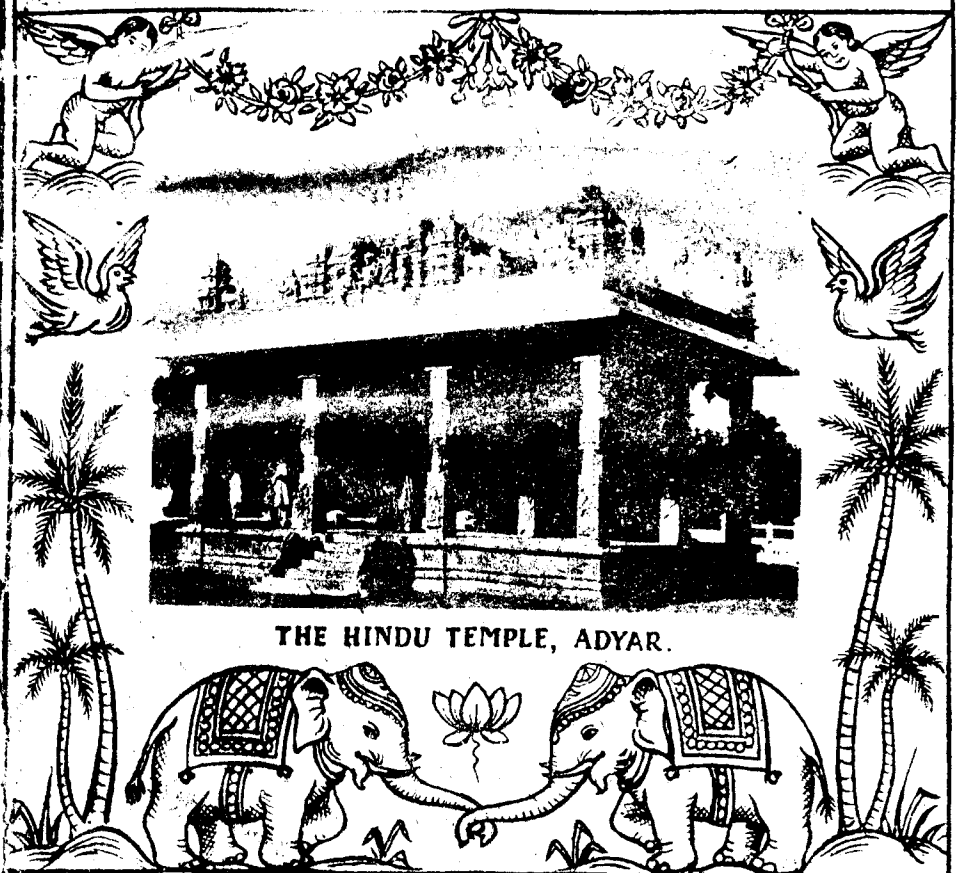


BHARATA DHARMA

(The Official Organ of the Bharata Samaja)

A MAGAZINE OF LIBERAL HINDUISM

Editor: Mr. S. RAJA RAM



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THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE BHARATA SAMAJA

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JUNE, 1927

CONTENTS

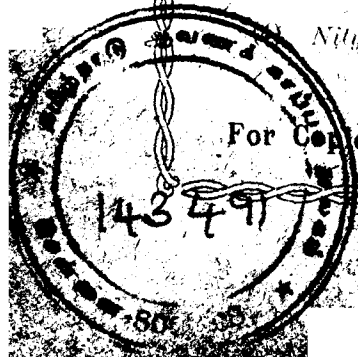
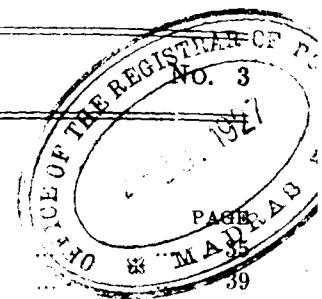
NOTES. Editor	...	...	...	...
THEY SEEK THEE! T. L. Vaswani	...	...	...	39
AN EXEMPLARY WEDDING. C. V. Krishnaswami Ayyar, B.A., B.L.	...	...	...	39
WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT: SOME PRESENT WANTS. Srimati Parvati Ammal (Mrs. Chandrasekhara Aiyar) of Bangalore	...	...	...	41
THE BHARATA SAMAJA—ITS ORIGIN, OBJECTS AND WORK. T. Ramchandra Rao, B.A., B.L.	...	...	...	45
THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE RAMAYANA AS GIVEN BY GOVINDARAJA.	...	...	...	46
" V. V. S. Avadhanulu, B.A.	...	...	...	46
THE TEMPLE MOVEMENT. M. S. Madhava Rau	...	...	...	48
JOINTS FROM PERIODICALS	...	...	...	50

NOTES

IN reference to our observations in the last month's issue of THE BHARATA DHARMA, we have received the following from Mr. O. Seeta-pati Rau, Secretary to the Asakta Poshaka Sabha at Bangalore:

"Referring to your kind note in p. 3 of THE BHARATA DHARMA for April, 1927, advocating the cause of the disabled poor, I am glad to tell you that an institution by name "Asaktha Poshaka Sabha" has been working in this City for the last 4 years nearly. It was first started under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge, Bangalore City. Though it is mainly supported by the public, the institution commands much sympathy from Theosophists. It is also recognized as one of the activities of the Theosophical League of Service, Bangalore City."

We had occasion to witness one of the feedings soon after the inauguration of the Sabha, and who will not be pleased to see the hungry faces of the disabled and the diseased brighten at the prospect



PLM 2, 1927, 5.3

of a good meal? We are particularly happy to note the munificent monthly grant of Rs. 50, provided by the Civic and Social Progress Association of the City towards the housing of the homeless. It is a commendable action for which the Association deserves the thanks of all, and we hope that similar institutions will copy the example and come forward to help similar undertakings elsewhere. We congratulate the Asakta Poshaka Sabha and its Secretary on the humanitarian services they have been so successfully rendering to the deserving of the neighbourhood.

In our Notes in the October (1926) issue, pp. 20-21, we emphasised the need of taking effective steps to secure co-operation between Devas and men, as we have long neglected the injunction of the Gita :

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥

(With this nourish ye the Shining Ones, and may the Shining Ones nourish you; thus nourishing one another, ye shall reap the supremest good.)

Here are some points from "The First Message" received by one who has studied the subject of the Brotherhood of Angels and of men closely.

"In all times of need, sudden crises, sickness, births and deaths, the aid of the Angels would be gladly given, but the power would be greater and the presences more real if magnetised centres were provided in the house. A single object of great beauty, mentally associated with the Angels and with Nature, a bowl of flowers freshly gathered every day, incense, the use of a short prayer or invocation each morning and a benediction each evening would suffice. Complete cleanliness, an atmosphere of utter purity, and the single motive of co-operation for mutual help are essential; while added to the simple ceremony might be an appropriate reference to the Founder of the Religion of the house, and a prayer perhaps for His blessing upon both Angels and men. . . . The essential factor for success in co-operation between us (Devas and men) is the mental realization of its possibility and the continual recollection and employment of it, in the mental world, in every piece of work which is undertaken. . . . The conception should be entirely free from any desire to obtain a close personal contact with individual Angels or to employ them from motives of personal gain, interest or curiosity . . . The qualities of simplicity, purity, directness and impersonality must characterise all who hope to take part successfully in any mutual endeavours."

—From *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men*, by Geoffrey Hodson.

We gladly give prominence to the following appeal to the public of Madras issued by Dr. S. Muthulakshmi, M. L. C. :

“ There are innumerable brothels in the city. Who can say how many innocent, simple and guileless girls are not entrapped and made the victims of such nefarious trade? It is only just a few months before that we had the most horrid tale of two children aged 12 and 10 who were sold away by a father to a brothel-keeper in Triplicane. The girls were sent all the way from here to Meerut. When the police rescued them, already they were tampered with, and had become infected with venereal disease. Such heinous crimes are perpetrated daily in our midst. This commercialised vice that eats into the very soul of our society, that makes innocent girls as well as boys also its victims, not only demoralises them but also disfigures them with diseases. Not only every parent, but every public-spirited citizen must try and see that these procurers and brothel-keepers who make money out of such evil bargain are brought under the grip of law, that the city is cleared of such houses of ill fame, and also rescue homes are opened for those girls who are removed from such brothels and who desire to be reformed and lead a normal life. To carry out the work effectively as in other civilised countries, women should be trained as police-officers to enter and investigate these brothels. Before that is done, the services of trained and experienced nurses may be made use of for such welfare work, who should work in co-operation with the police. I feel strongly that each and every brothel in the city should be visited and investigated by the police with the help of these nurses lest any more innocent girls of the type are victimised in a similar manner.”

The local Legislative Council ought to pass a law prohibiting the keeping of brothels, and it will take that step only if sufficient pressure of public opinion is brought to bear upon it. Bombay and Bengal have on their statute-books Acts designed to mitigate the evil, though they are of a very unsatisfactory character. Madras ought to follow their lead, but go further than they have done and thus set an example to the rest of India.

A very important and beneficial step was taken by those responsible for the conduct of the Bharata Samaj Puja at Madanapalle in arranging for the performance of the Puja at the most important temple of the place. On the 15th May (Sunday) morning at Sri Venkateswara Temple and before a large gathering, which overflowed the mantapam in front of the sanctum-sanctorum, Mr. K. Narahari Sastri conducted the Puja, aided by some ladies and gentlemen already acquainted with the ritual. Several members of the Theosophical Society assembled here in communal life were present along with a large number of the townspeople, men, women and children, all taking

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[illegible]

part in the Puja without any distinction. The peace and the blessing that generally flow out wherever this Puja is conducted suffused the whole atmosphere. At the end of a serene and solemn forty minutes of contact with spiritual life, the gathering dispersed with a feeling of upliftment and joy in having taken part in calm and devoted worship of the Highest, free from the distractions usually associated with the average temple-worship of the day. The thought of receiving and spreading the blessing to others in this way was much appreciated.

Principal Trilokekar and Pleader Seshagiri Rao deserve praise for their thoughtful action in having successfully organised the Puja with the welcome assistance of the authorities of the Temple. It is earnestly hoped that this first attempt will be repeated in myriads of places of worship in this holy land. The Puja was repeated the next Sunday at Sri Anjaneya Temple before a very large and distinguished gathering including Sir T. Sadasiva Aiyar and Mr. Pattabhirama Rao.

On Thursday morning—May 19th, the Upanayana—initiation into Gayatri—ceremony of Chiranjivis Ram and Lakshman, two sons, and Lilavati, daughter of Mr. F. S. Raghavacharya, Retired Store-keeper of Mysore Railways, was conducted by Mr. K. Narahari Sastri under the auspices of the Bharata Samaj, with the abridged ritual issued by the Samaj, at the College Library Hall. A large and distinguished gathering, including Dewan Bahadur Sir T. Sadasiva Iyer, Mr. N. Pattabhirama Rao, Retired Dewan, Principal C. S. Trilokekar, Mr. T. Ramchandra Rao, Mr. and Mrs. S. Raja Ram of Adyar, Mr. and Mrs. A. Rama Rao (Public Prosecutor, Rajahmundry), Mr. H. Sankara Rao of Dharmavaram, Mr. S. K. Parthasarathy Iyengar, District Munsif of Kumbhakonam, Mr. P. Sitaramayya, Headmaster, High School, Nandalur, Mr. and Mrs. V. Ramachandra Naidu of Enangudi, Mr. and Mrs. Chakrapani Chettiar (Pleader of Coimbatore), Mr. and Mrs. M. Parvatesam (Headmaster, Government Training School, Bimilipatam), Mr. Seshagiri Rao and several other ladies and gentlemen of the place and visitors. As usual the ceremony was conducted in a solemn atmosphere and finished in about 45 minutes. The candidates satisfactorily responded and consciously took part in the ceremony, having been previously and thoroughly prepared for the occasion. A photo was taken of the candidates with the officiant, and the pleasant gathering dispersed after *harati* and distribution of sandal, sugar-candy, fruits and *pan supari*.

THEY SEEK THEE!

By T. L. VASWANI

THEY seek Thee—the suns and stars ;
 They turn and turn to glimpse Thy radiant face ;
 They cry aloud for Thee—the wind and storm ;
 They need Thy blessings to bear their pain ;
 They weep for Thee—the dew and rain ;
 They sigh for Thee, O Blessed Beauty !
 ---The roses of Shiraz,
 And bulbuls of my broken naveland ;
 They speed after Thee—the streams,
 And long to lose themselves in Thee ;
 And many paths along—in Egypt and Iran,
 In Greece and Hindusthan,
 In Rome and China and Japan,
 In Teuton, Turkish, Celtic, Saxon lands,
 In EAST and WEST the nations in their wild unrest
 Are still a-seeking Thee who alone canst heal.

AN EXEMPLARY WEDDING

By C. V. KRISHNASWAMI AYYAR, B.A., B.L.

[The wedding refers to that of Dr. and Mrs. Sen performed under the auspices of the Bharata Samaja and noticed in our May issue.—ED.]

IT was an early morn not long ago on a Thursday, a day consecrated to the Guru of Gurus. The bright Sun had not yet gone over much of his daily round. A gentle breeze was blowing, lifting the coarse mats on the floor as though it thought that even they were superfluous, marring the grand simplicity of the occasion and as if Mother Earth was anxious to have no veil between her and the solemn scene. All the air a solemn stillness held save for the fugitive booming of a motor horn. Behind was the Temple beloved of the Bharata Samajists. The guests were few, and one at least was even uninvited, but all came there to assist—not to destroy—in the creation of a loving and sympathetic atmosphere for a most eventful day in the progress of two humans. The bride, a descendant perhaps of the ancient Celts, and certainly a denizen of Celtic Europe in this incarnation, came dressed in Indian fashion. Jasmine had taken the place of the customary orange blossom on the brow. The bridegroom hailed from the land of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, the home of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Rabindranath

Tagore. Before them, rather beside them, was Brother Narahari Sastri, the preceptor. Oh! how one missed his glossy beard, which would have made him look like a modern Vasishtha. Around him his amateur assistants—good men and true, who had dived into the mysteries of the Vedic marriage ritual. To the stroke of nine uprose the music of the Vedic chant, asking for divine blessings on the work on hand. *Mantras* of purification, verses plighting troth, *Saptapadi*, benediction—all marched in solemn grandeur. Pansupari and flowers, fruits and sugar-candy, above all sweet words of congratulation, came in quick succession. By 10 a.m. man and maid had been made one for ever and ever, for better or for worse.

To one among those present it all looked like a vision. Could it be possible for a marriage ritual to be over in an hour? Where was the noise of the invited and uninvited guests, the booboos of babies, the noise, miscalled music, of the piper, the clamour for *dakshina*, the chatter of the women folk, the complaints, loud and low, about the absence of this and the presence of that—could a marriage be possible without these? Yes, it was possible. Aye, it has always been possible. The wonder was why all will not make it possible.

Sitting beneath that simple thatched pandal, which the rays of the morning sun pierced in a hundred places, one's thought went back centuries ago to the *ashrams* where not even a *pandal* divided heaven from those below. What form did marriages take then? Did they marry wee bits of girls, because a grandmother wanted to see them decked? Was Maitreyi married to Yagnavalkya when she was a *kanya* eight years old? Was a suitable bridegroom rejected because he belonged to Kendramanickam and not Malnadu? Did the fathers of the boy insist on a Rs. 2,000 present in ready cash and the boy himself on a wrist watch or a motor cycle? Did the *sambandhis* show their condescension in accepting the bride by insisting on coffee at 5 a.m.? Did the bride think more of a particular *saree* than on the solemnity of the *samskara* which made her a matron? Did the bridegroom utter *mantrams* plighting eternal constancy, not knowing what he was saying? Was *Praveshahomam* performed in the house of the bride without any entry into the bridegroom's house or were *mantras* about crossing rivers muttered without even crossing a door? These questions and a myriad others of that type lingered in one's thoughts. The answer was before his eyes. Simple and dignified, short and sincere the ceremony looked almost as one of another world—of another age. Yet it knit together kindred souls, kindred tastes and kindred sympathies as well as much noise, much furious arrangements, and above all, much money, are supposed to do. When will children of the Motherland learn that it is the spirit that enliveneth and matters, that the form hinders and killeth?

WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT: SOME PRESENT WANTS

By SRIMATI PARVATI AMMAL (MRS. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYAR)
OF BANGALORE

(Continued from p. 25)

OFTEN enough the result of western education and of the contemplation of western societies in books or during travels abroad is to create a yearning among young men to separate themselves and their wives from the rest of the family and live a free and untrammelled life elsewhere. The desire for freedom is natural enough. What is apt to be overlooked is that those who seek thus to set up new households are young and inexperienced, and their wives still more so, besides being also more or less uneducated; and it remains true in the home sphere as it is true elsewhere that mere book-learning is no adequate substitute for practical knowledge. The proper management of a household and the upbringing of children require as much intelligence and training as any other avocation in life.

Need of education for women.—Women in India have plenty of native intelligence; what they lack is the development and training which education can alone provide. A land may in itself be very fertile; but unless you plough and weed and manure and water it, you cannot get the full benefit of its fertility. So it is with the intelligence of women.

So far, education has made very little progress among our women. The proportion of literates to the total women population is only a little over one in a hundred; even this is contributed mostly by progressive sections like the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Malayalis, Parsis, and Brahmos, while South Indians, Bengalis and Muslims come far behind.

The fact is that sufficient attention has not been paid to the importance of education for women, which remains in large measure a monopoly of the other sex. Nor can it be said that, even in the measure in which it is at present given, the true end and object of education has been steadily kept in mind. Education for women is not simply for show; its purpose is to draw out and train the intelligence which woman possesses in equal degree with man, to mould the character, to develop capacity, to instil the spirit of service; in a word, its aim is to build up a complete personality, and to enable that personality to realise its duties in life and perform them efficiently. Many are the duties which fall to a woman's share: she must be a loving daughter, a devoted wife, a wise mother, a careful manager, and, not least, a true lover of her country. It is the qualities that help her to fulfil these duties which form her true and priceless adornments; and the education which evokes them is woman's (as it is also man's) unerring guide and compass on the voyage of life (*samsara-sagara*), a true friend and support in adversity and danger.

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Training for vocations.—There are some who think that education is only needed for those wishing to qualify for some sort of employment, and who question whether this last is a proper objective for women. Apart from the true value of education, upon which I have just touched, I would go so far as to affirm that the time has come when it is increasingly necessary for our women to seek employment of some kind outside their homes. The goal of marriage, and particularly, happy and useful marriage, is becoming more and more difficult to attain for our girls. Even if a boy is stunted and deformed or pock-marked all over the face, he expects to secure for his bride a girl who is pretty and accomplished; and in most cases a money payment is also insisted on as his price—so much for an ordinary graduate, so much for an F. C. S. man, so much more for an I. C. S. man, and so on, according to a sort of ascending scale. And even after all such exactions, the girls married are sometimes sent away to their parents' houses on some pretext or other. Besides, we have in our midst a countless number of young widows, for whom penances and practices for the control of the passions are no longer feasible as of old and who have no one to protect them at home. There are again many helpless women either abandoned by their husbands or guardians, or left inadequately provided for on the death of their husbands, but with a number of young children to take care of. Often when there is some little property, the reversioners appropriate it and drive them to litigation and ultimate disaster. For all such unfortunate women some decent means of earning a subsistence is absolutely necessary, and this necessitates some kind of training for a vocation.

It is after all only in the highest castes, the Brahmans particularly, that there is a prejudice against women going in search of work. Among the other castes even married women go out freely with their husbands, and the earnings of their labour help towards the maintenance of the family, which would otherwise be solely dependent upon the small wages or salaries of the men. For those who can safeguard their inner purity and self-respect, there can be nothing debasing in honest work of any kind, while the necessity for useful work outside the house can no longer be ignored in the case of poor widows and others. The time-honoured varieties of household work, like making chilly powder, pickles and pappadams, stitching leaves, and the like, which were available to poor widows in need of a living, are no longer open to them in these days of large-scale production by machinery; pickles and powders and things of that sort, prepared in Europe, are sold at the nearest shops in neatly labelled packets or bottles, for a few annas, while plates of cheap enamel or aluminium, or of silver for the more well-to-do, have largely displaced the use of stitched leaves.

From any point of view, therefore, whether of self-development or of training for a living, education is of the first importance for women.

Kind of education needed.—We now come to another point, the kind of education which is needed for our girls. Here, again, it cannot be sufficiently emphasised that it is not mere book-learning which is important, but

cultivated intelligence and practical knowledge and the capacity which is equal to all ordinary contingencies.

Among the elements of a right education for our girls, I would give the first place to the formation of character on a strong basis of living truths and inspiring ideals. Religious and moral teaching should be directed to this. The former, however, should keep clear of dogmas, speculations and controversies, and concern itself only with the eternal verities, the broad essential truths which are common to all the great religions. The latter should instil a spirit of rectitude and self-reliance, of devotion to great ideals, of kindness towards others, of unselfish service; and it should specially emphasise the fact that a woman's real strength is her virtue.

Next comes physical training, by means of exercises, games, etc., the aim being not so much strength or muscular development as health, suppleness, and activity. Under this head will also fall the various kinds of drill and discipline provided by the Girl Guide movement wherever the same can be introduced.

I would have every girl taught First Aid, Hygiene, Domestic Economy, Motherhood, and the Care of Children; also Music, Drawing, Sewing, Arithmetic, besides, of course, the usual courses of literature and general information.

I would also have every girl trained for some line of practical work, no matter what it be, which will help her to be useful to herself and to others—whether it be a profession like that of teacher, doctor, nurse or midwife, or some handicraft or cottage industry, or, if nothing else, at least the pursuit of Mahatma Gandhi's *charka*.

Instruction in all these subjects should be given, as far as possible, through the pupil's vernacular, and not, as is now generally the case, through a foreign medium. I would not, however, by any means neglect the study of English, seeing that it has long been the principal means of intercommunication in this continent of numberless tongues, and that it is the established language of governments and courts, and to a large extent of business and public life.

One other point I wish strongly to urge, and that is that, since examinations as now conducted impose a serious strain on the growing body, it need not be made compulsory for all girls, and that in any case the pressure which it imposes may be reduced in all possible ways in the permanent interests of their health.

I do not propose on this occasion to deal with the conditions and requirements of higher education, beyond remarking that its scope cannot be the same for all women, any more than it can be the same for all men. Individual aptitude will count for a great deal, as well as the career or other purpose in view in each case.

(To be continued)

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THE BHARATA SAMAJA

ITS ORIGIN, OBJECTS AND WORKS

By T. RAMCHANDRA RAO, B.A., B.L.

Vice-President

(Continued from p. 29)

AFTER the Rules were recast, the Managing Body was reorganized and enlarged so as to include persons in parts of India other than the South, and our revered leader, Mr. J. Krishnamurti, was gracious enough to continue as President, which offer he had accepted a short time before.

It is an inspiring sight to an English-educated man like me who graduated in 1869 to see the change that has come over our Motherland. Indeed the change would evoke similar feelings even in those who took their Degree even 20 or 25 years later. If I imagine myself as having gone to sleep some time before December 1883, when I came into contact with Theosophy, and woke up to-day, I would have found considerable difficulty in believing my own eyes when I see myself and many others like me all over India taking such active part in the work of the regeneration of the Motherland.

I shall therefore take a retrospect of the state of affairs before the advent of Theosophy into India and the marvellous developments which have taken place since. In doing so, I intend to relate specially my own experiences, which, however much they may differ in details from those of other men of my class, are, I believe, typical of the changes which have come over the mentality and outlook of a large number of our intelligentsia in these matters.

I had a brilliant career as a student and took a 1st class B.A. Degree in 1869 when I was 17, and, as usual then and perhaps to some extent even now, my attention was confined to obtaining passes in the examinations I had to undergo. My English education did indeed teach me to think for myself and to try to discharge the duties of my profession as faithfully as I could. But I had interest in nothing else. Belonging to an orthodox family and with a father who, while he was all that a good father should be, was punctilious as to religious observances, I did observe some of the forms of religion, but my outlook was quite materialistic, and in a prize essay I wrote just before leaving college and which just missed the prize, I laid stress on the utilitarian principles of John Stuart Mill. I had no idea of religion or the value of the Motherland, and I shared the prevalent indifference, if not contempt, for the East and its lore.

No doubt from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Roy there was some talk of the Eastern books, and some Western Orientalists had taken up the

translation of some of them. But among the Indians themselves there were few who took any interest in the teachings of the East. The Brahma Samaj and allied movements had been started, but apart from drawing attention to religious matters they cannot be said to have done much for India or the Aryan Religion. The Arya Samaj for the reform of Hinduism was only started in the Panjab in 1875 and its work was for a long time confined to the Panjab.

Into such an Indian world came Madame H. B. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, leaders of the Theosophical Society started in November, 1875, at New York (U.S.A.). The former was mainly the inspirer and Teacher and the latter the President of the movement and organizer. They settled themselves at Bombay for 2 or 3 years and permanently removed to the present Headquarters at Adyar in 1882.

They opened our eyes to our past greatness and made us take up the work of our regeneration. With Madame Blavatsky behind, Col. Olcott toured throughout the whole of India telling us of our great heritage the value of which we never knew and compelling us to take up the study of our ancient scriptures in the light thrown on them by the teachings of Theosophy, which as has been well said by one of its greatest exponents is the "apotheosis of commonsense". They made us see how reasonable the teachings were and how foolish we had been in throwing them aside thoughtlessly.

His tours extended from Cashmere in the North to Cape Comorin on the South and from Assam in the East to Baluchistan in the West, and we might say without exaggeration that he conquered the English-educated countrymen and laid the foundation of the great changes which have since been wrought.

THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE RAMAYANA

AS GIVEN BY GOVINDARAJA

By V. V. S. AVADHANULU, B.A.

Retired Sub-Judge

(Continued from p. 30)

II

THE story of Rama's invasion of Ravana's Lanka or Island occurs in a Samskrit work called the *Ramayana* of Valmiki as well as in the *Vana Parva*

of the *Mahabharata* of Vyasa. The former is very largely read throughout the length and breadth of India, as its translations are found in almost all the dialects of the country. The original work in Samskrit has several commentaries, and, without fear of contradiction, Govindaraja's exhaustive commentary may be pronounced the best, though it is not free from prejudice or bias. It is naturally most popular with the *Visishtadvaitins* as the commentator is a follower of Shri Ramanujacharya. The *Ramayana* is nothing but an amplification of a string of verses at the fag end of the *Rigveda*. The literal meaning is not hard to grasp as the style of Valmiki is flowing and mellifluous. I shall not therefore stop in describing the historic fight with Ravana and the rescue of Sita by Rama. The story has, according to Govindaraja, an esoteric meaning which I purpose to write for the benefit of those who have no access to the original.

Sita, wife of Shri Ramachandra, is discovered in the furrow of a holy field, and is therefore not born like the ordinary run of humanity. She has not had the impure company of flesh for 9 or 10 months even in a human womb. Therefore Sita represents Jiva or the individual soul. The word Sita is in feminine gender in Samskrit and it, therefore, implies dependence on God for ever, even after salvation as the *Visishtadvaitins* hold. This Jiva is a spark in a big mass of fire, working her way to salvation by keeping constant company with Rama who is the Ishvara, or Lord of the universe, until she is tempted by the mirage of sensuous pleasures typified in the golden deer of Mareecha. This falling into temptation is good for the soul, for unless she proves her strength to overcome the temptations of life, she cannot pretend to enjoy the life that knows no sleep. Soon after the *Vishayikachinta* or temptation of the senses, *Ahamkara* or the intense feeling of the ego or "I" overpowers the soul in the person of the demon Ravana, and makes her his slave. She exerts in vain to get rid of the clutches of *Ahamkara* by the Karma Yoga of a friend in need, typified in the struggle of Jatayu, the ancient king of kites. She is dragged by *Ahamkara* and in the tussle lets down some of her own good deeds which are Sita's jewels, before dwelling in the body known as Lanka, the isle of Ravana. Ravana keeps the Jiva in the midst of Rakshasa women who represent the baser passions such as *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Moha*, *Mada*, *Matsarya*, etc., the legitimate daughters of *Ahamkara* and *Mamakara*. God Rama, in His search to find the individual soul, has performed good deeds to wipe off her sins and befit her to receive spiritual training, sees the jewels of Sita with Sugreeva and feels satisfied that the Jiva has herself done meritorious acts which, according to the scriptures, generate in her an undying desire to develop spiritual wisdom. He then sees in Hanuman all the qualities of a Guru and sends him with the necessary instructions. Hanuman exhibits great aptitude for the high honour of a spiritual Guru conferred on him, in his classical speeches to Rama and Lakshmana, in his unflinching fidelity to his God Rama, in his glory to be known as Rama's *Dasa* (servant), in his sincerity of purpose, and in reaching the object of his search through the

thick mass of palpable darkness of the human race after a great deal of trouble and anxiety. He at last reaches the goal, removes the veil of darkness and despair that is hanging over the Jiva, and brings words of solace and comfort to her by narrating to her the be-all and end-all of human existence with the *via media* to attain it; and then he initiates her into the Mantra for which the *Rama Mudrika* (Rama's finger ring) stands, and then the Jiva feels a hope of liberation from the turmoils of wordly existence. After *Shravana*, the devoted *Shishya* (pupil) makes *Manana* and *Nididhyasa*, and comes unscathed out of the fire of birth and death after the holocaust of *Ahamkara* and *Mamakara* and their brood, *viz.*, *Ravana* and *Kumbhakarna* and their huge forces, and stays once more as the meek and inseparable servant and handmaid of God Rama.

The above interpretation shows that our grand old national works like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are capable of more than one meaning. So did *Shri Madhvacharya* hold with respect to the *Mahabharata*. *Vyasa* himself says in the beginning that he has written *Mahabharata* with the sole object of preaching the invaluable lessons of *Dharma* to the world, which is the cream-essence of the Vedic teaching for the benefit of all of us, *viz.*, women, *Sudras*, and *Dwij* castes in name, who cannot reach the Vedic instructions directly from the Vedas. Thus they are both history and allegory and are full of lessons to all humanity.

THE TEMPLE MOVEMENT

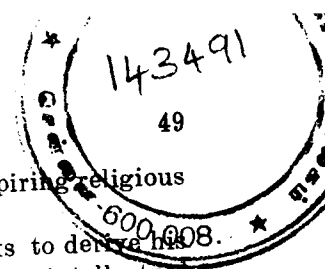
By M. S. MADHAVA RAO, B.A.

THE spirit of reform often works in curious and seemingly anomalous ways. But that is also a sure sign of life and vitality in the movement. The Hindu temples which had latterly become the standing symbol and citadel of religious narrowness and material vested interests, thereby weakening the spirit of Hinduism and the solidarity of the whole community, are now sought to be made the levers of Hindu spiritual revival and communal unity. Everywhere one hears of the demand made by the so-called 'lower classes' for equal privileges in the matter of temple worship and a few sensible organisations themselves urge that the temples should be thrown open to the so-called "depressed" and "untouchable" classes. The depressing classes have apparently realised the age-long folly of excluding the untouchable and unapproachable classes from the temples and are now trying to make up for it. If not, they are being forced to do so by the Time Spirit in various ways. Workers for social upliftment have recognised the value of religious influences in their programme and that efforts at mere educational and

economic betterment, without the provision of healthy and inspiring religious exercises, are not effective.

Man loves Beauty, and through art and ritual seeks to derive religious inspiration for expressing the Divine in himself. A mere intellectual problem of philosophy and ethics is unsatisfactory to the average mass of men, and most so to the class of those who owing to their environment have had no opportunities for intellectual training to grasp the high concepts of religion. That is why the Brahmo Samaj, at least speaking for Southern India, could not make much progress among the masses or perceptibly move them into a higher standard of life and aspiration. But the temple movement of Sri Narayana Guruswami on the West Coast among the Thiyyas, who are counted as one of the so-called "untouchable" and even "unapproachable" classes, has had a remarkably dynamic effect in raising the social consciousness and status of that community. When the movement was started, the original conception of a temple had been intuitively grasped by the great reformer, and the adoption of it in practice has had a most salutary effect upon the community. The Bhil Seva Mandal, serving the cause of the aborigines in the Bombay Presidency who are addicted to orgiastic practices, has recently started a Sri Rama temple for them which was consecrated by one of the Sri Sankara-charyas near the place. There is no doubt that the right use or abuse of a temple has a corresponding effect for the good or the evil of the community. When the rules are followed in their true spirit, the temples cannot but have a most beneficent effect upon the lives of the people in the vicinity. Similarly when mere formalism rules, vested interests in religious and material matters are created with their concomitant evils of various kinds in which modern Hinduism abounds.

So the reform of Hinduism from within can take place effectively but with the reform of its temples on rational lines. The original criterion of physical and other purity sanctioning admission into temples and participation in the worship should be re-established in place of the present practice of right and privilege got by mere birth into a privileged caste. The recent unrest in Vaikom (Travancore) and Palghat on the question of the Thiyyas going along the "sacred" roads approaching the temple or surrounding it is of portentous importance to Hinduism. Let those who would fain defend the present practice on the plea of physical purity take note that it is best secured, encouraged and maintained by giving free and full opportunities for the constant and continuous enjoyment of its fruits. It is also conceivable that the standard of purity in the so-called lower castes is the result of their exclusion from temples and consequent removal of all discipline in their lives and the absence of all emulation of the higher classes in their virtues. The result on the privileged and monopolistic classes has been no less disastrous. Freed from all responsibilities, the high standard of their efficiency gradually degenerated and the plight into which the Hindu temples have been thrown is pathetically described in the Report of the Madras Religious Endowment



Board. Conditions in other parts of the country cannot be much better. temples which are meant to be the common place of worship to the community, and the means of creating and maintaining high ideals and a spiritual aspiration for service, have, under the present system of exclusiveness degenerated into well-nigh what Jesus Christ described the temples of Jerusalem as "the den of thieves".

The best means of reforming the present temple system is by introducing the element of congregational worship into it. The example of the Bharata Samaj temple, in Adyar, can be adopted for this purpose. The ritual is simple, its meaning can be easily understood and therefore easily comprehended so that the will of the congregation may operate in intelligent unison and therefore the puja performed with ease and harmony after some practical apart from its immense reaction in the higher and invisible planes, congregational worship has no less remarkable and striking effect on the physical plane itself. It can best be demonstrated by the contrast between the Muslim Jumma on Fridays or the Christian Sunday service and the usual Hindu worship in the temples at the present day. It is not surprising that the Musalmans and Christians feel a great sense of religious communal solidarity among themselves while the Hindus at every step find themselves divided and weak. The Bharata Samaj has got a great future before it by spreading its idea of congregational worship in the country and thus strengthening Hinduism. Its membership is based upon the recognition and practice of universal beliefs with regard to religion and ways of healthy living. While the appeal and the agitation to admit all classes of Hindu (and later of all Faiths even, if their followers come in a reverent spirit) into the existing temples is to be strengthened, the movement can be further helped by starting Bharata Samaj temples in as many centres as possible. Hindu pilgrimage and religious importance. They would exert great influence over the vast numbers and varieties of people who visit them through the year. And silently the example of the new temples in allow all classes of Hindus to worship together in a simple, artistic and harmonious manner is sure to tell in the reforming of the older institutions as well.

POINTS FROM PERIODICALS

HINDU SABHA AND HINDU SOCIAL TYRANNY

THE way the Hindu Sabha deals with questions of untouchability and of widowhood reminds one of the attitude of the colonial powers towards slavery and slave-trade. These powers are far more energetic in suppressing slave-trade than in abolishing slavery, for slave-trade by causing transference

from one colony to another directly affects the material interests of the plantations in the colonies. From reading the Resolutions passed by the Hindu Mahasabha in its last session at Patna one gets the impression that the leaders of the Sabha are far more concerned to prevent transfer of the untouchables and the widows to the folds of other religion than uprooting the evils of untouchability and child widowhood. The untouchables are to be treated humanely "so that they may not be compelled to become converts to other religions" and widows should be shown some consideration for no superior reason than to save them from the 'clutches' of other religions. The same arithmetical obsession accounts for the resolutions requesting the Government to enter the aborigines as Hindus in the Census. This attitude of looking at the tyrannies of the Hindu society appears to us to be wholly wrong and immoral. Have the untouchables and the child-widows no better and in life than serve as the hunting ground for the evangelical enthusiasts? The fact seems to us to be that the inherent injustice of certain social customs has not yet sunk deeply enough in the mind of the Hindu Sabha. Obvious evils are still in the stage of discussion and Sanskrit verses are still solemnly uttered to prove that Hinduism does not provide for certain obvious evils. Tact may dictate the acceptance of one method of abolishing these evils in preference to another, but the method that compromises with the evils themselves and makes the life of those who suffer from them a mere pawn in the communal game condemns itself.

--The Servant of India.

NEW MOSQUE AT MYSORE

In the course of his speech on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the new Jumma Masjid in his capital, His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore said:

"Religion plays great part in the lives of all of us Indians and though we worship God in many and various ways there is unity in our diversity and all our ways if properly pursued lead sooner or later to the same eternal truths. It has been a real sorrow to me to see lately in different parts of India great clashes over externals of religion showing a tendency to pursue the shadow rather than the substance. I am rejoiced to think that no such spirit has yet manifested itself among my people and I hope this Jumma Masjid which I am declaring open to-day may be of great assistance in promoting search for eternal verities and in suppressing sectarian rivalries and prejudices."

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1. The objects of the Association are:

- To study the Sanatana Dharma and to make its teachings available to all;
- To investigate the scheme of Hindu rituals, and to adapt the same to the needs and conditions of the time as well as to provide, as far as possible, for their being properly performed;
- To promote social welfare and eradicate social evils in the Hindu community;
- To promote tolerance, good feeling, and a spirit of co-operation between Hindus and followers of other Faiths.

2. The Bharata Samaja holds up Service as the highest ideal of life, and enjoins on every one:

- The utmost purity in regard to conduct in daily life, including purity of thought, word and deed, sexual purity, purity of food and drink, and cleanliness of person and surroundings;
- Reverence for womanhood;
- The elevation of the submerged classes; and
- Kindness to animals.

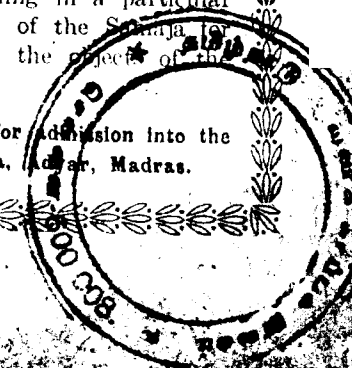
3. All persons, irrespective of creed, caste, sex, class, or color, who come with reverence and devotion, are welcome to attend worship, and participate in the benefit of other religious services and ceremonies, conducted under the auspices of the Bharata Samaja.

4. Membership in the Bharata Samaja is open to any person who is of or above the age of eighteen years and who is in sympathy with its declared objects, and is recommended by two members as worthy of admission.

5. There is no entrance fee, and no compulsory membership subscription; but only those who are of or above the age of eighteen years, whose names have been registered on payment of the prescribed fee of Rs. 3 for the first year and who pay an Annual Subscription of Re. 1 thereafter, as well as those who are already Associate Members at the time of the passing of this rule, are eligible for taking part in meetings of the General Body of members.

6. Any five or more registered members residing in a particular locality may apply to the Council of Administration of the Samaja to be constituted a Group, in order to carry out the objects of the Samaja in such locality.

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