

## IX.—NOTES.

### INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "MIND".

DEAR SIR,

I do not write to complain against Dr. E. J. Thomas's unsympathetic review of *Indian Philosophy* in the October number of *MIND*, for reviewers have their rights with which I have no desire to interfere. You will, however, permit me to say a few words regarding some of the points raised in it.

1. The review opens with a suggestion of inconsistency on my part regarding the value of Indian Philosophy. It is alleged that, while I assert in one place that it has great cultural value, I seem to doubt it when I say "even if Indian thought be not valuable from the cultural point of view, it is yet entitled to consideration, if on no other ground, at least by reason of its contrast to the other thought systems and its great influence over the mental life of Asia". While I believe in its cultural value, I am aware that there are some who do not share this opinion. In the sentence quoted, I am suggesting that even for those who do not regard Indian Philosophy as culturally valuable, it has a historical interest or, as Dr. Thomas would prefer to put it, 'anthropological' interest. I am unable to see any inconsistency here.

2. Dr. Das Gupta's work on Indian Philosophy is still in progress and, if and when it is completed, it will constitute an attempt to deal with Indian thought as an undivided whole.

3. After observing that Dr. Gough's book on the Upanishads "suffers from being written with the assumption that they are to be understood according to the rigid system of a much later age," Dr. Thomas proceeds thus: "but Professor Radhakrishnan is just as dogmatic in telling us that 'the Upanishads had no set theory of philosophy or dogmatic scheme of theology to propound. They hint at the truth in life but not yet in science or philosophy. So numerous are their suggestions of truth, so various are the guesses at God, that almost anybody may seek in them what he wants and find what he seeks'". I do not know whether Dr. Thomas remembers his notice of the chapter on the Upanishads in the *International Journal of Ethics*. He writes there: "Professor Radhakrishnan in this work, which is a reprint of the section on the Upanishads from his *Indian Philosophy*, restores the subject to its true atmosphere, so that although he writes on the philosophy of the Upanishads, he admits that they 'had no set theory of philosophy or dogmatic scheme of theology to propound. They hint at the truth in life but not yet in science or philosophy'". The same view and practically the same sentences taken from the same context call for a compliment in the *Journal of Ethics* and a stricture in *MIND*!

4. Dr. Thomas suggests that my claim that Sankara's system has a self-justifying wholeness is inconsistent with the admission of Sankara's indebtedness to Buddhism and of the criticisms levelled against him by

thinkers of other schools. I do not think that self-justifying wholeness means either independence of the past or infallibility. It only means that the different parts of the system hang together in a consistent manner.

5. The concluding paragraph of the review mentions a sin of omission. "We hear nothing of the obscenities of Sivaism or the licentiousness of Tantra and Krishnaism, but it is in these religions that the vedantic doctrines have found a home without essentially overthrowing the pantheistic basis." Though my main interest is philosophy, I have found it difficult to avoid discussions of religious questions on account of the close connexion between religion and philosophy in Indian thought. But as, what Dr. Thomas chooses to call 'the obscenities of Sivaism and the licentiousness of Tantra and Krishnaism' belong more to the history of Indian religions than to the development of philosophic thought, I did not feel called upon to treat of them.

While I am thankful to Dr. Thomas for his fairly long review, I must confess to a sense of disappointment. It is so much taken up with minor historical details and formal inconsistencies that it does not deal justly with the central interest of the book, viz., the philosophical significance of the chief schools of Indian thought. After all, the readers of *MIND* are interested mainly in philosophy.

Yours faithfully,  
S. RADHAKRISHNAN.

Calcutta,  
27th October, 1927.

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