



# Vivekananda Way

ISSUE 26

PULLOUT FOR REFERENCE

## Series 5: Issue 5: Vedantism - contd.

- ✓ **I** Defining Hinduism
- ✓ **II** Books of the Hindus
- ✓ **III** The Core Principles of Hinduism
- ➔ **IV** The Practice of Hinduism
- ➔ **V** The Task Ahead

## focus in this issue:

### Vedantism - part 3

This is the concluding issue of the talk 'Vedantism', delivered in Jaffna on 24th January 1897. In the previous two issues we explored Sections **I** **II** **III** the summary of which is shown below:

#### Summary of the previous two issues

##### part 1: Defining Hinduism and Books of the Hindus

1. An alternative word for Hindus: Vaidikas or Vedantists
2. The books of the Hindus - a visualization
3. Vedas are revelatory truths, eternal, without beginning or end.
4. Vedas were revealed to the Rishis - who were spiritual discoverers
5. The ideas of the Upanishads have permeated through Indian society
6. Smritis are scriptures that convert the eternal principles of Vedanta into contemporary customs
7. Puranas & Tantras illustrate the eternal principles to the people

##### part 2: The Core Principles of Hinduism

1. Who created this world?
2. What is God?
3. Is God partial or impartial?
4. Why are some people happy or unhappy?
5. What is the Soul?
6. What is the goal of the human soul?
7. What is the cause of birth & rebirth, and what is the cure?
8. What is the relationship between soul and God?

Please refer Vivekananda Way Issue 24 & 25 for details.

In this issue, we explore Section **IV** & **V** >>



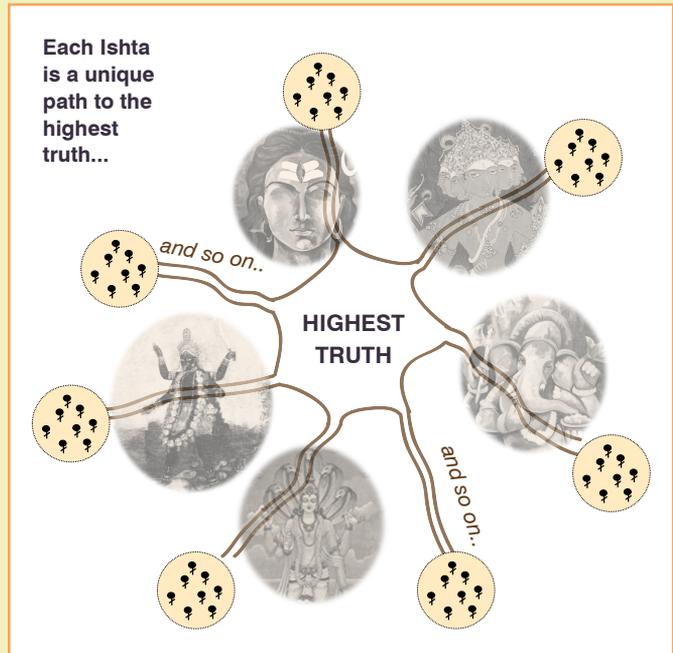
# The practice & application of Hinduism

## A: Hinduism supports unity in diversity

In India, people do not quarrel with each other because of the theory of the Ishta.

The theory of the Ishta says that:

1. There are various forms of worshipping God.
2. It is also recognized that different forms requires different methods.
3. And, each person's unique path is called in Sanskrit, my *Ishta*. Each one recognizes that your way is good for you but not for me, and my way is good for me but not for you.
4. Thus each person selects and worships the Ishta most appropriate to that person.



Contrary to the theory of Ishta is the view that everyone is to have the same religious opinion and takes the same path.

The consequence of such a viewpoint is that all religions and all thought are destroyed. Not only that, since variety is the soul of life, when variation dies out, creation itself dies.

### What is the Hindu response to the idea of one God?

We have no quarrel with any religion in the world, and when we see people coming and trying to force any one way on us, we laugh at them.



**We have no quarrel with any religion in the world, whether it teaches men to worship Christ, Buddha, or Mohammed, or any other prophet. "Welcome, my brother," the Hindu says, "I am going to help you; but you must allow me to follow my way too. That is my Ishta. Your way is very good, no doubt; but it may be dangerous for me. My own experience tells me what food is good for me, and no army of doctors can tell me that. So I know from my own experience what path is the best for me."**

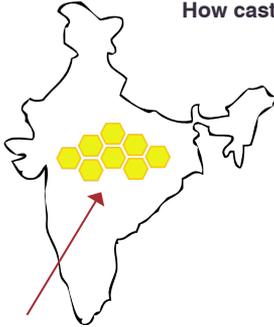
## **B: Caste & other institutions have been necessary to preserve our nation. When the necessity for self-preservation no longer exists, they will die a natural death.**

Though our castes & other religions are apparently linked to our religion, they are not so.

Hindu religion preaches inclusion of everyone and exclusion of none.

It is through these institutions that Indian society was able to have some measure of stability through many ups & downs over scores of centuries.

**How caste helped create social stability...**



- Enabled social stability in the face of invasions & changing political landscapes
- Allowed for stable economic ecosystems of interdependent relationships
- Enabled transmission and maintenance of professions & knowledge traditions
- Allowed Indian society to assimilate new groups into the social fabric
- Gave people alternative identities and self-esteem beyond the dominant power structure

*Whilst caste had many evils, it was a unique Indian Social Architecture*

## **Task Ahead: What we now want in this country**

### **A: Importance of the Impersonal God in the India of the future**

**THE IDEA OF THE IMPERSONAL GOD TEACHES US TO BE STRONG...**

“...This teaches us not to think ourselves as weak, but as strong, omnipotent, omniscient. No matter that I have not expressed it yet, it is in me. All knowledge is in me, all power, all purity, and all freedom. Why cannot I express this knowledge? Because I do not believe in it. Let me believe in it, and it must and will come out. This is what the idea of the Impersonal teaches.

**THE IDEA OF THE IMPERSONAL GOD ALLOWS FOR A RATIONAL SYSTEM OF ETHICS...**

“... no one knew why it would be good to love other beings as ourselves. And the reason, why, is there in the idea of the Impersonal God; you understand it when you learn that the whole world is one — the oneness of the universe — the solidarity of all life — that in hurting any one I am hurting myself, in loving any one I am loving myself.

**THE IDEA OF THE IMPERSONAL GOD WILL BE THE KEY TO RECONCILING SCIENCE & RELIGION...**

“...This idea of the soul is the life-giving thought, the most wonderful... the great thought that is going to revolutionise the world and reconcile the knowledge of the material world with religion.

**HENCE, WE SHOULD TEACH OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS THE GLORY OF THE SOUL...**

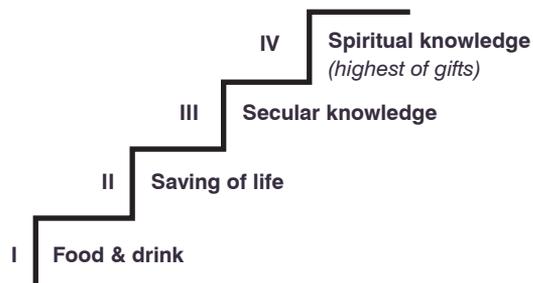
“Make your children strong from their very childhood; teach them not weakness, nor forms, but make them strong; let them stand on their feet: bold, all-conquering, all-suffering; and first of all, let them learn of the glory of the soul. That you get alone in the Vedanta — and there alone.



## B: Take up the duty of the age - disseminate spiritual knowledge

*India is an eternal fountain of spirituality. We have a vast treasure of spiritual ideas, and we have noble examples of practical spirituality. Both these have to be made the common property of all – rich and poor, high and low, not only in India but all over the world. This is one of our greatest duty.*

### The Ladder of Service



**The Tapas and the other hard Yogas that were practiced in other Yugas do not work now. What is needed in this Yuga is giving, helping others.**

**What is meant by Dana? The highest of gifts is the giving of spiritual knowledge, the next is the giving of secular knowledge, and the next is the saving of life, the last is giving food and drink. He who gives spiritual knowledge, saves the soul from many and many a birth. He who gives secular knowledge opens the eyes of human beings towards spiritual knowledge, and far below these rank all other gifts, even the saving of life.**

### A word of caution: Avoid jealousy and one-upmanship



**For ages we have been saturated with awful jealousy; we are always getting jealous of each other. Why has this man a little precedence, and not I? Even in the worship of God we want precedence, to such a state of slavery have we come. This is to be avoided. If there is any crying sin in India at this time it is this slavery.**

**...First, learn to obey. The command will come by itself. Always first learn to be a servant, and then you will be fit to be a master. Avoid this jealousy and you will do great works that have yet to be done.**

**FOR THE FULL LECTURE, REFER TO COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, VOL. 3, LECTURES FROM COLOMBO TO ALMORA.**

If you have any questions on this lecture, do post your queries on [www.vivekanandaway.org](http://www.vivekanandaway.org).

You can also access previous issues of Vivekananda Way here.