the Christian science of Divinity. In secular line we do not find among them leaders of thought to

---

69 It must be noted that Upadhyay was not alone in pointing out the barrenness of Catholicism of nineteenth century. Abbe Dubois noted it in the early part of the nineteenth century. He noted that Christianity 'is now looked upon with unconquerable aversion. A respectable Hindu, who was asked to embrace the Christian religion, would look upon the suggestion either as a joke, or else as an insult of the deepest dye.' Abbe Dubois, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, Third edition, 1906, Reprint, 1943) 301.


guide national deliberations. There has flourished no statesman, no historian, no thinker worth the name, to raise the status of Indian Christian Community.\(^2\)

Upadhyay attributes the stagnant state of Catholicism in India to the cultural clothing in which it has been presented in India. He cites the example of the Jesuits. He had been ‘edified by the wonderful devotion and self-sacrifice of the Reverend Fathers who have left their country never to set foot there again.’ He goes on to add that ‘if their life of self-denial and poverty be a little more manifest, our countrymen would have greater respect for Christianity than they have now.’ He writes:

Unfortunately the virtues practiced by our religious priests make very little impression on the Hindu mind. They cannot understand how poverty can be compatible with boots, trousers and hats, with spoon and fork, meat and wine. To a European they may be bare necessaries of life; to a Hindu they are objects of luxury. The poverty of the Franciscans is indeed heroic, but is very little appreciated here because of its foreign dress. If India is ever to be conquered it will be conquered by the power of poverty – poverty in Hindu clothing, poverty synonymous with abstinence from meat and drink, and living as mendicants in humble dwellings.\(^3\)

In some of the articles during this period Upadhyay focuses on the question why Catholicism has not taken deep roots in India. Upadhyay points out that if Catholicism has not flourished in Indian soil then it is because the Church, and especially the European missionaries in India, has failed to appropriate the spirit behind the Hindu caste system. He writes: “One word can explain to a great extent the cause of Christian stagnation. It is contempt. It is the contempt of the European missionary for the caste system prevailing in the country which he considers to be diabolical in its very conception.”\(^4\) In the same year in another article Upadhyay criticizes European missionaries for their failure in understanding the Indian social system which he considers as ‘a wonderful social structure’ and the product of the ‘Hindu genius’:

\[\text{The contempt which the European missionary has for the Hindu social organization provokes our people to the utmost. He has no respect for an ancient race which has reared up lofty metaphysics and a wonderful social structure, and evolved a very strong religious instinct. He thinks that the European frame of society is also compatible with the religion of Christ, while the Hindu fabric has scarcely any}\]


Upadhyay points out that it is the European missionary's incomprehension of Hindu social system and the contempt for things Indian which are the main causes for Christianity's stagnation in India. According to Upadhyay, it is the European missionary's 'contempt for the Indian philosophic thought which is to him a heterogeneous mass of contradictions' which has contributed to the stunted Catholicism in India.

3.2 Christianity and National Life

Upadhyay was particularly wary of the lack of participation from the part of Christians in the national life and he attributed the lack of vigour among Christians to such aloofness: "The Indian Christian community are devoid of vigour because they have been alienated from national life and thought." In 1900s Upadhyay began a series of critiques of the Catholic Church in general and the European missionaries in particular. "With sadness do we note the generally unfriendly attitude of European missionaries in India in regard to the administrative grievances and legitimate national aspirations of the children of the soil. This cannot but prejudice the religion of Christ in the eyes of the people." In his estimation 'the unsympathetic attitude of some missionary organs' has already done harm. According to Upadhyay if the Anglo-Saxon Protestants have done such a thing it would have been understandable, since they "believe in what is called Imperial - or, as we would say, muscular - Christianity. Many of them, besides, belong to the Church of England which is but an institution, nay, an instrument of the State." He finds it strange that missionaries support papers like *The Times of India*, *The Pioneer*, and *The Englishman* which often 'show...
but a thinly veiled contempt for religion and laugh at altruistic principles.\(^80\) Upadhyay makes the following request:

> To say the least, it is not nice that the preachers of the Gospel of Christ should, in purely civil matters, set themselves against those among whom they come to labour and whose hearts they wish to win to the truth. We earnestly beseech those who have the direction of missionary organs to think and speak more kindly and more respectfully of the natives of India. If, however, they cannot see their way to take a favourable view of Indian political aspirations we would request them to adopt the golden rule of maintaining silence.\(^81\)

Upadhyay proposes to remedy such situation by establishing educational institutions which can inculcate patriotism. He writes:

> The best possible thing we can do under the present depressing circumstances, is to establish an indigenous organization which will undertake to establish a central educational institute for the higher training of our young men on national lines. We emphasize "national lines" for obvious reasons. It cannot be denied that we Catholics do exercise but very little influence on the life and thought of our countrymen. We are units who contribute little or nothing to the common weal of our nation. We are like so many exotic herbs planted and watered by alien husbandry.\(^82\)

Upadhyay draws a distinction between Christian faith and cultural ethos, a distinction which is rooted in the difference between supernatural and natural religion: "The time is now come, if the universal character of the religion of Christ is to be demonstrated to our fellow-brethren, to show in a reasonable way that, in matters of faith we are above time and space, neither Indian nor European, but in matters other than those of faith we are essentially Hindu in the strictest sense of the word."\(^83\)

Upadhyay incorporated the prevailing intense nationalist feeling of the late nineteenth century Bengal into his thinking on Catholic Church. Indeed, at that period there was a sense of national feeling cutting across various Christian denominations. Soon after the Mutiny of

---

\(^80\) Specifically Upadhyay has in mind the problems in China. These papers 'are now clamouring for the forcible exclusion of missionaries from China while warmly defending the "rights" of the greedy trader to have a free run of the Chinese house.' B. Upadhyay, "The Church," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 214.


1897 an Indian Pastor named Lal Behari Day had started a movement against the exclusive missionary control of the Church and suggested that Indian ordained ministers should be put on equal footing with the European missionaries. Against the growing nationalist background, it is not entirely surprising to find patriotically inclined Bengali Christians forming the association in 1868 which they termed as The Bengal Christian Association for the Promotion of Christian Truth and Godliness, and the Protection of the Rights of Indian Christians. Among the Protestants, critical attitude towards European missionaries was not uncommon. One such prominent Christian leader was none other than Kali Charan Banerjea, the uncle of Upadhyay. Kali Charan Banerjea and other like minded Christians aired their radical views in The Indian Christian Herald. Kali Charan Banerjea and J. G. Shome organized the Bengali Christian Conference in 1877 which was meant as a forum where they could present their program. In 1887 both Kali Charan Banerjea and J. G. Shome left their Church and went on to form The Calcutta Christo Samaj somewhat parallel to the Brahma Samaj. These short-lived movements emphasized two things: (i) ecclesiastical autonomy and freedom from foreign control, and (ii) indigenization of their respective churches. Thus, there was no dearth of nationalist inspiration for Upadhyay in matters pertaining to Christianity.

3.3 Christianity and National Aspirations

Between 1900 and 1903 we can discern a significant change in Upadhyay’s approach to Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. Articles written during this period show growing disillusionment with the state of Christianity in India. One of the chief concerns

84 Lal Behari Day also proposed for the formation of a National Church of Bengal comprising of all Christians, Orthodox and Roman Catholics included the only confession of which should be the Apostolic Creed and which should give great freedom in matters of ministry and liturgy. Kaj Baago, “The First Independence Movement among Indian Christians.” Indian Church History Review, Vol. I, no. 1, (1967) 66.


expressed by Upadhyay during this period is the inability of Catholicism in general and that of the hierarchy in particular to sympathize with India’s national ‘aspirations’:

The missionary contempt for our political aspirations is of the deepest dye. In spite of their good intentions our European preachers cannot sympathise with the national awakening that is visible throughout the length and breadth of India. Educated Indians have combined almost to a man to acquire by persistent constitutional agitation the right of self-government limited, of course, by British supremacy and control. There is a mighty upheaval in the country from end to end. But our missionaries look up on it all as disloyalty. 88

As we have already indicated, in the pre-swadeshi days Upadhyay was not thinking of Indian independence; rather he envisages more Indian participation in terms of self-government within the framework of colonial government. Upadhyay goes on to complain:

One fine morning I was informed that my political writings had been pronounced seditious in high ecclesiastical quarters. The lynx-eyed government did not see anything wrong with them but our European missionaries did smell sedition. I ignored the curious opinion as proceeding from want of touch with the people but I was pained to see the religion of Christ turned into a weapon against our nationalism. 89

Clearly, by 1901 Upadhyay began to be somewhat disillusioned with the state of Christianity in India. In particular he is concerned about the ‘denationalizing’ spirit showed by Christianity in India: “Christianity, as it is in vogue here, threatens to break our national integrity not because this is in the least incompatible with any Christian principle but simply because of the missionary scorn for the constitution of our society and their active solicitude to remodel it after the European fashion.” 90 If Christianity has been oblivious of national aspirations Upadhyay is also equally wary of the ‘denationalizing’ tendencies promoted by Christianity.

This denationalizing spirit has converted the Indian Christian community into a mere excrescence. And the supreme contempt for Hindu thought and philosophy, with the determination to present the Christian religion with its hard European clothing, has turned the milk of Hindu sympathy into gall while it has reduced the converts to the awkward straits of thinking with European brain and even performing their devotion with European heart. Hence they grow weak and half-formed like plants in a hot-house.91

It is important to note that already in 1901 Upadhyay’s views on Christianity were intrinsically linked to nationalism. He writes: “The political attitude of the missionary is most keenly resented by our people. It has actually made them think that Christianity is identical with European domination and has pressed us converts down almost to inanition. There is no hope for Christianity as long as this state of things continues.”92

3.4 Indian Hierarchy
Another aspect of Indian Catholicism which concerned Upadhyay was Indian hierarchy. Roman Catholic hierarchy in India was composed almost entirely of Europeans. In the nineteenth century Indian presence among the Roman Catholic hierarchy was unheard of. Against such a background Upadhyay writes: “A native hierarchy in India is but a far-off dream, and we should not have referred to it but to take notice of certain difficulties raised with respect to it, which appears to us not to go to the root of the matter.”93

Upadhyay had been an advocate of the self-reliance of the Catholic Church in India and his view seems to be consistent with his nationalist ideals and goals. Upadhyay gives examples of economic self-reliance of various religious denominations:

The Christians of the Syro-Malabar rite can raise money enough to support a numerous clergy of their own. The most insignificant sects among the Hindus maintain their priests in comfort and even superfluous affluence. Is it to be supposed that those who are members of the true, universal religion, are less zealous and less generous? No, it is not so; it cannot be. Think what the poor fishermen Christians of Ceylon have done and are still doing for the honour of our Holy Faith by erecting magnificent Churches for the reception of Emmanuel, the Holy of Holies! With a certain incentive and under proper conditions the Catholics of India can be made to

contribute funds not only for their own ministry but – in course of time – also for evangelistic purposes.\textsuperscript{94}

It is clear that Upadhyay wanted the Catholic Church in India to be economically self-sufficient. However, according to him, a greater difficulty lies in the paucity of native vocations, and the reasons for such a state of affairs he states as follows:

Here we have arrived at the kernel of the question. It seems to us that there are several causes of this regrettable state of things. We will refer to one, the chief one. A widespread impression prevails among Indian Catholics that there is a disposition in high places against allotting native priests their due share of responsibility in the administration of Church affairs; in fact, that the position of the Indian Catholic priest is not a very honourable one.\textsuperscript{95}

He focuses on the way the Indian clergy has been placed at the lower rungs of the Indian Church and asks whether the treatment meted out to them is justified:

That the Indian clergy have little voice in the councils of the Church is a fact too patent to be denied and is indeed not denied. But is justified on the ground that the general standard of culture among these is not high enough. There is some truth in this, no doubt. At the same time, is it not a fact that there are among the Indian priests men who are head and shoulders above many European priests in intelligence, tact, ability and even education? Is the treatment and recognition of these such as to encourage others to make themselves worthy of trust?\textsuperscript{96}

Upadhyay’s concerns regarding the native clergy needs to be seen against the historical background. In the mid-nineteenth century, out of eighteen vicariates, seven had no native clergy and they were the Vicariates of Vizagapatam, Hyderabad, East Bengal (Dacca), Central Bengal (Calcutta), Bombay, Patna and Agra.\textsuperscript{97} Upadhyay points out that most missionaries ‘have a too low opinion of the mental and moral caliber of the native. They have yet to learn to respect them.’\textsuperscript{98} Against this background Brahmabandhab writes:


\textsuperscript{97} In the remaining Vicariates the number of native priests were as follows: Ava-pegu (1), West Bengal (4), Coimbatore (5), Jaffna (2), Madras (6), Madura (6), Mangalore (14), Mysore (3), Pondicherry (14), Quilon (16), Veropoly (418, mostly of the Syrian Rite), Carlo Mercês de Melo, S. J., \textit{The Recruitment and Formation of the native Clergy in India (16th to 19th Century): An Historico-Canonical Study} (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1955) 282.

The Indian Catholics are drawn from one of the most intelligent races of the world — the Hindu. Why should European priests demur to being placed under capable Indians belonging to the same holy ministry as themselves? Was not the very first Bishop of Bombay a Brahmin? If this was made possible so long ago, why may it not be now? If there are drawbacks and deficiencies among Indian Catholics, surely they can be remedied.99

Upadhyay further points out that classical cultural ethos have no place in the training programme of the priests in India. "It seems our European missionary friends do not seem to attach any importance to the study of Hindu philosophy at first hand. There are so many seminaries for the training of missionaries destined to work in India but, strange to say, not in one of them is taught Sanskrit or Hindu philosophy."100 According to Brahmabandhab, 'it is through this want of knowledge of Hindu philosophy on the part of missionaries that the religion of Christ has not been presented intelligently to the educated Hindu.'101 Moreover, Upadhyay finds it a "great humiliation that Indian Catholic priests — especially such as come from communities which continue to dress in the national way in spite of change of faith — should adopt the European sacerdotal garb even when working among their own people. Are we inferior to all races of the world in self-respect, backbone and stamina?"102

3.5 Christianity and Indian Identity

It needs to be noted that after the ecclesiastical interdict against The Twentieth Century in 1901, and the Catholics were forbidden to read the journal, Upadhyay chose to remain silent on theological matters. The last article written by Upadhyay on Christianity appeared in The Tablet in 1903 and it was entitled “Christianity in India.” In this two-part article Upadhyay writes about the 'stupendous obstacles' in 'winning over India to the Holy Catholic Church.'103 In this article he writes about the 'frightful barrenness' of Christianity in India as follows:


100 Upadhyay points out that in the Papal Seminary in Ceylon (later transferred to Pune) no place is given to Sanskrit studies. B. Upadhyay, “Notes: training of Indian Clergy,” Sp-M (24 November, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 218.


102 B. Upadhyay quotes Father Gleason's letter which describes the adaptation of Chinese ways by European missionaries: "These men become like the people. They dress like the Chinese, shave their head, but not the beard, and wear a queue. The first I met was a splendid character — a native of France — Father Debus. He was dressed in blue cotton Chinese clothing." B. Upadhyay, “Notes: On the Indian Clergy,” J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 220.

There it stands in the corner like an exotic stunted plant with poor foliage, showing little or no promise of blossom. Conversions are nil so far as the Hindu community is concerned. There are, indeed, conversions of famine-stricken children and also of non-Aryans not within the pale of Hinduism, but these acquisitions, too, are on a very insignificant scale... The material civilization of the West is leavening our society more than the spiritual principles of the Gospel. Our educated men are eager to acquire European culture which, with the advance of time, is more and more divorced from the spirit of Christianity.\textsuperscript{104}

Brahmabandhab further points out in the article that Indian Christianity has produced not even a noteworthy philosopher or theologian; in the secular world there is not even one Christian leader to guide national deliberations.\textsuperscript{105} He summarizes the barrenness of Indian Christianity as follows: “There has flourished no statesman, no historian, no thinker worth the name, to raise the status of Indian Christian community. Strange to say, men who have shed luster on India in modern times have, almost all of them, sprung from outside the Christian pale.”\textsuperscript{106}

As to the reasons for such unfortunate state of affairs, Upadhyay opines that ‘English education stands as the first and foremost stumbling block in the way of Christianity.’ In his view, some sections of educated Indians, influenced by naturalism and evolutionism tend to hold Jesus Christ as only as a ‘culmination of humanity by the process of natural evolution.’ Brahmbabandhab points out that Christianity ‘is too much mixed up with beef and pork, spoon and fork, too tightly pantalooned and petticoated, to manifest its universality.’\textsuperscript{107}

3.6 Indian Christianity and Hindu Mediation

Upadhyay dwells at some length on the nature of ‘Hindu mind’ within the context of his concerns about Christianity. According to him, English education and the concomitant English culture have a tendency to ‘destroy the originality of the Hindu mind.’ Upadhyay admits: “We Indians are poor. Our nakedness has been exposed to strangers. We have no position in the scale of nations. But one precious bequest we are inheritors of, and fain would


we barter our life for its sake. It is Hindu thought." According to Brahmabandhab 'Hindu thought has flowed on uninterruptedly from the Vedic period, sometimes as a stream of flood, sometimes as an invisible undercurrent, down to the present age of Europeanization.'

Ascribing the longevity of the Hindu race to the innate vigour of its thought patterns, Brahmabandhab asks: "Where are the Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Babylonians? But the Hindu persists in existence notwithstanding tremendous convulsions, political and social, as well as religious." He pins the hope of a future regeneration of India on the capacity of Hindu race to survive: "This wondrous survival leads us to cherish the hope of a glorious future awaiting our fallen race." 

In Upadhyay's opinion, the best way of communicating Christianity is through Vedanta. His basic premise consists in the view that the theistic truths of Hinduism act as the preparatory stage before the full Christian truths could be communicated. Brahmabandhab tells his British readers that 'Hindu thought has reared up a magnificent theism which in its essential conclusions agrees wonderfully with the philosophy of St. Thomas.' It is important to note that even after the ecclesiastical interdict, Upadhyay had not diluted his convictions: "To my mind the best and the most congenial way of teaching theism to the educated as well as to the non-educated in English will be through Hindu thought. Hindu thought may be made to serve the cause of Christianity in the same way in India as Greek thought was made to do in Europe."

In the second part of The Tablet article Upadhyay focuses on Hindu caste structure, which he feels has not been properly understood by Christianity. Pointing out that in India 'different tribes have been united in one social commonwealth,' Brahmabandhab stresses that 'the Hindu bond consists more in the membership of a common social polity than in the political

---

111 Upadhyay writes: "The preparation for the way to Christianity in India should consist chiefly in imparting to the people the true knowledge of God from the natural and rational standpoint." B. Upadhyay, "Christianity in India-Part I," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-II, 240. As we have pointed out before, for Upadhyay, this 'natural' standpoint of Hinduism consists in its theistic truths.
allegiance to British supremacy. He describes the ancient social formation of the Indian subcontinent originally propounded by the proponents of Aryan race theory, with all its racial connotations:

When the Aryans, a white and civilized people, first settled in India, they encountered a fierce opposition from the natives of the soil, who were dark skinned savages. The latter were gradually conquered and compelled either to surrender or take refuge in fastness and jungles. In the beginning they were despised and shunned, but as they grew more and more tractable they were admitted into the Aryan society as forming one of its divisions.

According to Brahmabandhab, the regulating principle of the social system developed by the Aryans is the love of vocation for its own sake and not its fruit, which is a marvelous and noble way of bringing under control the natural human tendency for greed and competition. He attributes the caste system as being responsible for the high spirituality of the Hindu race: "The result of this system has been that, perhaps no living race on the face of the earth is more religiously inclined than the Hindu." The later decline of the high Aryan spirituality and ideals is attributed to the admittance of the non-Aryans like the Dravidians into the Aryan-Hindu fold; these ill-fitted alien races 'could not enter into the spirit of Aryanism.'

Given the primacy and superiority of the Hindu social system Upadhyay is of the opinion that 'it is rash to wage war against the Hindu social system as incompatible with the spirit of civilization and Christianity.' He also points out that 'the armoury of Hindu thought and philosophy can supply powerful weapons' to 'encounter the evils of Westernism with great effect.'

---


115 Upadhyay adds that the conquered non-Aryans "were not obliged to renounce their fetishism and accept the purer form of Vedic worship in order to be included within the Aryan pale, but were only made to submit to the social laws." B. Upadhyay, "Christianity in India-Part II," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, ed., TWBU-II, 244.


4. Fourth Phase: Nationalism and Catholic Faith

The fourth stage is marked by certain amount of ambivalences and ambiguities as far as Upadhyay's Hindu-Christian identity is concerned. This stage begins from 1904 and lasts till his death. During this period some of his actions seem to have raised questions about the 'Catholic' dimension of his Hindu-Catholicism. This period is also marked by his intense involvement in the nationalist movement. Here, we focus on (1) the question of Upadhyay's Catholic identity (2) his *prayascitta* or social penance and (3) social penance and Catholic faith.

4.1 Upadhyay's Catholic Identity

In the previous stage Upadhyay was highly critical of Europeanized colour of Christianity in India. With the ecclesiastical interdict Upadhyay seems to have grown disillusioned with the state of Indian Christianity. His plans and proposals were not materialized which made him to withdraw from any active engagement with Catholicism. He stopped writing on any theological issues. Some of Upadhyay's actions during this period caused some amount of consternation among his friends. On 25 July 1904 Upadhyay gave a lecture on Sri Krishna in the Albert Hall. An incomplete typed manuscript gives the following information regarding the genesis of Upadhyay's lecture on Sri Krishna:

Rev. Farquhar had attacked Krishna on various counts. The Raja of Sovabazar wanted a refutation. Pandit Mokshada Samadhya had been asked to do the needful. Feeling too busy for so gigantic a task, he approached Upadhyay. That is how the Swami lectured before a select audience in the Raja's palace. The lecture was repeated in the Albert Hall. Several Jesuit Fathers attended. It was given in English this time. In view of the various interpretations given to the lecture and rumours set afloat, it will be necessary to sum up carefully the passages.\(^{119}\)

In this lecture Upadhyay 'violently attacked Rev. Mr. Farquhar, a Protestant Missionary, for his unjust strictures on Sree Krishna, saying that the sectarian missionary had neither understood the Hindu doctrine of Avatar nor the Christian doctrine of Incarnation.\(^{120}\) His lecture seems to have raised the question whether Upadhyay had put Krishna and Christ on

---

\(^{119}\) Source: "Introduction" to "Srikrishna Tattva" by Upadhyay. Typed Manuscript, incomplete, 4 pages. *Varia on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, Goethal's Archives. p. 1. This typescript seems to be that of Animananda, for the same introductory information can be seen in *The Blade*, 123.

\(^{120}\) Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Study of His Religious Position*, 47.
Against the background of such confusion among his friends, Animananda quotes from an explanatory note (handwritten) by Upadhyay:

Now it is clear that there is a vast difference between Christ and Krishna and they differ from each other beyond comparison.... Now God in Himself manifests Himself in three: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.... I cannot understand then why there should be any misunderstanding. We should not mix up Christ with Krishna, though they are nothing but of the One God, still we cannot put them in the same category.

In 6 July, 1904 in a letter Upadhyay expressed his conviction that “Christianity can never thrive unless it be engrafted upon our national traditions.” In his school Saraswata Ayatana Brahmabandhab had organized Saraswati puja in 1905, though he did not join it. Animananda (Rewachand), Upadhyay’s friend and colleague, who could not agree with his ideas of the puja on account of his Catholic beliefs, separated from him. If Rewachand had considered the puja as amounting to idolatry, Upadhyay had very different notions about it. Animananda quotes Upadhyay:

As regards Saraswati puja there has been a good deal of misunderstanding. Saraswati is not a symbol of God but she is the representation of Learning-Art and is styled the ‘intellectual daughter of God.’ Just as they in Europe make statues of Faith, Wisdom, Liberty, the Hindus make images of Learning. The ritual is purely an apostrophical veneration of Learning-Art, as an aesthetical aspect of the Divine manifestation in the

---

121 B. A. Nag, a Protestant missionary and a friend of Upadhyay heard from his friends that in the lecture Upadhyay ‘had completely denied Christ and spoke as if he were a Hindu.’ Nag writes: ‘The first time I met him after that meeting I tackled him again, and his answer was as straightforward as before. Indeed, he said, that he was much grieved that anyone who knew him could ever think that he was disloyal to Christ. He said that Sree Krishna was a unique manifestation of rational wisdom and power, but Christ was the Saviour of sinners. Krishna was an Avatar but Christ was the Incarnation of God. He always held that the Hindu conception of an Avatar was very different from the Christian conception of Incarnation.” Quoted by Animananda, Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhab: A Study of His Religious Position, 57.

122 Animananda, The Blade, 129.

123 It is not clear to whom the letter is written; the letter ends with “Ever yours affectionately in Christ.” In this letter Upadhyay writes: “Europe has her traditions and Christianity grows by feeding upon them by elevating them. But Europeans want to drive out our traditions and give us a blank Christianity. Why should we give up our heroes and heroic inspirations in order to become Christians.” Quoted by Animananda, Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhab: A Study of His Religious Position, 48.

124 Upadhyay had started a school named Saraswata Ayatana in 1902 for ‘Hindu boys who were to be brought up as Hindus in the Hindu way.’ The aim of the institution was to train up a number of students who would imbue the Indian traditions and thought patterns. Within a year the school managed to enroll thirty five students. However by 1906 the number of students went down and the Saraswata Ayatana ‘died a natural death.’ Animananda, Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhab: A Story of His Life, Part-I, 31.

125 Animananda, The Blade, 122.
world. I do not know why the Hindus should be deprived of such a beautiful devotion.\textsuperscript{126}

The above quote is significant since it reveals Upadhyay's thought on Hindu beliefs and practices. For him, the Saraswati is not a 'symbol of God' but only a representation of 'Learning-Art.'\textsuperscript{127} In 1906 he had taken an active part in the Shivaji festival and organized the Sakti worship. Upadhyay's actions such as these left people wondering whether he had abandoned his Christian faith.\textsuperscript{128}

\subsection*{4.2 Upadhyay's Prayascitta}
Another action of Upadhyay that caused considerable confusion about his identity as Catholic was the \textit{prayascitta} ceremony, which he underwent in August 1907, two months before his death. In fact, in a significant article written in 1901 titled "Social Penance" which focused on the integrity of Hindu society, Upadhyay had dealt with the meaning of \textit{prayascitta}. Following the Hindu tradition and of Hindu law-givers, Upadhyay wrote that \textit{prayascitta} 'is making the unclean clean, the impure pure, by imposing upon guilty persons certain social chastisements.'\textsuperscript{129} Indeed, this article was written before his trip to Europe. Upadhyay gives the basis of \textit{prayascitta} in the following manner: "Interdining with foreigners is prohibited by Hindu law-givers not on the score of spiritual defilement but on the ground of its being an occasion for introduction of un-Hindu manners, customs, habits and mixed blood which may go to weaken and corrupt the vitality of the Hindu race."\textsuperscript{130} He makes a distinction in the article: "By social expiation is not meant internal purification but the performance of a humiliating act prescribed by the injured society as a public confession of sorrow for the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{126} Upadhyay writes further: "I have never held that Christians should worship Saraswati... Whether Christianity can assimilate this Saraswati devotion, as she has assimilated the devotion of Faith-Statue, is a question beyond my province, mine is a question of procedure in our dealings with non-Christians. It is not a question of \textit{Christian} Faith or practice." Quoted by Animananda, \textit{Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Study of His Religious Position}, 48.

\textsuperscript{127} Upadhyay had given a talk to the boarders and day-scholars a talk on Saraswati and \textit{Pal Parbhan} had a Bengali version of what he said: "God is \textit{Sat-Cit-Ananda}. Every aspect of God should be worshipped, but being students we quite naturally worship in Him the aspect of C\textit{i}, Intelligence, Knowledge, Wisdom. Where would the world be without God's wisdom?" Quoted by Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 121.


\textsuperscript{129} B. Upadhyay, "Social Penance," \textit{TC} (31 July, 1901), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, eds., \textit{TWBU-II}, 130. According to Brahmabandhab, 'if a Hindu enters into any social alliance with aliens calculated to injure the integrity of his race, society has every right to impose corrective chastisements on such a truant.' Ibid.

guilty attempt of breaking social integrity." More importantly, Upadhyay had written: "Social penances do not necessarily involve the question of religious faith."

The commonly used word in the nineteenth century for the reintegration to Hindu fold of those 'defiled' the society was 'Suddhi,' which literally means purification. It needs to be noted that the cognate 'Suddh' (pure) is associated with Hinduism with the natural state of an individual in the performance of dharma. By 1850 new developments were taking shape in Bengal in relation to suddhi. In Calcutta, for example, the Dharma Sabha debated over means of re-accepting high caste Christian converts, many of them wayward sons of powerful bhadralok families.

4.3 Social Penance and Christian Faith

An important question which arises in the context of Brahmabandhab's *prayascitta* is whether he had abandoned his Christian faith by undergoing social penance. Animananda, who has devoted considerable number of pages on the question of Brahmabandhab's expiatory rite in *The Blade*, is of the opinion that Upadhyay had not given up his Christian faith. If we are to go by the testimony of Tarkaratna, with whom Animananda had an interview, Upadhyay wished to undergo *prayascitta* for 'violating the duties of a Brahmin.' According to Tarkaratna, who wrote the written injunction of *prayascitta*, Upadhyay never

---

134 As Zavos notes, the complex colonial Indian context of nineteenth century the notion of suddhi had began to acquire new nuances: In the nineteenth century, however, the term began to assume a more specific ritual meaning. This meaning arose initially out of a singularly colonial situation, in that it referred to the ritual processes required of high caste Hindus who had traveled abroad, and in so doing had naturally come into contact with polluting materials or persons. The flow of high caste, high class individuals to Britain to receive education demanded the formulation of ceremonial codes which allowed for full caste rehabilitation on their return. Purification assumed the form of a standard ritual process signifying the re-entry of the individual into a situation where he could perform his dharma and resume normal social relations. John Zavoz, *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) 87.
135 The Sabha sponsored meetings along this line, including a large public meeting attended by 200 pundits and several hundred others in May 1851. The following year a 'Society for the Deliverance of Hindu Apostates' was formed which set up a public re-acceptance ceremony. Four hundred people were assembled on 5 May 1852 'to form a native House of Commons, discussing, deliberating and determining upon the question at issue with the greatest eagerness, zeal and unanimity.' Of the six applicants for re-acceptance, 'four were restored to the privileges of the caste and two were driven out with contempt and disdain.' *Bengal Hurkuru*, quoted in M. M. Ali, *The Bengal Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities 1833-1857* (Chittagong: Mehrub Publications, 1965) pp. 97-100. cf., John Zavoz, *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*, 88.
spoke against Christianity nor had any intention of giving up his faith.

More to the point Brahmabandhab wanted to do penance with a view of being formally readmitted into Hindu society.

However, as Lipner points out, Upadhyay did not attempt to clear up any general misunderstanding surrounding his *prayascitta* ritual, for most people thought that he had ceased to be a Christian and went back to his original Hindu religion. According to Lipner, ‘Upadhyay seemed to say nothing publicly to counter this impression’ and he considers Brahmabandhab ‘as less than forthright.’ Jogananda Mitra, who knew Upadhyay from his childhood, mentions in a letter that “every intimate friend of Upadhyayaji knows that during his last days he was the most Hindu of the Hindus although he had a firm faith in Catholicity. Those who hold that he renounced the Catholic religion since his *prayascitta* ceremony know little of the man.” It needs to be noted that Upadhyay had been consistently concerned about the ‘integrity’ of the Hindu social order. Many people knew that Brahmabandhab had become a Christian. Many more people knew from his articles that he had gone to Europe. For all practical purposes it meant interdining and mingling with foreigners which implied the violation of caste regulations. Perhaps for Brahmabandhab undergoing *suddhi* and *prayascitta* had a highly symbolic dimension given his recently acquired status as a radical nationalist and highly popular editor of *Sandhya*. After all, Upadhyay had been consistently writing about the integrity of Hindu society and traditional Hindu values.

Several friends had vouched that Upadhyay had not abandoned Christianity and Christ till the end. Animananda (Rewachand) received a letter from Upadhyay written on 25 December

---

137 For the details of Animananda’s interviews with the pandits involved in Upadhyay’s *prayascitta*, see, Animananda, *The Blade*, 162-67.
139 Letter of Jogananda Mitra to Animananda, written on 15 June, 1925 from Calcutta. Source: *Varia* on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Indian Library and Research Society Archives. In the same letter Mitra mentions that Upadhyay and his father were “intimate friends from their youth” and that both were ‘favourites of the great Keshab Chandra Sen.’
140 After Upadhyay’s death, in an interview, Sudhir Nan, Son of Babu Chunder Nan said the following: “Upadhyay never said that going to the Church was not a duty. I asked him once in October 1906. Why don’t you go to the Church, it is Sunday. He [Upadhyay] said: ‘you see it is too late.'” Source: Hand written paper fragment. No date. Source: *Varia* on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Archives, Calcutta.
1906 with these words: "With hearty Christmas greetings, Yours affectionately in Christ."

Animananda, who was convinced that Upadhyay was a Catholic to the very end, asks:

"Can Upadhyayji use this language, if he be not a Catholic? Can he sing the praises of the Incarnate Logos, and the Blessed Trinity before the picture of Jesus Christ in February 1907? Can he fast and pray in front of a crucifix on Good Friday, the 29th March 1907 and address Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and the Blessed Virgin as the mother of God?"

It seems reasonable to suggest that Upadhyay saw no contradiction between being a Christian and being a Hindu at the same time, a conviction which he seems to have carried till his death.

**Conclusion**

Upadhyay’s tryst with Catholicism went through various stages. In the first stage (1891-1896) he is a staunch apologist for Catholicism, defending his religion over and against Protestantism, Theosophy, Arya Samaj, Brahmoism and traditional Hinduism. During this period his new identity as Catholic plays a key role in the critique of these religious groups. At this point in time Brahmabandhab also focuses on the role of the church and its mission; he proposed a ‘central mission’ to train monks who would engage in public discussions with other religious groups. A significant aspect during this stage is the enunciation of some significant hermeneutical principles to locate the scope and role of Catholicism and Hinduism.

In the second stage (1896-1900) Upadhyay was actively engaged in finding ways and means of making Catholicism intelligible in the Indian context. To this end in view Upadhyay sought the help of Advaita Vedanta as a natural platform to articulate Catholic faith and doctrines. Integral to dressing Catholicism in Hindu garb was his efforts in establishing a Catholic monastery at the Banks of Narmada. He initiated the establishment of an Ashram but it did not proceed according to his plans. During this period Brahmabandhab articulated the relationship between Christianity and Hindu caste structure. He saw the caste system as an integral part of Indian Christianity. Upadhyay’s Ashram project and his theological writings were met with disapproval of the Catholic hierarchy.

---

In the third stage (1900-1903) we can discern a significant change in Upadhyay's approach to Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. Articles written during this period reflect a sense of disappointment with the stagnant state of Christianity in India. Upadhyay felt that the Indian Christian community is bereft of vigour because they have been alienated from national life and thought. By 1901 Upadhyay's views on Christianity were intrinsically linked to nationalism; now he is very critical of European missionaries' attitude towards the Indian political situation. He came back from Europe as staunch anti-British and anti-European. During this period Brahmabandhab also wrote about the need to have native clergy. In 1903 he was convinced that Indian Christianity cannot grow without adopting Hindu social system.

In the fourth stage (1904-1907) his direct engagement with Catholicism for all practical purposes comes to a standstill. Some of his speeches and actions seem to have caused confusion regarding his Catholic identity. To compound confusion Upadhyay underwent prayascitta ceremony which was interpreted by some as Upadhyay's return to the Hindu fold. However, evidences suggest that Upadhyay had never disowned his Catholic faith and faith in Jesus Christ. He remained a Catholic in his faith and a Hindu in terms of social practices. He saw no contradiction in his hyphenated identity of being a Hindu-Catholic. In the next chapter we shall focus on an important dimension of his Hindu-Catholic synthesis, namely, his restatement of Catholic faith in terms of Hindu categories.