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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE APPROACHES OF
PANDITA RAMABAI AND SADHU SUNDAR SINGH TOWARD THE
EVANGELIZATION OF INDIA

By

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INTRODUCTION

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE APPROACHES OF
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INTRODUCTION

India is, above all things, extremely religious in every phase of her life; her people are continually striving, by every possible means, for peace with their gods. As Charles Andrews puts it:

India, perhaps more than any other country in the world, has felt in her soul this thirst for the living God. No one, who has watched the long line of pilgrims on their way to some sacred shrine, can ever forget the mystery of the heart longing to seek and to find God's presence. Age after age, the perpetual search goes on: the eternal quest is repeated. 1

The answer to their unending pursuit is brought to fruition in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of India, by and large, have been unwilling to respond to Christianity, because of the unsatisfactory way in which it has been presented, and because of their adherence to traditions and customs which are contrary to Christian thinking.

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

If the evangelization of India is ever going to become even a partial reality, those who carry the Gospel

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1. Charles Andrews: Sadhu Sundar Singh, p. xi.

must follow the advice of an Indian Christian who wrote, "If India is to be Christianized, Christianity must be Indian-¹ized." The teachings of Christ must first link themselves onto the cultural heritage of India before it can ever appeal to the heart of India. To a great many missionaries, India is an uncivilized place where nothing can be drawn from the culture but, instead, western culture must be injected into every avenue of life. Mr. Popley, writing in the International Review of Missions, strongly disagrees when he says,

The only safe rule for the missionary to India is the rule of Christ and Paul. 'He became flesh. Greek to the Greek, Jew to the Jew, Barbarian to the barbarian,' We must enter into the spirit of Indian culture, and learn to appreciate it before we try to teach anything to India. 2

In light of this realization, it is necessary, for those interested in India's salvation to observe and study the Indian culture, as well as the methods which native Christians use as they present the Gospel to their own people. It is, therefore, the purpose of this thesis to study the lives of Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh as they present the Gospel to their people with the end in view of gleaning from their approaches practical suggestions of modern approaches to the nationals of India.

2. The Subject Justified

It is not axiomatic that, if a person becomes wholly Indian in his attitudes and thinking, and then pre-

1. H. A. Popley: The Music Heritage of India, International Review of Missions, Vol. IX, 1920, p. 200.
2. Ibid., p. 202.

sents the Gospel, every Indian will flock to him and accept his message. This is no more true for India than it is of the United States. It will, however, bring the people of India to the realization that Christ is the universal Saviour and will thus make Him appealing to their thinking. It is no wonder that there is a rejection of Him when He comes to them in western garb, with western customs, and with a western mind, when He is in reality eastern in background.¹ Therefore, it seems needful to examine closely the lives of native Christians, who were successful in their respective ways of presenting the Gospel to their fellow countrymen, and glean from them their methods of approach.

3. The Subject Delimited

There are a number of native Christians, the study of whose lives would prove quite profitable to the furtherance of this topic, but due to lack of space and limitation of subject it is necessary to select two natives whose contributions to Indian Christianity have been outstanding, namely: Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh. Both individuals are truly Indian and yet they are dissimilar in their approaches.

. Authorities on the two persons under consideration continually praise them for their wonderful work.

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1. Cf. Milton Stauffer(ed) : An Indian Approach To India, pp60
61.

Concerning the Sadhu, one says, for example:

The Christian Patriot (a Madras Paper) wrote: 'the problem of Christianity in India is solved, and the Sadhu has solved it . . . it is the homage of the Indian to the ideal of the Sadhu. For ages we have learned to place the man who renounces the world and all it has to offer, above him who conquers and rules it.'¹

And Nicol Macnicol says of Pandita Ramabai:

She has not been denationalized by an influence from the West. Her desires are set upon other things, her citizenship is in heaven. She is, I think we may say, Indian in every fibre of her being, and none the less so because racial or national or personal claims mean nothing to her beside the claims of God and of the things of the spirit.²

B. The Sources of Data

Books, pamphlets, and periodicals on background of Indian culture and the lives of the two to be studied have been searched for material considered vital to the subject. Pandita Ramabai has written one pamphlet called, A Testimony, but other than that, neither she nor Sundar Singh have compiled any books which are directly related to their life experiences. Others who have been in close contact with them in India give rather accurate accounts of their lives. Those who have been most helpful for the study of Sundar Singh's life are books by Andrews, Streeter, and Zahir. Parker, Dyer, and Macnicol have written helpful books on the life of Ramabai.

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1. T. E. Riddle: The Ashram Review, An Adventure for God. Jan. 1935, Vol. 7, p. 168.
2. Nicol Macnicol: The Making of Modern India, pp. 204, 205.

C. The Plan of Procedure

The purpose of this study is to analyze the lives of these two Indian Christians to discover their underlying motives and purposes in doing things as they did. In order to understand their actions, it is necessary first to know something of the whole of the Indian background in which they lived. Looking more specifically at their lives, there are differences and similarities in their home life and conversion experience which would naturally affect their later life, and would be instrumental in shaping their approach to their fellow Indians. The concluding chapter of this thesis will consist of a comparison of their approaches, with a view to discovering possible satisfactory approaches for modern mission situations.

D. The Clarification of Terms

The term, evangelization, is used in the title and will be referred to in the paper. The writer uses this word in the sense that it means the calling of sinners to repentance through the finished work of Christ and the continued upbuilding of the individual and the community in the Christian life through the teaching of God's Word on their level. The Word of God states this same message when it says:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.¹

Those who strive to evangelize must realize that it is not only a matter of leading a person to Christ, but also of teaching him all the things which have been commanded by God in His Word.²

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1. Matthew 28:19-20a
2. Cf. J. Grant: "New Tasks in Old Fields," The East and the West. Vol. XIX, pp. 330-342.
Cf. Robert H. Glover: "What is the Message of the Church?" The Missionary Review of the World. Vol. LI, No. 5, p. 347.

CHAPTER I

INDIAN CUSTOMS AND CONDITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE
PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

INDIAN CUSTOMS AND CONDITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter I

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the actions and reactions of any people, one must first have a partial knowledge, at least, of the customs of the people. The whole of Indian culture is so varied that it is necessary to limit this study to Hindu customs; that does not, however, exclude the remainder of the Indian population, which is not Hindu, because the underlying characteristics of a people are basically the same. For the course of study here proposed, it is considered necessary to study the Hindu aspect because of the close relationship of both Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh to the Hindu religion. Pandita Ramabai's father was a Hindu reformer; and even though Sundar Singh's

parents were Sikhs by race,... in religious thought and practice they seem to have been almost as much Hindu, frequenting the places of worship, reading the sacred books and keeping in close contact with the teachers of both religions. 1

B. HINDU SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Nearly everyone writing on this subject of social ideals and customs in India comes face to face with the

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1. Burnett Hillman Streeter: The Message of Sadhu Sundar Singh, p.4.

problem of the vague distinction between the social system and religion. Mr. Paton, in his book on social ideals begins by saying, "Hinduism itself is as much a social system as a religion."¹ Other authorities make statements such as these:

Religion to the Hindu, permeates the whole social domain; and social order draws its sanctions from, and is enforced by the penalties of religion.²

As regards social customs, it may be said that the daily life and habits of the people are immensely influenced by religion in India. There is not an act that is not performed religiously by them..³

Thus it is impossible to speak of social customs and omit the religious philosophy and customs. It will be necessary, therefore, even in this section on social customs, to speak of some of the religious interactions upon society.

1. The Caste System

The caste system exercises extraordinary tyranny over the people of India; the reason for this power points once again to the whole Indian philosophy of life. Consequently, Mr. Jones' previously quoted statement is quite significant; "... social order draws its sanctions from, and is enforced by the penalties of religion."⁴

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1. William Paton: Social Ideals in India, p.2.
2. John Peter Jones : India; Its Life and Thought, p.92.
3. Pandita Ramabai Sarasvita: The High-Caste Hindu Woman, p.4.
4. Jones, loc. cit., p.92.

a. Origin of Caste

Even though there are a number of theories as to the origin of caste, one of the most reasonable suppositions is that its basis is found in the realm of occupation. It is believed that the Aryan Hindus, when they invaded the land, imposed an economical division of labor upon the people.¹ With the passing of the years, the Hindus have withdrawn themselves, using this system of caste as a wall of segregation and thus providing a means of defense against foreign elements influencing religion and society.

b. Divisions of Caste²

All of Hindu society is divided into five major divisions. There are even smaller sub-divisions which need not be enumerated or explained here, but the stated divisions will suffice to show the character of the society.

The first division is the Brahmans, or the Priests; they are the appointed spiritual governors over all and are the recognized heads of society. In the religious realm, this caste is also the highest goal toward which all people are striving. Because of the austerity of class distinctions and

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1. Cf. Paton, op. cit., pp. 4,5.
Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 98-100.
Cf. Sarasvita, op. cit., p. 6.
Cf. Rice: Hindu Customs and their Origins, pp. 47-55.
2. Cf. Paton, op. cit., pp. 6, 11.
Cf. Sarasvita, op. cit., p. 6.
Cf. Rice, op. cit., p. 117.
W.J. Wilkins: Modern Hinduism, 265-283.
Sir Monier Monier-Williams: Hinduism, pp. 151-164.

the consequent inability to rise in the social ladder, it is only through a rebirth that one may become a Brahman, if one is not already that. Their system of Karma¹ states that the person must finally be born as a Brahman before he can ever hope to be free from the many incarnations and have a chance at liberation.

Next, in order of sequence, is the Kshatriyas caste, the warrior and the noble; these are the protectors of the country, suppressors of crime and injustice.

The third category has to do with the business men, the tradesmen, and the artisans, the Vasisyas or trade class. This has a great number of groupings and sub-groupings according to trade.

The Sudra caste constitutes the fourth heading which is the servant class. Some authors are of the opinion that all of those not in any of the previous three castes are considered to be in this fourth caste, while still other writers provide a separate and fifth division, which includes all the outcastes who are then called Panchamas.

There are four features of caste which Mr. Jones considers as unchanging factors. "These four — the connubial, the convivial, the contactual and the occupational—are the constant factors of the caste existence and activity in

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1. Mr. Paton defines Karma as, "the theory that all souls wander from body to body through an endless series of incarnations and everything in it is determined by the actions of the soul in the preceeding series of lives." p.7.

India."¹ The connubial, of course, refers to marriage and the relation it has to caste. No one may ever marry another outside of his caste without breaking caste. The family is such a vital organic unit that the disobedience of one person endangers the standing of all the remainder of the family. For instance, if a son breaks caste, through marriage, by becoming a Christian, or even in some more insignificant way, all members of that caste are forbidden to give any of their children in marriage to the members of that family. The whole family is placed under a kind of ban. Marriage to a widow is also an act which severs caste ties and places a man under a ban.

Under no circumstances can a Hindu dine with those of a caste below his own. The second category, the convivial, has to do with this matter of eating with persons belonging to a lower caste. The Hindu must know who has handled the food before he eats and in many cases how it is prepared. Water is to be especially guarded against the touch of a lower caste person, for fear of pollution. An orthodox Hindu is sure that sacred water, no matter how filthy it is, will not harm him. Concerning the use of the foul water in many of the, so called, sacred rivers, Mr. Williams explains that the Hindu will either bathe in it or drink it with avidity; whereas the purest water is supposed to cause external and

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1. Jones, op.cit., p. 113.

internal taint if accepted from a person of low caste"¹. Most Hindus carry their water in a brass vessel and will drink water from nothing else. This fear of the contamination of water by the presence of a lower caste person also necessitates two wells in a village. Mr. Jones, to illustrate the strictness of these laws, tells of one of his experiences with a Brahman's waterpot while traveling on a train:

He has entered a railway car and accidentally touched a Brahman's water pot under the seat, whereupon the disgusted owner seized the vessel and immediately poured out of the car window all its contents. ²

There is a third category which the Hindu must guard against and that is summed up in the contactual factor. Outcastes are untouchable and even unapproachable, especially in South India where this ban of untouchability is a very real thing. Millions of people, Mr. Paton declares, are in one of the following categories:

A Hindu reformer, writing to a daily paper in denunciation of caste, stated that, "In Cachin a Yatar can pollute a man of higher caste only by touching him. The Kammalan group—that is, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, and leather-workers—pollute at twenty-four feet, toddy-drawers at thirty-six feet, Pulayan or Cheruman cultivators at forty-eight feet and Pariahs, who eat beef, at sixty-four feet. ³

Mr. Paton also tells of occupational limitations: "Trade castes not only prescribe the one ancestral occupation to their members; they also, with equal distinctness and sev-

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1. Williams, op. cit., p. 157.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 107.
3. Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

erity, prohibit to all within their ranks any other work or trade."¹

c. Penalties for Breaking Caste Rules

A man must continually be on guard; for no one is exempt from the punishments which will be meted out to those who disobey. In most cases the punishment is rebirth.²

Pandita Ramabai Sarasvita tells of possible punishment due the one who disobeys the laws of caste:

According to this doctrine, a man is liable to be born eight million four hundred thousand times before he can become a Brahman (first Class), and except one be a Brahman he is not fit to be re-absorbed into the spirit, even though he obtain the true knowledge of the Paramatma. It is, therefore, necessary for every person of other castes to be careful not to transgress the law by any imprudent act, lest he be again subjected to be born eight million four hundred thousand times. ³

Mr. Wilkins, in his book, Modern Hinduism, tells of judgment, punishment and reward awaiting the Hindu:

A person who loses human birth passes through 8,000,000 births amongst inferior creatures before he can appear again on earth as a human being. Of these he remains 2,100,000 among the immovable parts of creation, as stones, trees, etc.; 900,000 amongst the watery tribes; 1,000,000 amongst insects, worms etc.; 1,000,000 amongst birds, and 3,000,000 amongst the beasts. In the ascending scale, if his works are suitable, he lives 4,000,000 lives amongst the lower castes of men; and 100 amongst Brahmans. After this he may obtain absorption into Brahma. ⁴

Although these strict caste rules are slowly being broken down, there are so many superstitions and penalties pressed upon the people who disobey that it will

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1. Jones, op.cit., p. 112.
2. Cf. Sarisvita, op.cit., p.3.
3. Sarisvita, Loc.cit., p.3.
4. Wilkins, op.cit., p.417.

actually take hundreds of years before the system crumbles completely. Many, who are not so familiar with the rigidity of the system, suppose it to be much like our class system here in the states. This is a false concept, however, because, for the Hindu, the breaking of caste has severe penalties in this present life as well as in the many lives¹ to come.

d. Disadvantages of the Caste System.

This system has an innumerable amount of faults. In the occupational realm, for example, a young man who has unusual abilities, if born as a Panchama, will never have the freedom to develop his abilities and take a rightfully higher place in society. Instead he must remain in the occupation which his father, and grandfather, and great-grandfather² before him have followed.

An outcaste thinks nothing of the curse or deriding remark which is made about him by the high caste man; in fact, he would almost consider it wrong if the man failed to do it.

Caste, furthermore is the mother of an appalling number of the social evils of the land. Before the days of caste, there were no such things as child marriages, prohibition of widow remarriage, expensive doweries, and temple

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1. Cf. Sarasvita, op. cit., p. 9.

2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 92.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 112.

women. It is therefore evident that caste has fostered many¹ of the evils now existing in India.

2. The Marriage System

India makes changes slowly; but she is not completely static. Numerous legal acts have been passed in the last half century² which affect the life of Indian women and yet because of the over powering influence of custom and tradition, they have not succeeded in making any sizable impact on the prevailing mores.³

Pandita Ramabai's book, The High Caste Hindu Woman, deals with the various religious rites and customs which held the women of India in superstition and ignorance. Her book divides the life of a woman into three parts: childhood, youth or marriage, and widowhood. As she portrays it, the life of a woman of India is a most miserable existence from beginning to end.

From the time of her birth, a girl is a care and burden to her parents and they do not delay letting her feel the same. If she is the first child, she and her mother are greatly frowned upon; if, on the other hand, there have been several boys born to the family first, there is a little better welcome for her. In their eyes, their concern is valid,

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1. Cf. Jones, op.cit., p. 137.

Cf. (ed) Milton Stauffer: An Indian Approach to India, p.130.

2. Cf. Eleanore F. Rathbone: Child Marriage: The Indian Minotaur, pp. 17-26.

3. Cf. Lady Hartog: India in Outline, p. 15.

4. Cf. James Lowell Hypes: Spotlight on the Culture of India, p.157.

for the father's redemption depends upon the birth of a son. "There is no place for a man (in heaven) who is destitute of male offspring.' Vasishttha, XVII " ¹ Because of this possibility of their being no redemption for the man there is a clause in their sacred book, Manu, which reads, "If a wife happens to have all daughters and no sons, Manu authorizes the husband of such a woman to supersede her with another in the eleventh year of their marriage." ²

It is hardly possible to comprehend what a dreaded position for the Indian woman is that of not having given birth to a son. A woman in the United States could in a carefree manner brush off the matter and refuse to be married, if it were going to cause all this trouble. But in India, although this is not a written law, it is thoroughly taken for granted that a woman can have no salvation if she is not married. ³

a. Childhood

Almost as soon as a girl is born , her parents must begin thinking of the problem of her marriage, for again, " According to Manu, 'eight years is the minimum, and twelve years of age the maximum marriagable age for a high caste girl.' " ⁴ Popular custom makes the age vary some, anywhere from five years to eleven. Where the father neglects this

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1. quoted by Sarasvita, op.cit., p. 13.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Ibid., p. 29.

responsibility of finding a husband for his daughter, he is guilty of committing the unpardonable sin, must face ridicule,¹ and is excommunicated from his caste. Since this law concerning the age of marriage had religious significance, the British government had to proceed with caution when passing a bill to improve conditions.

Mr. Hypes mentions several interventions of the government, but states that:

the most important attempted intervention of marriage customs by the Government was the Sarda Act which was passed by the Central Government (1930) under the advocacy of the Indian liberals of the Assembly, forbidding the marriage of girls under fourteen and boys under eighteen years of age.²

The Act, passed on October 1, 1929, was not to come into effect until six months later, on April 1, 1930. The priests and money lenders, who make a tremendous amount of money through marriage ceremonies, took advantage of the ignorance of the people and tricked them into believing that after April 1, 1930 the British government would prohibit all marriages - not of girls under fourteen- but for fourteen years. Consequently, all over India, for that period of six months, from Oct. 1, 1929-April 1, 1930, there was a mass marriage of children of all ages from infancy and upwards.³

Because of this widespread dishonesty there was an increase in the marriage of children under 15 from

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 23.

2. Hypes. op.cit., p. 157.

3. Cf. Rathbone, op.cit., pp. 43-45.

8 $\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1921 to 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ million in 1931.¹ As people begin to become aware of the harm which child marriage imparts to young girls they will no doubt raise the age themselves.

Lady Hartog rightly puts it:

The mere passing of an Act cannot put an end to a custom so deeply ingrained unless it has the sanction of public opinion behind it, but education has already resulted in raising the age of marriage among the middle classes, and it is fitting that this measure should have been added to other measures of social reform.²

Raleigh Parkin, in his book, India Today, which is copyrighted as late as 1945, says:

Changing ideas and economic conditions have tended to discourage this practice amongst the educated, while legislation has also had some effect. Speaking generally, however, what is known as child marriage is a feature of Hindu society which continues to prevail and which has important social consequences.³

Not only must a girl be married at a certain time in her life but there are high doweries to supply. For the poor family this is beyond their means, especially if they have several daughters. Because of the high dowery custom, which has come in with the caste system, the practice of female infanticide takes place. This simply means, that when too many girls are born into the family, they are killed.⁴ This was considered unlawful by the British government, but in many cases it is still taking place and the authorities have little power over it. " As early as 1802 the British

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 46.
2. Cf. Hypes, op.cit., p. 157.
2. Hartog, op.cit., p. 15.
3. Parkin; India Today, p. 13.
4. Cf. Sarasvita, op.cit., p. 25.

government enacted laws for the suppression of this horrid¹ crime,..." or they worked with Hindu princes and agreed that a girl's father should not give dowry above that which he was able, " but caste and clan prejudice could not be overcome so easily."²

Being a superstitious people , the Indians use horoscopes of individuals to determine their ability to live together in harmony in marriage.³ When a boy is found whose horoscope agrees with a girls, the parents get together and decide on the marriage. It is necessary to remember that still in many cases the boy and girl are only children. Nevertheless there is a marriage ceremony which is gay and colorful, with music, song, firecrackers, and even an elephant⁴ on which the children ride. It all seems like a fairy tale. And so it is, for immediately after the ceremony the girl-bride accompanies her husband to his home where she lives with the family until she is old enough truly to become his wife. His mother uses her for household chores and trains her to be obedient to her future husband.⁵ The official marriage ceremony takes place when they both reach puberty.⁶

b. Married Life

Married life for a woman means a complete sub-

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1. Ibid., p. 26.
2. Ibid., p. 26.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 36, 37.
Cf. Hypes, op.cit., p. 155.
4. Cf. Sarasvita, op.cit., pp. 40, 41.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 34.

jection to the man of the house, whether it be husband or son, if the husband is dead. "The Dharma Satras says: ' Day and night must women be kept in dependence by the male members of the family; they are never fit for independence; they are as impure as falsehood itself.'¹"

Most of the women are ignorant and illiterate, not because they are naturally so, but because they are given no opportunity whatsoever to get any education, except that which their mothers are able to give them. Their early marriage stunts their education and Mr. Jones, in his book entitled India: Its Life and Thought, verifies this by stating: "Only 6 out of one thousand women can read and write."² His book was copyrighted in 1908. A 1931 census report states: " The number of literates per 1,000 over the age of five for all India is 156 males and 29 females."³ Frank Laubach presents statistics from the same year and, by comparison of the two, it was found that in the same census there were 29 females (Hindu women) per 1, 000 who were considered literate. This places the percentage at 2%.⁴ An official 1941 census, which would show an official count, has not been tabulated or published. These are only samples given of the approximate percentages collected from a cross section of states which responded to the census. The percentage of literacy

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1. quoted by William Arthur Stanton: Out of the East, p. 141.

2. Jones, op.cit., p. 213.

3. Rathbone, op.cit., p. 131.

4. Cf. Frank C. Laubach: India Shall Be Literate, pp. 248-249.

for women from all India is here mentioned as 5%.¹

A married woman is given few things to enjoy. She is, however, granted the joy of wearing ornaments and they become a source of pride to her. Dainty foods are sometimes given her and occasionally she receives a bow from the man of the house.

c. Widowhood

If one considers the life of a girl and a married woman hard, the life of a widow is ten times worse, Pandita Ramabai substantiated the reason for this in the statement:
" Throughout India, widowhood is regarded as the punishment for a horrible crime or crimes committed by the woman in her former existence upon earth."²

It was the custom of the widow to throw herself upon the funeral pyre of her husband and die with him there. The act was supposed to be voluntary, yet in many cases it was not that at all, for some would attempt to escape but were forced to remount the burning pyre. Suttee, the name given to this act of burning widows on the burning pyre of their husband, has now been forbidden by the government.³
During her married life, the Indian women had been taught to love ornaments but now, as a widow, she is denied the privilege of wearing them. Not only is she denied jewelry but

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1. Cf. S. Kingly Davis: The Population of India and Pakistan, p. 151.
2. Sarasvita, op.cit., p. 69.
3. Cf. Hypes, op.cit., p. 139.

Pandita Ramabai tells how, "among the Brahmans of Deccan the heads of all widows must be shaved regularly every fortnight."¹ Young children do not understand the reason for this and are ashamed to be seen in public when their heads are shaven. The widow must wear a single coarse garment, white, red, or brown. She must eat only one meal a day and may never take part in jubilee.²

3. Individual Characteristics

India possesses a number of traits which, when rightfully motivated by the Spirit of God, will be advantageous and conducive to the furtherance of Christian character. The book, Building with God in India, by Daniel Fleming, holds forth these desirable characteristics of the Indian nationals: humility, simplicity, and patience. Rev. Bradley, writing concerning the church problems of India, stresses these three traits as well.³

a. Humility

Humility is a trait which most Christians admire and strive to acquire, through the grace granted them by Christ. Indians approve heartily of this characteristic in people and will respond favorably to those in whom it is exemplified. Bradley explains:

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1. Sarasvita, op.cit., p. 82.
Cf. Hypes, op.cit., p. 139.
2. Cf. Sarasvita, op.cit., p. 82.
3. Cf. Daniel Johnson Fleming: Building With India, p.155.
Cf. Bradley: Indian Church Problems of Today, pp. 129-136.

Humility to the average Britisher or American seems to rest on a type of weakness... But India feels that true humility calls for an exercise of restraint and self control that will tax the strongest character. 1

b. Simplicity

Considering India's art, with its many complicated designs, and India's involved religious system, it is difficult to understand where simplicity enters the picture, but the people desire great simplicity in organization, at least. They feel inadequate when confronted with the complicated church organization of the Westerner. For instance, a Westerner will set an intricate system of church government running and then expect the Indian to take over in his absence. With their training and background they feel inadequate to the task. "A certain complexity is inevitable with the progress of life and civilization, but an extreme can be reached where organization hinders rather than helps. India's ideal has been simplicity of organization." When looking at the organization of the early church there is reflected the Indian desire for simplicity. Organization is not wrong, "but India still prefers the personal, direct method of the Master to the worked out system of the western hemisphere."

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1. Bradley, op.cit., pp. 135,136.
2. Cf. Paton, op.cit., p. 86.
3. Bradley, op.cit., p. 128.
4. Ibid., p. 129.

c. Patience

Patience is an absolute essential in any portrait of India. She has no regard for a person who loses his temper. The hastily uttered words of the west cause dissension, while the people of India would rather take their time and solve things in an unhurried and peaceful way. To lose self control before an Indian is to lose everything.¹

It is essential that missionaries understand that organization and routine professional work will not affect the people of India. Fleming comments:" the graces which appeal to India are simplicity, gentleness, patience, God centeredness, a thoroughgoing indifference to things which are not eternal."²

C. RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE HINDU

The one truly stable thing in the Hindu system of religion is the caste system, if one can consider that a part of the religious system since it is so close to the social aspect of their life.

1. Hindu Religious Philosophy

The philosophy of Hinduism is much too intricate to discuss in its entirety. It is therefore advisable to view but a few of the underlying philosophies of Hindu thought.

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1. Cf. Ibid., p.139.

2. Fleming, loc. cit., p.155.

a. Asceticism

The religious ascetic represents one of the characteristic features of modern Hinduism. Asceticism, as defined by Ferm is, "the view that through moderation or renunciation of things commonly considered pleasant one reaches a higher spiritual state."¹ Two names are given in particular to the men who adopt this form of life: sadhus and sanyasis. A sadhu's life "is vowed to religion from the beginning whilst the sanyasi's may begin at any time, even at the end of the life."² A sadhu never embarks upon any of the ordinary occupations of the world, while the sanyasi, on the other hand, fulfills the general obligations of life, marries, and has a family; then he may turn aside to the "holy" life.

From the earliest days of India men have been attracted to this type of self denial as a means of obtaining peace of soul and of being absorbed into the deity. Mrs. Parker tells of the lengths to which some men go because of their intense desire for peace of soul. Some swing over a slow fire, hold up the right arm until it has stiffened and the nails have grown through the back of the hand, sit on beds of spikes , or place themselves under a vow of silent meditation on the banks of some sacred river.³

In India there are millions of these "holy men" who simply wander and beg and live upon the common people.

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1. Vergilius Ferm:(ed) An Encyclopedia of Religion, p. 41.
2. Mrs. Arthur Parker: Sadhu Sundar Singh; Called of God,p.1.
3. Ibid., p.2.

The people accept them as the highest type of piety in the land; therefore they give them money and food, considering it a merit. A great majority of these men are simply lazy and have no idea of their lives' becoming more holy because¹ of their denial.

Mr. Jones claims that most of the asceticism is carried on under false premises: " In Hinduism, the rigours of asceticism are, indeed, sometimes a means to an end: but that end is not character or any spiritual achievement, but power with the gods.² Christianity has the emblem of self renunciation and denial but it is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. The "holy men" of India set their entire concern upon their own attainment with the gods and see no reason for helping another find peace of soul. To alleviate suffering, for instance, would be working against karma.³ Karma has come to mean fate.⁴

b. Mysticism

The interpretation given to mysticism by Vergilius Ferm is as follows:

Mysticism exists in varying degrees, from what has been called 'mild mysticism' to intense and absorbing forms of experience, mounting at times to ecstasy, and often accompanied by ascetic practices in living and devoted service.⁵

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1. Cf. Jones, op.cit., p. 133.
Cf. Ramabai: A Testimony, p. 11-12.
2. Cf. Jones, op.cit., p.228.
3. A.C. Bosanquet: Japan Evangelist, April, 1919, p.263.
4. Cf. Macnicol, op.cit., p.31.
5. Ferm, op.cit., p. 513.

"It is emotional apprehension of a spiritual reality."¹ India sees its' fruits in bhakti and yoga. Yoga is a sort of personal ability, through self discipline, to throw one's self into a trance and then have visions of various things related to the gods. " The bhakta seeks it," apprehension of a spiritual reality," through the beauty of song, dance, and hymn. The former tries to suppress his desires, the latter to express them.²

c. Quietism

Absolute calm, unmixed with selfish ambition, is the true receptive mind for the divine grace. Characteristics such as patience and endurance are the component factors around which such a philosophy is built, and the perfect acquisition of such traits make for perfect calm which opens the way for divine grace to fill the life. The Rev. Bradley declares that, " India could not be what she is without her meditative brooding spirit... it would be un-indian to be in such a hurry!"³ Time devoted to meditation and thought is not considered lost in India.⁴

d. Ceremonialism

Since there is no ideal present in human nature, there is an exaltation of rules and ceremonies. All of life's tasks are done behind the veil of an elaborate ceremonial

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1. Ferm, op.cit., p. 513.
2. B.H. Streeter: The Message of Sadhu Sundar Singh, pp.186, 187.
3. Bradley, op.cit., p. 127.
4. Cf. Nicol Macnicol: The Making of Modern India, p.201.

form. All man is asked to do is to conform to outward ceremony; if he does this he is a good man even though he breaks all the other commandments. " All of life is reduced to an unceasing ritual..¹"

Indian women, when they are religiously minded, have daily ceremonies which they perform. Macnicol thus describes a woman's ceremony:

Morning by morning she bathes the idol(home idol) in holy water and garlands it with flowers. She keeps the sacred fire burning and punctiliously observes the rites and ceremonies of her religion. She makes long pilgrimages to sacred places, worships at countless shrines, bathes in the water of sacred rivers, and offers the very hair of her head to the god of her devotion. 2

2. Outstanding Hindu Religious Doctrines

Three of the major principles on which the Hindu religion operates were found to be Pantheism, Karma and Transmigration, and Moksha or Salvation. The various authors studied agree in stressing these.

a. Pantheism

It is a sweeping statement to make when one says a religion is pantheistic. The Hindu religion is variously divided in regard to this. Hindus can be found who believe in one god and others who believe in many gods.³ The lower classes of people, especially the outcastes, have a variety of gods. The outcastes are never permitted to worship the

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1. Jones, op.cit., p. 137.
2. Macnicol, op.cit., pp. 140, 141.
3. Cf. Paton., op.cit., p. 3.

Paramatman(the Supreme Spirit), "Hence the Brahman has put before him",the outcaste," a stick or a stone and said to him, 'This is your god. Worship that.'¹ Throughout the land one finds idols where the people come to worship.

Those who point to the existence of one Supreme Spirit(Paramatman), have made it a pantheistic philosophy. In Mr. Stanton's chapter,"India's Search For God," he portrays the Supreme Spirit:

The self is the "Ancient", the "Bright", the "Immortal mortal," the "Infinite", the "Self-Existent",the "Eternal Thinker," the "Grest Being," the "Highest Self,"(Paramatman), "hidden in the heart," "the Self in all beings," "all-pervading", "smaller than the small, greater than the great," "unborn, without beginning, withoutend", "unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving"... The Self"is incomprehensible, for he cannot be comprehended.."2

There are two"selves"; the one is this Supreme Self while the other is the self within a man. The aspiration of all seeking souls in India is to have this oneness or absorption into the divine realized. To be a Brahman is the highest realization of this in life.

b. Karma and Transmigration

There arises, however, an insurmountable obstacle to the attainment of that goal. That is the relentless doctrine of Karma and Transmigration. The doctrine of Karma in Biblical language is, "Whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap."³

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1. Stanton, op.cit., p. 66.
2. Ibid., pp.26,27.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 30.

Standing by itself, this may seem like a rather good philosophy; however, it becomes more complicated and is fatalistic when there is a right understanding of the Hindu idea of life.

Mr. Stanton defines life as the Hindu sees it:

Life, according to the Hindu conception, if not confined to the brief span of this present life, but consists of an endless succession of existences, bound together by a law of retribution, 'Just as a man acts, just as he behaves, so will he be born.' 1

c. Salvation or Moksha

Salvation to the Indian is freedom from this unending series of births. The Hindu stands absolutely alone² as the agent and cause of his salvation. Is it any wonder that he feels the necessity of having many births before he can attain? There is no promise of deliverance from evil but only from rebirth. The way to Release is the extinction of desire; therefore, one can understand the sanyasis of India when he puts on the customary yellow robe and through³ the surrender of every pleasure seeks to annihilate desire.

On the other hand, the ethical philosophy is anything but moral. Moral criteria do not apply to the descents or incarnations to which people are subject. One of the worst practices in India is the practice of keeping dancing girls in the temples. Mr. Jones tells of mothers bringing their baby girls to the temples with the idea that they will be

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1. Ibid.

2. Cf. Jones, op.cit., p. 240.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 32.

married to the gods, when in reality they become the professional prostitutes of the land.¹

India's search for Liberation is an unending cycle of birth and rebirth for the purpose of being reabsorbed into the Supreme Spirit. This absorption is described by Mr. Stanton in the following analogy: As the flowing river disappears in the sea, losing its name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine Person,² who is greater than the great.

D. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of the foregoing chapter to study the customs, practices, and beliefs of the Hindu as a basis for a greater understanding of the lives and experiences of Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh, as well as a means of deepening insight into their basic principles of approach to their people with the Christian message.

The constant element in Hindu culture over the years was found to be the caste system. Although there are various theories as to its origin, several authorities agree that the Aryan invaders of India introduced it as an economical division of labor. Caste has developed into a religious system which separates men into five classes of society. All Hindus fall into ones of these categories: Brahmans,

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1. Cf. Jones, op.cit., p. 212.
2. Cf. Stanton, op.cit., p.33.
Cf. Sarasvita, op.cit., p.3.

Kshatriyas, Viasyas, Sudra, and Panchamas. A person is automatically a member of the caste to which his parents belong and he has no opportunity whatsoever to climb the ladder of caste. Therefore, although to be a Brahman is the most desired end, it is only through rebirth that a person can reach a higher level of attainment from the level on which he finds himself. The whole intricate system of caste has so bound the people of India that they are reluctant to welcome anything new.

The marriage system in India , which has kept the women in ignorance and superstition, has undergone many changes in the last century. Laws have been passed to alleviate the situation but the customs and traditions of the people have more power than laws. It has been discovered, for instance, that Manu, sacred Hindu Scriptures, stated eight as the minimum and twelve as the maximum age for a girl to be married. The Sarada Act, passed in 1930, raised the minimum to fourteen but popular custom disobeys both these laws.

Female illiteracy, infanticide, high dowry prices, and superstition were all seen to be marriage evils which, instituted with the caste system, are only slowly being overcome by laws and education.

Common characteristics of the Indian nationals, it was discovered, are humility, simplicity, and patience.

Four of the outstanding phases of Hindu religious

philosophy were briefly discussed. Asceticism, the view that renunciation of things considered pleasant will bring a higher spiritual state, is prevalent throughout India. Mysticism expresses itself in lesser and greater forms of ecstasy. Quietism is nearly synonymous to meditation. Rules and ceremonies are given first place and if a man conforms to them he is a "good man".

The various authors studied agree that the outstanding Hindu religious doctrines are: Pantheism, Karma, and Transmigration, and Moksha, or salvation. These were considered in turn.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF SADHU SUNDAR SINGH AND
PANDITA RAMABAI AFFECTING THEIR PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

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CHAPTER II

A. Introduction

The preceding chapter presented a general survey of the customs and culture of Hindu society. The study under consideration in this chapter proposes specifically to examine the experiences of two Indian Christians who were either born into Hindu homes or had close connections with the teachings of Hinduism.¹ The actions and nature of an individual in later life are frequently dependent upon the home life and early training of the person. Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh presented the gospel to their people in strikingly different ways. It is believed that a partial reason for the variance is due to the dissimilarities in their home life and early training. This chapter will disclose important influences and events in the lives of both Sundar Singh and Pandita Ramabai which no doubt led them to use their distinctive approaches in presenting the gospel. This treatment will be brief, touching only the essential information which will give a better understanding of the ongoing program of their later life.

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1. Ante, p. 1.

B. SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF SUNDAR SINGH

It is extremely difficult for an individual to erase from his memory the many experiences he has had in his childhood. Those early years are impressionable years when the child offers little or no resistance to the teachings, attitudes, and religion of his parents. Because of his complete dependence upon his parents and his ignorance of, or rebellion against, a better way, he more or less ardently follows in the footsteps of his parents until he is able to think for himself. When confronted with new ideas, the individual inevitably considers his previous thinking and teachings, thus attempting to evaluate the new in light of the familiar past. In a land such as India, the people cling so tenaciously to their traditions, laws, and religions that they are particularly hard to reach with new ideas.

1. Home Life

a. Early Life

Alfred Zahir, when writing his account of the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh, makes the statement, "Our information of his early life at home is regrettably meagre.."¹ Other writers do not state this fact, as such, but by the limited amount of space which they allot to the subject, one is made aware of the lack of knowledge concerning his

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1. Alfred Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p. 24.

early life. The material which is given deals largely with his mother's influence on his life. They were together a great deal of the time.

b. Relation to His Mother

Often the success of great men is attributed to their mothers; this is especially true of the Sadhu. Mrs. Parker tells of Sundar's closeness to his mother and of her devotion to her religion:

From his earliest days the child not only accompanied his mother on her visits to the temples but was carefully taught by her to regard religion as the supreme thing in life. He saw her reverence for the holy men she often went to consult; and very early in life his impressionable mind seized upon the idea that, of all lives, that of a holy sadhu was the best worth living. 1

He was always close to his mother and it was she who encouraged his religious desires. ² Since Singh was the youngest child of the family and seemingly followed his mother everywhere, he could not help but become as she was. She influenced his thinking and his planning for the future. Streeter says:

His mother constantly held before him the life of a sadhu as the ideal to follow when he grew up, bidding him abandon the things of the world and strive to obtain the inner Peace, alone permanent and permanently satisfying, the quest for which has been immemorial in Indian religion. 3

His mother, who was his source of inspiration, was also his spiritual teacher; she would spend much time in prayer for him and the other children in the family, as well as taking time to teach Singh the sacred scriptures. "By the

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1. Parker, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Cf. Burnett H. Streeter: The Message of Sadhu Sundar Singh, p4.
Cf. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p. 24.
3. Streeter, op. cit., p. 5.

age of seven he knew by heart most of the Bhavagad Gita, by¹
common consent the most sublime of the Hindu Scriptures."

During his later life he always spoke of his mother with the utmost regard. When addressing lectures to mothers his face would beam as he related the worth, in his mind, of his own mother. He was so devoted to her that while speaking of her to the Archbishop of Canterbury he said, " If I do not see my mother in heaven, I shall ask God to send me to hell² that I may be with her."

The desire for peace with God was so deeply implanted in his heart that he sought everywhere for peace of soul. Mr. Streeter relates the intensity of his desire when he says:

..for some time, under the direction of a Hindu sadhu, he practiced a form of Yoga—one of the methods, much esteemed among Hindus, of seeking identification with the Supreme Spirit, and the resultant peace and illumination, by concentration leading up to a state of trance—but with no avail. ³

When Singh was but a child of fourteen the one who understood him best and who was his spiritual guide and counsellor was taken from him. His mother died, leaving him⁴ alone in his quest for peace.

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1. Ibid., p.5.
Cf. Andrews, op.cit., p. 30.
2. Streeter, op.cit., p. 5.
Cf. Andrews, op.cit., p. 35.
3. Streeter, op.cit., pp. 5,6.
4. Cf. Davey, op.cit., p.95.

c. Relation to His Father

Streeter explains, "his father was Sirdar Sher Singh, a Sikh by descent, and to this day", 1919, "a wealthy landowner in Rampur, in the state of Patiala."¹ Being the owner of land in India means that a person is wealthy. Singh was brought up in the midst of luxury. This wealth later became a point of temptation to Singh, and it certainly was not a help in preparing him to meet his future life as a sadhu.

It was during the two years following the death of his mother that his search for God was greatest. At times he would stay up late to read the Hindu Scriptures. He later relates the great displeasure of his father:

'It is bad for your health to read so late.' Though there was much in my home to make me happy, I was not attracted by it. My father often remonstrated with me, saying: 'boys of your age think of nothing but games and play, but how has this religious mania possessed you at so early an age? There is plenty of time to think of these things later in life. 2

In spite of this attitude, when it was reported that Singh had torn a New Testament apart and burned it publically, his father was dismayed. Yet three days later his father rebuked him severely when he confessed his faith in Christ. Sher Singh could not understand his son. He first called him crazy; but when others witnessed that Singh was leading a different life in school, his father took necessary steps to keep the family

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1. Parker, op.cit., p.p.5,6.
2. Andrews, op.cit., pp. 30,31.

¹
clean by first attempting to change his son's decision
through gifts of money, by persecuting him, and finally by
²
excommunicating him from his home.

Singh's father died in the 1920's. Before his
death he had become a Christian.

2. His Education

a. Formal Education

Singh's formal education began in a Presbyterian
mission school at Ludhiana.³ As he grew somewhat older and
understood the implications behind what his teachers were
reading and teaching, he began to rebel violently. He dis-
liked this Christian teaching so much that he left the school
and resolved to join a government school which was three miles
from his home. That meant that he had a six-mile hike every
day. Soon he realized that his body could not stand the strain,
especially in the heat of the eastern sun, and so he had to
choose either to go without education or return to the mission
school.⁴ He did return to Ludhiana and later when he became
a Christian, he found refuge from persecution in this school.
While his work in high school was not completed, A.C. Bosanquet
witnesses to Singh's keen mind when he writes that, "he knew
seven or eight languages including Thibetan."⁵

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1. Cf. Ante. p.1.
2. Cf. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, pp.33-35.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp.26,27.
5. A.C. Bosanquet: Sadhu Sundar Singh, Japan Evangelist, April,
1919, Vol. XXVI #4, p. 21.

As he grew older he had no desire for formal education in his own life. A friend, Bishop Lefroy, thought it would be an asset to his ministry if he attended a Theological school. The years 1909 and 1910 were spent in study¹ at St. John's Divinity College at Lahore. But Singh was not used to following schedules; and praying at a set time seemed particularly forced. He was used to freedom in his worship. He felt he did not learn much from the school. Long after he said, " I did not get any great benefit from the Divinity School. I did not like it, but stayed on out of regard for Bishop Lefroy."² Because he carried on his life as a sadhu even in college, his fellow students thought he was trying to set up a standard of holiness, in light of which they felt inferior. He was simply living as he felt he should and he did consider the lives of the other students too lax to become the ministers of the gospel.³ His own words probably best express the way he felt about most religious learning: " Religion is a matter, not of the head but of the heart."⁴

b. Informal Education

It was Singh's greatest desire and pleasure to meditate upon God's Word and through fellowship with Jesus

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1. Cf. Parker, op.cit., p. 27.
2. T.E. Riddle : An Adventurer for God, ~~The~~ Ashram Review, Vol. I #6, Dec., 1934, p, 111.
3. Cf. Andrews, op.cit., p. 64.
4. quoted in Streeter, op.cit., p. 16.

learn those things which He would have him learn. Mrs.

Parker tells us:

He had no books to explain the New Testament or to cloud its meaning. There was just the New Testament, God and his own highly attuned soul--a soul that had sought long and hopelessly for God, and had found here all, and more than he had sought.¹

Throughout his early years he was acquiring attitudes and aims in life which cannot be taught but are learned by supreme example. He learned what it meant to live a disciplined life, through the example of his mother and sister. Because of his own experience of intense searching after God he could sympathize and help those who found themselves in the same state. Through the teaching of his former religion, and the example of the "holy men" whom his mother took him to see he learned what it was to give one's whole life to the god to whom one was devoted. Through persecution he understood the trials of persecution.

3. His Conversion Experience

As Sundar Singh's young mind became more and more interested in spiritual realities, his mother's advice to him to become a holy man gained momentum. Even though he studied the "holy" books of his father's religion and visited the same "holy men" whom his mother had visited, before her death, his heart found no peace. In the mission school which he attended he was required to read the Bible;

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1. Parker, op.cit., p. 7.

the more he read the greater his hatred for it grew. He reacted to this inner conflict as any headstrong young man might, by publicly burning the New Testament to show his hatred for the Christian religion.¹ The inner strife was at its height; his sensitive soul longed for peace. In desperation he turned to the New Testament, which he had so recently burned,² to find some comfort. He did discover such verses as, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," and John 3:16,³ which aided to some extent. But still the burden of anguish prevented him from finding true rest. He resolved that he would find the truth which was behind this agonizing conflict or put an end to his life. With this resolve to discover truth, he locked himself in his room for three days, following the burning of the New Testament. At the end of these three days, on December 18, 1904, his conversion took place. The experience is best given in his own words, as quoted by Streeter from one of Kandys' addresses. He first tells of his persecution of Christians, his hatred of the Bible, and yet of his unbearable unrest of soul. He describes this situation as becoming worse until he says,

My intention was that, if I got no satisfaction, I would place my head upon the railway line when the 5 o'clock train passed by and kill myself. If I got no satisfaction in this life, I thought I would get

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1. Cf. Andrews: Sadhu Sundar Singh, A Personal Memoir, p.42.
2. Cf. Ante., p. 33.
3. quoted in M. Brain: Sadhu Sundar Singh, The Missionary Review of the World, Vol. XLV #4, p. 289.

it in the next. I was praying and praying but got no answer... At 4:30 a.m. I saw something of which I had no idea at all previously. In the room where I was praying I saw a great light— Then as I prayed I looked into the light, I saw the form of the Lord Jesus Christ.— I felt that a vision like this could not come out of my own imagination. I heard a voice saying in Hindustani, 'How long will you persecute me? I have come to you to save you; you were praying to know the right way. Why do you not take it?' The thought then came to me, 'Jesus Christ is not dead but living and it must be He Himself!' 1

Bosanquet's account agrees with Streeter's and he adds,

"From that moment on his heart was at peace, and the peace and joy and conviction of that morning have never left him since."²

C. SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF PANDITA RAMABAI.

Pandita Ramabai's life and experiences are almost directly opposite to those of Sadhu Sundar Singh. She had no permanent home until she was about twenty-two years old; her father influenced her somewhat more than her mother; she had no formal education, yet was exceedingly brilliant; her conversion experience was first an intellectual acceptance, then an acceptance of the heart.

1. Her Home Life.

She had little experience of real home life for she explains, in the first part of the pamphlet called, A Testimony, "My mother told me that I was only about six

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1. Streeter, op. cit., pp. 6,7.
2. Bosanquet, op. cit., p. 121.

months old when they left their home."¹ They traveled north and south throughout India in the role of readers of Sacred Scripture. Macnicol quotes Ramabai's description of this profession which her parents followed;

' The readers of Puranas... are the popular and public preachers of religion among the Hindus. They sit in some prominent place, in temple halls, or under the trees, on the banks of rivers and tanks, with their manuscript books in their hands and read the Puranas in a loud voice with intonations, so that the passer by or visitors of the temple may hear.— When the Puranika reads Puranas, the hearers, who are sure to come and sit around him for a few moments at least, generally give him presents— We never had to beg or work to earn our livelihood, we² used to get all the money and food we needed and more..."

Ramabai testifies:

"Ever since I remember, my father and mother were always traveling from one sacred place to another, staying in each for some months, bathing in the sacred river or tank, visiting temples, worshipping household gods and the images of gods in the temples, and reading the Puranas in the temples or some convenient place."³

Thus she knew no real home, but they carried their belongings with them wherever they went, Wherever they were, they kept all the Hindu Customs.

a. Relation to Her Father.

Pandita Ramabai's father was Andanta Shastre Dongre. Young men flocked to him to study Sanskrit. At one time he was tutoring a young man in Sanskrit who in turn was preparing to teach a royal princess.⁴ That a woman should

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1. Pandita Ramabai: A Testimony, p. 14.
2. Nicol Macnicol: Pandita Ramabai, p. 14.
3. Basil Miller: Pandita Ramabai, India's Christian Pilgrim, p. 9.
Cf. Ramabai, A Testimony, p.5.
4. Cf. Ann H. Judson: Women Who Ventured, p. 3.

learn to read or write was unheard of: yet through this experience Andanta Shastre learned it was true. He was a thinker and revolutionary in his own ideas. He attempted to teach his first wife and his mother Sanskrit but they refused to learn and simply laughed at his foolishness. Later, when his first wife died and his children were grown, he remarried. Though he was forty years old, his new wife was but a girl of nine, and he again hoped for the fulfillment of his ambition, to teach his wife Sanskrit. This second wife was willing to learn Sanskrit and later taught it to the three children whom she bore, one of whom was Ramabai. Ramabai says of this:

My father, though a very orthodox Hindu and strictly adhering to caste and other religious rules was yet a reformer in his own way. He could not see why women and people of Shudra caste should not learn to read and write the Sanskrit language, and learn sacred literature other than the Vedas. So he, at the risk of being excommunicated by the Brahmans, made up his mind to teach his wife, my mother the Sanskrit language. 1

It was Ramabai's father who influenced his wife to teach Ramabai the language which gained fame for her. He was the one who was concerned that her mind be trained. That training of her mind proved to be most helpful in her later work.

There is one intimate glimpse of Ramabai in relationship to her father, just before his death, which reminds one somewhat of the unending desire of Singh's mother

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1. Ramabai: A Testimony, p. 4.

that he grow up to be a holy man. Macnicol quotes the father's last plea:

Child, I am now leaving you, but remember always how much I loved you. Follow after that which is true, that which abides, that which is in accordance with religion. If you should survive, then continue in the path of God, always make it your aim to serve God. As you are the last of my children, so you are of all the dearest to me. I have given you into God's keeping. He will guard you. He alone is Lord and you must always serve Him. 1

She found it impossible to forget these last words of her father.

b. The Tutelage of Her Teacher-Mother.

Ramabai's mother was also her school teacher, who first had to teach herself. During the daytime she did all of her household duties, then studied at night. Ramabai had no other education than that which she received from her mother until she went to England in her later life. The manner of her mother's teaching was such, however, as to encourage and enable Ramabai to teach herself through private study and reading which she greatly enjoyed. Muriel Clark, as well as other authors, make the astounding statement, "When only twelve years old she could recite eighteen thousand verses from the Puranas." ² "When I was about eight," Pandita herself relates, "my mother began to teach me and continued to do so until I was about fifteen years of age." ³ This was her main source of education and yet the lack of

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1. Nicol Macnocil, op. cit., p. 26
Ibid., p. 34, 35.
2. Muriel Clark: Pandita Ramabai, p. 8 . Cf. Miller. op. cit., p. 10. Cf. Dyer, Helen; Pandita Ramabai, p. 14.
3. Pandita Ramabai, A Testimony, op. cit., p. 5.

formal education did not hinder her in her growth. She did some studying and teaching in England. Her powers of organization and management were made manifest in the smooth running of the Mukti Mission. Later in life, when she felt the need for a new translation of the Marathi Bible she learned Hebrew and Greek and proceeded to translate the Bible into Marathi.¹

Referring to the time of famine, when there was no food for the family, Ramabai says,

"My brother, sister and myself, had no secular education to enable us to earn our livelihood by better work than manual labor. ...pride of caste and superior learning and vanity of life prevented our stooping down to acquire some industry whereby we might have saved the precious lives of our parents."²

She loved her mother very much and was ever grateful not only for the Sanskrit she learned from her but also for something more precious and enduring which she had received. "She owed both her father and mother," Macnicol explains, "far too much of what was best in herself for it to be possible that she should not always honor them."³

2. Her Conversion

a. Experiences Before Her Conversion

It may be said that Singh had many unusual experiences before he was converted to Christianity, but he was only sixteen when he experienced salvation, while Pandita Ramabai was thirty-three years old before she act-

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1. Cf. Fuller, op. cit., p. 58.

Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 127.

2. Clark, op. cit., p. 10.

3. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 29.

ually experienced the new birth. Because of the extra years which passed there were many events in her life which led up to her conversion. Only a few of these need be considered to show her progress toward a new life in Christ.

The first major step in this direction was the rejection of the Hindu religion. After the death of her parents, sister and one brother in 1872, she and her surviving brother, Srinivasa, continued to travel to sacred tanks and rivers all over India in order to cleanse their life from sin and achieve their desires. On every hand they found deception, greed, and unreality, so much so that over a period of years they lost faith in their former gods.¹ Her brother died; but she went on to gain fame among Sanskrit scholars in Calcutta. They granted her the honorary title of "Sarasvita", meaning "goddess of Wisdom".²

Since her father was a reformer, he had rebelled against the common law and custom of having a daughter married before she reached the age of puberty.³ Therefore Ramabai had not been promised in marriage. Of her own free will she married a young Bengali lawyer. In 1880 she discovered a Gospel of Luke in her husband's library, and after reading it was much impressed. This was her second contact with Christianity. Her first contact was while her brother still lived. They had been invited to a Christian social

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 30 and 41.
Cf. Miller, op. cit., p. 21.
2. Cf. Judson, op. cit., p. 10.
Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 36.
Cf. Mary L.B. Fuller: The Triumph of An Indian Widow, p.18.
3. Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 33.

gathering; during the course of the evening they knelt for devotions before their chairs. Ramabai and her brother were sure that the chairs must be their gods for they could¹ see no other.

Her husband died after only two years of married² life leaving her a Hindu widow with a child, Manoramabai.

She lectured on the problem of the education of women of India and finally the time came when she had an opportunity to go to England. There she was cordially welcomed by the Sisterhood of Wantage of the Church of England. They became interested in her and began to teach her English, using the Bible as the text book.³ Portions of Scripture were read and intelligently discussed. Ramabai testifies:

Thus my heart was drawn to the religion of Christ. I was intellectually convinced of its truth on reading a book written by Father Goreh, and was baptized in the Church of England in the latter part of 1883 while living with the sisters of Wantage.⁴

The stress should be placed on the fact that she was "intellectually convinced", for she confesses,

I came to know after eight years from the time of my baptism, that I had found the Christian religion which was good enough for me; but I had not found Christ who is the Life of the religion, and "The Light of every man that cometh into the world."⁵

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1. Cf. Miller, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Cf. Judson, op. cit., p. 12.
Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 48.
Cf. Fuller, op. cit., p. 19.
3. Cf. Ramabai; A Testimony, op. cit., p. 9
4. Ibid., p. 10.
5. Ibid.

After her baptism she came to America where the Ramabai Association was formed to help her raise the standards of living of the Hindu widows of India.

Upon returning to India she opened the Sarada Sadan for the housing and teaching of widows. She permitted entire religious liberty to all of her pupils. Other Christians criticized her strongly for permitting this to take place.¹ She felt strongly convinced, however, that this was the only way to meet women of India, and that they would not even come if there was open teaching of the Gospel.

About this time she began to be dissatisfied; for she had many intellectual problems about Christianity.

b. Her Conversion Experience

Macnicol describes Ramabai's dissatisfaction with her spiritual condition and then says, Ramabai:

came upon a book called, From Death Unto Life, by Mr. Haslam, a Church of England clergyman who was greatly successful as an evangelist. The book gives an account of his conversion and of the remarkable results that followed from it in his preaching of Christ. The reading of this book made her 'consider where she stood and what her actual need was.' What it seemed to her she needed was an inward change, such as, she believed, had not yet been accomplished in her spirit. Her religion was too external, too intellectual.²

She thought that determination to give up sins was what was necessary for forgiveness and that the rite of baptism was the means of regeneration. These ideas are latent in Hindu religious thought.³ Once again Ramabai

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1. Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 76
2. Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., pp. 85, 86.
3. Cf. Miller, op. cit., p. 49.

expresses her thoughts:

"I used to pray in a general way, and had never known that my special need was: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Salvation I thought was something to be got in the future. That is how the future tense in the above text is abused by the converts, especially the intellectual converts of the present day in this country. "1

Finally recognizing the futility of her own efforts to find soul satisfaction, she accepted Christ and yielded herself fully to Him. An unspeakable and inexplainable joy came over her soul. Miller quotes her as saying:

"I can only give a faint idea of what I felt when my mental eyes were opened, and when I, who was sitting in darkness, saw a great light, and when I felt that to me, who but a few minutes ago sat in the region and shadow of death, light has sprung up. I was very much like the man who was told 'in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk.'" 2

After her conversion she took on even bigger projects, by faith, than ever before and the policy of her school was changed. Now there was definite Christian instruction though non-Christian girls were welcomed. After all that was the new purpose of the school, to convert Hindu girls and give them new life and hope in Christ. Neutrality was no longer possible after her experience of true faith in Christ. Due to the fact that the lives of many girls were changed as they attended the morning prayer meetings of Ramabai and her daughter, a number of Hindu parents removed their daughters from the home and withdrew their support as well.

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1. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 86.
2. Ibid., pp. 86, 87.

Of necessity she had to depend more and more upon God and found Him faithful. It was this that now satisfied her conscience and not her attitude of strict neutrality.¹

D. SUMMARY

The study of Sundar Singh's early life revealed that he was influenced to a great extent by his mother who herself was deeply devoted to her religion and led her boy to the same paths of a disciplined and religious life. Singh's father was wealthy and loved him but never quite understood him as did his mother. The Presbyterian mission school at Ludhiana was instrumental in bringing Singh to a faith in Christ for it was there that he first came in contact with Christianity. At first he rebelled violently against Christian teaching and left school, only to be forced to return because of its proximity to his home. Later in life he attended a divinity school out of regard for a friend who requested that he go. However, he regarded his most important education to be that which he received by silent meditation on and study of the New Testament. In informal ways his mother had taught him more of personal living than could ever be obtained from the study of books on the subject.

As the result of several years of rebellion against Christianity yet dissatisfaction in Hinduism, Singh sought after truth from God himself and, after

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1. Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 89.

actually having a vision of Christ, accepted Him as his Saviour and found peace of soul.

Pandita Ramabai's parents, it was found, were readers of Puranas, the public preachers of religion among the Hindus. Because they continually traveled from place to place, they had no permanent home. Her father was a Hindu reformer as well as a scholar in the Sanskrit language. He succeeded in teaching his second wife, Ramabai's mother, Sanskrit: she in turn taught Ramabai. The education which Ramabai received from her mother was of such a nature as to aid her in teaching herself. This she did in later life.

Her mother, father, sister and one brother died of starvation in 1873^{4?}. She and her remaining brother, Srini-vasa, travelled to sacred rivers, tanks, and shrines in an attempt to cleanse themselves from sin, but they only succeeded in losing all faith in their religion. Ramabai married, bore one child, and in two years her husband died, leaving her a Hindu widow.

While she travelled in England she was baptized in the Church of England, but it was eight years later, after she had returned to India and set up a home for Hindu widows, that she came into a true experience of salvation through faith in Christ.

Because of the conversion of several Hindu girls a group of Hindu parents withdrew their children and their support. Though at the time it seemed to be a disadvantage, it proved to be a means of strengthening her Christian faith.

CHAPTER III

APPROACHES USED BY SADHU SUNDAR SINGH AND PANDITA
RAMABAI TOWARD THE EVANGELIZATION OF INDIA

APPROACHES USED BY SADHU SUNDAR SINGH
AND
PANDITA RAMABAI TOWARD THE GOAL OF EVANGELIZATION

CHAPTER III

A. INTRODUCTION

There is a difference between the methods of evangelism which one uses and the approaches one makes toward the goal of evangelism. As the title suggests, this chapter does not intend to present the methods of evangelization which Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh used, but rather will deal with the basic approaches or preliminary steps toward making the gospel appealing to the Indian nationals, with specific reference to Hindus. Several methods which they used will be referred to but only to clarify their approaches.

Sundar Singh's main approach was born of his desire to see an Eastern Christianity. He was concerned that there be a genuine Biblical Christianity, lived by the Indian national, in an Indian manner. At the time of his baptism he became a member of the Christian Church. The mode of worship which they continually practiced was foreign to India. As Streeter puts it, "Their modes of worship, the church building, their very dress and food and manner of conduct,

all spoke to him of an alien faith."¹ He could see no reason for all these changes and therefore through his life and teachings he sought to portray a truly Indian interpretation of Christianity.

Pandita Ramabai's basic approach seems to have been rooted in the conviction that the way to reach Indian women with the gospel was first of all to meet their conscious needs. It was always her custom to seek out women who were in desperate need of help and invite them to her home as a place of shelter.² They became a part of the home, were instructed in the Christian faith, and were often converted. Each of these approaches will now be examined.

B. THE DISTINCTIVE APPROACH USED BY SADHU
SUNDAR SINGH: INTERPRETATION OF THE CHRISTIAN
FAITH AND LIFE IN TERMS OF INDIA

Sundar Singh wanted to see Christ presented to the Indian mind in such a way as to make them hunger and thirst after Him. He was well enough acquainted with the attitudes and philosophy of Hinduism to know that the average Hindu would not accept Christ unless He were presented in a typically Indian manner. He frequently used the following illustration, as related by Davey to explain his point:

There was a commotion when the Frontier Mail stopped at the wayside station and, from the long third-class carriage where Sundar was sitting, a Brahman priest was car-

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1. Streeter, op. cit., p. 59.
2. Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 90.

ried on the platform. He had collapsed in the noisy, crowded, overheated carriage. Sundar watched the Anglo-Indian station-master running forward with a cup of water from the refreshment-room, and saw the fainting Brahman wave it away in horror. He would not pollute his lips with a common cup even to save his life. Then a companion from the train appeared with the Brahman's brass bowl. The fainting man clutched it, drinking greedily. As the train moved on with the sick man revived and safely back in his carriage, Sundar turned to those sitting near him.

' That is what I am always telling my Christian friends. We are offering Christianity in a Western cup and India rejects it. But when we offer the water of life in an Eastern bowl, then the people will recognize it and take it gladly. ' 1

Singh could see no reason why his people should not be permitted to drink of Christianity from an "Eastern bowl" and when asked how the Church could be Indianized, Streeter cites him as replying:

The people should sit down on the floor in church. They should take off their shoes instead of their turbans, Indian music should be sung. Long, informal addresses should take the place of sermons..2

He desired, nevertheless, that there be a clear distinction between Hinduism and Christianity. There was to be no fusion of doctrines, but he was convinced that Christianity must come to his people in Eastern garb.

1. In His Own Person

a. Discipline

Indian people had their doubts whether Christians

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1. Davey, op. cit., p. 43.
Cf. Streeter, op. cit., pp. 177, 178.
2. Ibid., 181.

had enough love for their Master to live thoroughly disciplined lives. From Singh's background, both in his home and in the lives of "holy men" which he visited, he was aware of what it cost to lead a completely disciplined life. In spite of the realization of the high price he must pay he determined to live a life, as a Christian, which would be as strict in its discipline as the lives of his fellow Hindu "holy men".

His classmates in highschool and in College ridiculed him for his strictly disciplined life, because they felt he was deliberately setting up a standard which they could not hope to attain.¹ This was not the case, however, for this was just his thoroughly Indian way of showing his complete devotion to Christ. When they learned to know him² they came to him as a counselor.

Singh was such an example to them that they marvelled at his life which was so much in keeping with that of their "holy men". Zahir relates the testimony of a Hindu inquirer: " I did not know until I saw Swami Sundar Singh that there are men amongst the Christians who could be Sanyasis".³

And then Zahir makes the statement:

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1. Cf. Andrews, op.cit., p.64.

2. Cf. Parker, op.cit., p.88.

3. Zahir: A Lover of the Cross, p. 3.

Hence if men like Sundar Singh have done nothing else they have at least proved to the non-Christian world that Christ is not all comfort and that while he has power to lift nations to zenith of material prosperity, He also has the potency to inspire self-denial and self-sacrifice in the service of man and God. ¹

b. Love and Patience

Singh's love toward those who persecuted him and his patience in the midst of trials proved to be traits which were contributing factors to his effective ministry as a Christian Sadhu. These, it will be recalled, are ² character traits which Indians greatly admire. A Hindu, who later became a Christian, told of his experience of walking along the Ganges River on the way to his morning bath. Beside the river he saw a crowd of people, and as he drew near he realized that a Sadhu was preaching the gospel. There were those in the crowd who seemed attentative as well as those who seemed antagonistic. One young man deliberately took a handful of sand and threw it in the eyes of the Sadhu, who by the way was Sundar Singh himself. The Hindu man, who related the story had the police arrest the one who threw the sand. Singh calmly washed his face in the river, asked the police to release the young man, and went on preaching. The released man fell at Singh's feet and accepted the ³ Christ about whom he had been preaching.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ante, p. 18

3. Cf. Zahir: A Lover of The Cross, p. 9.

his love for the souls of men and his patience with those who sought to harm him moved many to accept Christ. Another instance of love and patience was exemplified in one of his visits to Jubbulpore. Zahir relates Singh's story:

One day a 'Moulvie'- a mohammedan divine - became so angry on account of my preaching that he slapped me on the face in front of a big crowd, I said nothing, but calmly turned the other cheek toward him. Seeing this ¹ the moulvie became quiet and looked rather crest fallen.

Later the man requested Singh to visit him in his home where he asked his forgiveness.

c. Humility

To the Indian who feels that humility is a sign of strength of character, the manifestation of true humility as shown in Singh's life was considered a noble attainment. There was no trace of pride or arrogance in the soul of Singh. In 1918 he began to become famous. People wanted to know of his labour and sufferings for Christ's sake but he hesitated to tell of his adventures except when he wanted ² to illustrate some truth.

Zahir declares:

It is not only his inspiring and edifying lectures that move and win people's hearts, but it is the deep humility and the perfect simplicity of the man which makes his words so real and effective. It is rather, as many have said, seeing Christ lived than hearing Him preached. ³

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1. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p. 62.
2. Cf. Riddle, op. cit., p. 110.
3. Zahir: The Lover of the Cross, p. 7.

Mr. Andrews implies that he once had pride:

The extraordinary gentleness and humility which everyone notices in his character during the later years of his life, came in a great measure from his severe inward discipline and self-restraint which he put upon himself in order to overcome his pride. 1

2. In His Role as a Christian Sadhu

Sundar Singh knew the respect which the Indian² showed toward his own Hindu Sadhus, and although he realized that in most places he would not be treated with respect, he would at least, because of the Sadhu robe, be able to begin to give the message of Christ in places³ from which he would otherwise be banned.

There were fundamental differences in Sundar Singh's life as a Sadhu which definitely characterized him as a Christian Sadhu. First, the Indian Sadhus have more of an ascetic nature than did Sundar Singh. Singh cannot be classified as an ascetic; he said himself, "I do not consider myself a Sannyasi (ascetic) for a Sannyasi means one

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1. Andrews, op. cit., p. 60.
2. Cf. Ante, p. 31.
Cf. Riddle: An Adventurer for God, The Ashram Review, Volume 1, #4, p. 79.
Cf. Parker, op. cit., p. 1.
3. Cf. Brain, op. cit., p. 292.
Mrs. Parker explains, "By adopting the recognized dress of the Sadhu, Sundar Singh not only opens the door to all castes and classes of society but also even to the sacred precincts of the Eenaana homes of India, where on various occasions he has had unique opportunities of speaking for his Lord to the great ladies of the land." op. cit., p. 4.

who renounces the world because he considers that everything is good. ¹ Sundar Singh was against Hindu asceticism, because the "holy man" tortures himself in order to accumulate merit. Singh's one desire in being a Sadhu was not to acquire merit for himself but to be like his own people to the extent that they would listen to his message of life in Christ. Riddle explains the contrast between Singh and a Hindu Sadhu partially when he says:

The Hindu sadhu is venerated because he gives up everything in order to obtain union with the Absolute and Universal Spirit, and by that union obtain for himself alone freedom from the crushing burden of birth and rebirth. Sundar Singh found union with God in Christ and gave up everything that he might more fully know Him, and share with others in the power of His resurrection, and in the fellowship of his sufferings. 2

Because he desired to be a Christian Sadhu, he knew that he would have to endure suffering and persecution but he considered that to be the least he could do for Christ who gave His life for him.

The Hindu Sadhu not only renounces certain things in order to accumulate merit but in the eyes of his fellow Hindus, he is given certain mystical and supernatural powers which he can use to curse or bless individuals. ³ The ordinary Hindu Sadhu revels in the fact that men consider him

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1. Soderblom, op. cit., p. 231
2. Riddle, op. cit., p. 79.
3. Cf. Streeter, op. cit., p. 32.

to have such a power; he glories in his own attainments. With Singh the exact opposite was true; Streeter declares: "Any such reputation for power personal to himself the Sadhu¹ is above all anxious to avoid." This knowledge, that certain qualities of supernatural powers are believed to be in action in the Hindu "holy man", led Singh to the position of never baptizing a new convert or in fact any individual. Streeter feels that his refusal to baptize was in part due to the virtue which some might give to the baptism because of the person who administered it. He says:

The refusal himself to perform the rite of baptism is probably due, at least in part, to a well-founded apprehension that the uneducated convert might attribute some specific virtue to his personal action. 2

Singh had numerous opportunities to baptize individuals. The ascetic with his hair tied to the ceiling³ did accept Christ and begged for Singh to baptize him but he refused. Instead he took him to a mission station where he was instructed and later baptized. Other instances are recorded.⁴ He even refused to baptize his own father when he became a⁵ Christian.

Singh never lost sight of Christianity's being lived

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Post, p.

4. Cf. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, pp. 74, 90, 97.

Cf. Streeter, op. cit., p. 32.

Cf. Parker, op. cit., pp. 29, 34.

5. Brain, op. cit., p. 293.

out in Eastern ways in India. Authorities point this out as being one of the secrets of his power. Mrs. Parker expresses it thus:

Herein lies the great secret of Sundar Singh's power over men wherever he goes. Taking the old idea of renunciation he had spiritualized it, and men see in him a reflection of the great renunciation of Christ Himself — not seeking suffering for suffering's sake as is the case with Hindu asceticism, but enduring it with cheerful acceptance as being the will of God for Him. 1

3. In His Role As a Christocentric Mystic

The Sadhu was a typical mystic. Every day had for him deep meditation and ecstasies. Mr. Andrews, whose home was always open to Singh, tells of experiences such as this:

'Where's Sundar?' we would sometimes ask as we came down the hill from Bareri. 'Oh, he has gone out to be alone .' would be the answer, and after that no further question would be asked. There was a cave where he would sometimes remain for the sake of solitude, and he would spend there both day and night, until his mood of visionary meditation was over. 2

He claimed to see visions of future events and spiritual realities. Old and New Testament writers alike experienced God speaking to them through visions; to him it was not surprising that the same thing should happen nineteen hundred years later.

The important thing about Singh was that he made Christ the center of his devotion and prayer. When he was

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1. Parker, op.cit., p.7.
2. Andrews, op.cit., pp. 137,138.

alone he had a real fellowship with Christ which the Hindu mystics did not know. Streeter writes:

The Sadhu is a Christocentric Mystic; realize that to him, as to St. Francis or St. Paul, partnership with Christ is a passion and a privilege, and therefore transforms labor, hardship, loss, from something which is to be accepted negatively as an unfortunate necessity, into something positively welcomed for His sake..1

4. In His Teaching

a. His Use of Parables

Streeter explains:

The Sadhu's own method of teaching is characteristically Indian. A sage frequently, a popular teacher always, speaks in pictures and argues in pictures. Often he also thinks in pictures; and Singh, coming as he does in the line of Indian seers and poets follows the same method.2

Almost every point he made in his addresses was illustrated by some parable from nature, from his own life, or from the experience of another. They were simple, yet unusual and striking, such as the following:

'There was a girl in a village. Every day she dusted off the cobwebs in her room. Once while doing this she thought about herself and prayed, 'Lord, as I am cleaning my room, clean thou my heart of all sin.' Then a voice was heard in the air, "Daughter, what is the use of sweeping away only the cobwebs every day? It is better to destroy the spider that spins the cobwebs. If you will kill the spider there won't be any more cobwebs. Likewise, it is not enough that our daily sins be forgiven, but, as the Apostle says, the old man in us should die." 3

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1. Streeter, op. cit., p. 62.
2. Ibid., p. 178.
3. Quoted in Streeter, op. cit., p. 130.

Speaking of the people of England who were not Christians, he said:

'I found a stone in a pool amongst the Himalayas,' he told to his audience. 'It was hollow, and when I broke it I found the centre completely dry. So it is here in the West. You have lain for centuries in the water of Christianity, but it has never penetrated to your hearts.'¹

His teachings through these stories and others similar to them have been gathered together to form a complete theology. His mind overflowed with illustrations such as those found above.² Yet he never seemed to repeat himself. As far as scholarly learning is concerned, his messages were not unusual but he had a unique way of teaching his people through the use of these common stories.

b. His Method Of Presentation

It is well to recall at this point Singh's previously quoted statement concerning the mode of church worship which should be carried out in India: with its suggestion that informal addresses would take the place of sermons.³ Singh applied this to his ministry. His sermons were more or less on the same pattern as an informal address. He did not even feel at home in that style but would rather have spoken informally using the rambling style of the Indian teacher. Davey describes Singh's preaching missions in India:

In the mornings he spoke with missionaries, preachers, teachers, and leaders where he could do so. He addressed

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1. Quoted in Davey, op.cit., pp. 86,87.
2. Streeter, op.cit., p. IX, Introduction.
3. Ante., p. 52.

Bible meetings, testimony meetings, meetings for worship and meetings for witness. People gathered by the great tanks, under the palmyra trees, by the roadsides, in the square before the sacred temples, in the wide, dry beds of the rivers. Sometimes there were 500, sometimes 10,000 listeners. Every meeting was followed by questions, discussions, throngs of people who desired personal interviews about personal and private problems. 1

It is significant to notice the size of the crowds and yet his willingness and desire even then to conduct the meetings in an informal manner, and to have discussion and personal interviews.

c. Instruction for New Converts

Although Singh did not consider it his calling to set up a mission station, he recognized the need for instructing those whom he led to Christ. Therefore, it was always his custom to hand his new converts over to the nearest Christian mission.²

Streeter gives us the probable reason for this:

The Sadhu, no doubt, recognizes the desirability that baptism should be preceded by a longer course of instruction than could be given by a wandering preacher, and also sees the necessity to the average convert, unless he is shortly to relapse into his old state, of a direct affiliation to a definite Christian community. 3

5. In His Itinerant Ministry

The Sadhu's own natural bent would have been to hide away in a cave as did his fellow countrymen who were

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1. Davey, op. cit., p. 73.
2. Cf. Brain, op. cit., p. 293
3. Cf. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p. 74.
3. Cf. Streeter, op. cit., p. 32.

searching for peace of soul, but "The love of Christ con-
strained him."¹ He was driven by an inner compulsion and
desire to spread the Gospel of Christ to those of his
country who did not know Him. Zahir quotes his declaration:
"Conversion does not lead to a monastery but to the mission
field."²

Singh considered Tibet as his specific mission
field. Once a year, in the summer season, which was still
extremely cold, Singh made a practice of crossing the
Himalayas, with only his New Testament, a thin blanket,
and no shoes; and as he went he preached. He always sought
out the hermits who were living in caves attempting to gain
merit, and preached the Gospel to them. Once he found a man
who sat in a cave with his eyes closed and his tuft of hair
tied to the ceiling. Singh asked the man how long he had
been there to which the man replied,

'I have been here for a fairly long time now and have
conducted all my meditations according to the methods
perscribed by my religion. I undergo all manner of
hardship and suffering and do nothing but yoga (medi-
tation) day and night, and yet my soul finds no rest.
It is as restless as it was ever before, while my heart
is sick with thought.' ³

The man came to a saving knowledge of Christ through Singh's

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1. Ibid., p. 40
2. Zahir: The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p. 47.
3. Ibid., p. 73.

ministry and was directed by Singh to a Christian mission where he was instructed and later baptized.

He tells of another case in which men-

'shut themselves up in a dark cell. Some remain in this condition for a number of years. Some stay in darkness for their whole lives. They never see the sun and never come out. They sit inside and turn a prayer wheel. Thus they live, just as if they were in a grave, on one side of their dark cells they make a small hole through which people put food for them to eat. I tried to talk with them, but did not get permission. I could only throw, through the hole, some passages of scripture for them to read...

... This is their idea of salvation. How much ought we to serve Christ and lay hold on eternal life, and in His service joyfully take up the cross for His sake, who has given and will give us heavenly blessing. 1

Since Sundar Singh had no actual mission station where he carried on a continual program, the greatest part of his time was used in traveling over the land of India and Tibet, preaching as he went. It would be impossible to tell of his numerous experiences while traveling in this way. They followed, however, a general pattern. He would preach in a village as soon as he arrived; then at the close of the day he would seek shelter and food, which was often denied him after they had heard him preaching about Christ. Sometimes the crowds who gathered to hear him were small, sometimes they were large, but no matter how many or how few gathered he always had a message for them from God.

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1. Andrews, op.cit., pp. 86,87.

Surely there can be no question concerning the significance of Singh's basic approach. Zahir evaluates his work thus:

It requires no long-winded description to understand the great value and usefulness of Sundar's work. None who judge his work with an unbiased eye can deny that his work speaks for itself. The influence of his quiet and yet arresting life underlies scores of hearts that have been touched and vanquished for the Lord Jesus. 1

C. THE DISTINCTIVE APPROACH USED BY PANDITA RAMABAI:

MEETING THE RECOGNIZED NEEDS OF INDIAN WOMEN

AS A BASIS FOR PRESENTING THE GOSPEL

With but comparatively few exceptions, the preceding study has revealed, the women of India are constantly held in superstition and ignorance; they are not given a chance to become educated, other than learning from their mothers what little they know. The custom of early marriage has long been one of the main factors involved in this denial to the women of India of the privilege of receiving an education.

Another of the marked needs of Indian womanhood, closely connected to the first, is the problem, which widows in particular face, of self support. Because of their lack of basic education it is difficult and contrary to custom to learn a trade and earn a livelihood; yet this is what they

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1. Zahir : The Apostle of the Bleeding Feet, p.9.

must do after they become widows. At the time in which Ramabai lived there were Christian mission homes to which these Hindu widows could turn, but no matter how much they suffered or how great their need was, most of them would not go to the Christians for aid.¹ Dyer explains one reason why this was true:

Their widows were taught that it was better to commit suicide and be sure of heaven rather than enter any institution established for the purpose of turning them from their ancient faith.²

It was for this reason that Ramabai first sought to meet the present need of the widows, a need of which they themselves were only too conscious, and then attempted to influence them for Christ. On the surface it seemed that she was concerned only with the physical needs of the women, when in reality this was only her means of reaching them to the end that they might have confidence in her and receive the message of Christ.

1. Through Her Schools

She was fully aware of the tremendous difficulties to be faced if she even proposed to teach women to read and write and teach others. They were bound by custom to the narrow confines of performing domestic duties.³ She was

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 26.

2. Dyer, op. cit., p. 42.

3. Cf. Stephen Neill: Builders of the Indian Church, p. 133.

convinced that they could learn and were desirous to learn and that thus through education they could become useful individuals.

Miss Fuller describes the divisions of Ramabai's Mission:

The Ramabai Mukti Mission comprises several departments all of which are consecrated to the service of Indian Womanhood; i. e., the Sharada Sadan, or House of Learning - the School; the Krupa Sadan, or House of Mercy - the Rescue Home; and the Mukti Sadan, or House of Salvation - the Orphanage.¹

a. Training For Their Minds,

The women who attended the school of Pandita Ramabai represented, as could be expected, a great range of scholastic ability. They were all given the fundamental subjects and then those who proved to have unusual ability were granted opportunities to make swifter progress and go further than the others. Ramabai received three hundred of her girls and women from a famine area.² She was determined to teach and train all of them to the greatest extent possible. They received regular secular and Christian instruction. Most of these girls had grown hard and crude from living in famine conditions and they needed to know the fundamental principles of a Christian life. These she proceeded to teach them. Macnicol states:

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1. Fuller, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Post, p. 70.

These had not only very much evil to unlearn but they had also to learn almost everything that religion to a Christian signifies. 'They had to be taught to read, as well as to kneel, to pray and to sing.'¹

These girls were difficult to handle and train at first but they too grew to lead useful lives.

b. Training For Their Hands.

It was Ramabai's aim to teach every girl who entered her school some work or other.² She recognized this as important first, because it would aid them in becoming self sufficient and secondly because it would teach them that manual labor is honorable. Since people of India were prone to think that once a person has education he can no longer stoop to do a menial task, she felt she must teach the girls that they could work and should work with their hands even after having had some education.

The Sharada Sadan had a farm and provided all the dairy products for the homes. The girls had charge of the farm and worked on it.³ They made their own butter and cheese and oil for cooking; some girls learned to run the hand looms and others worked in the fields.⁴ A printing press was located in the Mukti Mission; this offered an opportunity for the girls to learn to set type and actually

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1. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 101.

2. Cf. Dyer, op. cit., p. 157.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 139.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 140-144.

Cf. Miller, op. cit., p. 93.

Cf. Butler, op. cit., pp. 53, 83.

run the press. It was through the means of this printing press that Ramabai was able to publish her translation of the Marathi Bible. Christian literature was printed by the girls who ran the press and then distributed by others.¹ Miller says ". . . there were always at least sixty to seventy girls, experts in their trade, in the printing department."²

Hence the experience and training which the girls received in Ramabai's school were preparing them to occupy a certain place in life. Yet while they studied and trained and lived they were under Christian influences which were in turn shaping their character and familiarizing them with the Gospel message so that they could accept it joyfully.

2. Through Social Work

Ramabai saw all about her the many needs of her Indian sisters and it was impossible for her to ignore them. India always has its famine periods which leaves behind it physical devastation. Ramabai had to do something to relieve these needs.³ Under such circumstances both she and the girls in her home felt guilty remaining in their comfortable home, out of the cold, and having sufficient food

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1. Cf. Miller, op. cit., p. 92.
2. Cf. Fuller, op. cit., pp. 57-59.
3. Miller, op. cit., p. 92.
3. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 95.

to satisfy their physical hunger. The other drive which motivated her to attempt to save every girl she could was the remembrance of her own experience with her family during the famine which took all of their lives but hers and her brother's.

a. Her Relief Work,

In 1896 a famine struck the Central Provinces; Ramabai seized the opportunity of enlarging the enrollment of her school by welcoming famine stricken girls and women into her home. She did not know how she would provide for them, but Macnicol quotes from her Testimony where she says:

'I was trusting Him for both temporal and spiritual blessings."¹ The Pandita not only welcomed them but made a trip to the Central Provinces, where the famine was worst, and brought groups of girls back with her to her homes and there cared for them.² She brought a group of three hundred girls and women from this famine area.³ And God supplied their every need.

b. Rescue Work.

Many women, against their own wishes, were in the temples of the land. Pandita disguised herself as a poor pilgrim and went to the temples in an attempt to rescue some of the women, but though she tried a number of times her attempts were unsuccessful.

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1. Ibid., p. 94.
2. Cf. Dyer, p. 105.
Cf. Fuller, pp. 44, 45.
Cf. Macnicol, op. cit., p. 97.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 102.
Miller, op. cit., p. 77.

D. Summary

The distinctive approach used by Sadhu Sundar was seen to be that of interpreting Christianity in terms of an Indian viewpoint. Singh himself exemplified the qualities of life, such as discipline, love, patience, and humility, which are considered to be strong characteristics of life to the Indian.

In his role as a Christian Sadhu he rejected ascetic qualities and accepted any suffering which he endured as a means of fellowship with Christ. While the Hindu Sadhu attempts to acquire merit for himself, Singh was constantly giving of himself in order to lead others to a saving knowledge of Christ. Thus he utilized a familiar concept but lifted it to Christian levels.

Singh, furthermore, was a Christocentric mystic who experienced his times of ecstasy but whose center of devotion was always in Christ.

His teaching also was cast in Indian form, as was seen in his use of parables, a typically eastern method. Another unusual approach which he used was to present his messages in an informal manner.

Indians are accustomed to the informal method of presenting material and are therefore more ready to accept it. Although he did not set up a school or church, he saw the need for education because he depended on the churches to teach his new converts.

Since he lived a Sadhu life and traveled as they did, he met other Sadhus and confronted them with the Gospel. He not only spoke to Sadhus individually but preached Christ in each village through which he passed; whether the crowds were large or small he was faithful in his ministry.

In such ways Sundar Singh manifested a thoroughly Indian Christianity to his people which made Christ more acceptable to them.

Pandita Ramabai, the foregoing study revealed, was concerned with the spiritual life of individuals but first gained their confidence by supplying their material needs.

In the several schools and homes which she founded and directed, the girls were trained in accordance with the amount of ability which they manifested. Their minds were trained but they also were taught to do practical things with their hands. Socially, the work of Ramabai was one of bringing relief to Hindu widows by training them to be self-supporting, and to other women who needed assistance, by offering them food and shelter during times of famine.

Thus, by meeting needs of which they themselves were aware, she was enabled to reach them and then to meet their more basic need of knowing and experiencing Christ in their lives.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to study the lives of Pandita Ramabai and Sadhu Sundar Singh, as they present the Gospel to the nationals of India, in order to glean from their approaches some practical suggestions for the missionary approach to present-day nationals.

Hindu social customs which must be considered in presenting the Gospel were discovered to be the caste system, the marriage system, and the individual social characteristics which are common to India. The caste system is so closely connected with religious customs that its divisions and penalties are most readily felt in the religious realm.

The injustices to Indian womanhood because of the traditions and customs of the Indian people are many. Numerous laws have been passed in recent years in order to bring changes into the system. Some of the laws such as prohibition of infanticide, high dowry prices, and suttee, the burning of Indian widows on the pyres of their husbands, have been obeyed rather strictly because of government intervention. The early marriage of girls, which causes a great many social problems, however, has been continued to a large extent in spite of government intervention.

Humility, simplicity, and patience, it was seen, are held in high esteem and are characteristic of the land of India.

Hindu religious philosophy was summarized briefly as including asceticism, mysticism, quietism, and ceremonialism.

Pantheism, it was found, was one of the outstanding Hindu religious doctrines, even though there were also monotheists among the Hindus. Karma, or fate as it has come to be known, and transmigration, rebirth into a higher or lower class, form a kind of doctrine of man. Man stands completely alone as the agent of his salvation. Salvation or moksha pertains to man's future state of oneness with the deity and only through a freedom from rebirth can this be realized.

Investigation revealed that little is known about the early life of Sadhu Sundar Singh except that his mother had a great deal to do with the formation of his aims and his attitude towards life. She died while he was a youth and not settled as to his religious convictions. His father did not understand him and therefore the two years following his mother's death and preceding his conversion were years of difficult spiritual struggle. Through his reading of the Bible at school, and his deep sense of spiritual need he came to an end of himself and accepted Christ. After that experience he had true peace and joy in his soul which never left him.

Pandita Ramabai's childhood was discovered to be that of a wanderer. Her parents who were scholars in

the Sanskrit language and readers of the Hindu scriptures were always traveling from one shrine to another to worship there.

Ramabai had no formal education but her mother, who in turn had been taught by her husband, the Pandita's father, took on the task of educating her daughter and teaching her Sanskrit.

She did an excellent bit of work, but it was almost too good because her education, for several years, stood between her and Christ. She accepted Him only intellectually while she was in England and not until in middle life did she come to know Him experientially. Her actual conversion experience was not similar to Singh's but the end result was the same unspeakable joy which Singh experienced.

Sundar Singh's interpretation of the Christian life in true Eastern manner was found to be the distinctive approach which he used in presenting the Gospel to his people. He exemplified, in his own person the exalted ideals of discipline, love, patience, and humility.

As a Sadhu, he Christianized the Hindu ideal and yet held to the characteristics of a Hindu Sadhu, thus at least proving to his countrymen that a Christian can lead a life of renunciation and strict discipline. He was not an ascetic but a Christocentric mystic who had Christ at the center of his devotion.

His life not only exemplified an Eastern Christianity but the form in which he presented his material was that of an Indian teacher. For example, he used parables with their vivid pictures of the truth, and he followed his addresses with a period of discussion, also a typical Indian method.

His testimony and influence reached to the far corners of India because of his itinerant ministry, in which he presented Christ to all he met.

In the case of Pandita Ramabai, it was discovered, her efforts to meet the needs of which the Indian women themselves were aware proved to be the channel through which she was enabled to reach them with the message of Christ.

The schools which Ramabai founded and maintained were the means of meeting the illiteracy problem. She trained the minds of the girls who came to her but she also trained them to see the worth of working with their hands, even though social pressure was against an educated person's working with his hands. The girls in the school learned several trades such as printing and weaving.

Ramabai was moved with compassion when she became more conscious of the need which so many of her Indian sisters had for the physical necessities of life. And so it was that during the famine period she opened her homes to all who wanted to take refuge in them and was even inwardly compelled to go out and invite them in. She depended upon

God to supply the extra finances and food to care for them.

Pandita Ramabai was a pioneer in the education of Indian women. To her education was not an end in itself but only a means to the ultimate goal of winning them to Christ.

Through the discovery of the approaches of Sadhu Sundar Singh and Pandita Ramabai, certain practical suggestions for modern missions emerge:

1. Accept the native culture; find the good in it and utilize it. Interpret Christianity in light of this culture in so far as it does not conflict with a Christ-centered emphasis. Christianity can become a part of their culture.

2. Inasmuch as it is possible, live on a par with the nationals. They must feel that the worker is one with them and not superior to them. Simplicity in clothing and housing will aid in creating this likeness of spirit.

3. Utilize concepts and methods with which people are familiar but vitalize them by lifting them to Christian levels.

4. Realize the importance of educating every convert and every potential convert. Give them secular as well as a religious education.

5. Use every opportunity of demonstrating Christian love by meeting physical needs as a means of contact which will open the way for presenting the Gospel.

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