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CHAPTER-1

HISTORICAL MOORINGS OF THE INDIAN SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

Indian society has deep historical moorings. There lie in the contours of its geography, composition of the people, ancient political tradition, social system, Sanskrit language and in its tradition bound culture. Its historical depths, social dimensions, cultural variegations are impressive, arresting and inspiring. These deep foundations and strong fastenings have withstood the challenge of time, absorbed the impact of ages and have remained unshaken. This inspiring vitality, this remarkable continuity and this capacity to respond to change is indeed curious. Imagine the unchartered times that preceded the Harappan Civilization, behold the panoramic view of the Indus Valley Civilization, feel the marvelous executive ingenuity of its authors; open at the Vedic Age and here is history and culture rolled into one; and the Upanishads open before us the enchanting, inspiring, refreshing and elevating new world. Here is, subtlety and sublimity, the human mind is capable of achieving best expressed. This and much more though thousands of years old, we feel it so near and close to us, for the immense influence it continues to have on us. In the ideas, concepts and beliefs of the past ages rests the rock-foundation of our heritage and tradition.* At all times their importance has been emphasised. We have invoked it for inspiration and strength. Raja Rammohan Roy drew upon it, and presented to the people, the gift of re-awakening; Swami Dayanand gave the call 'go back to the Vedas'; Mahatma Gandhi expounded it with a refreshing newness; Gurudev Tagore interpreted it to the world for the good of mankind and Pandit Nehru feeling the might of this ancient and great heritage, spoke of himself as a link in this long chain. Our Indianness is our heritage. We began in the unknown past. Think

* The Bhagvad Gita I (43); Commenting S. Radhakrishnan observes: "When we shatter the ideas enshrined in immemorial traditions, when we disturb the social equilibrium, we only bring chaos into the world."