

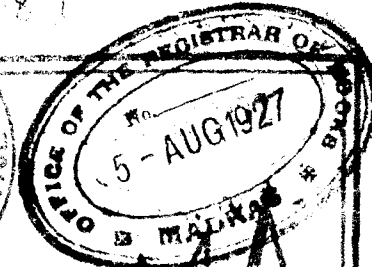
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THE BHARATA DHARMA

VOL. V - JULY 1927 - No. 4



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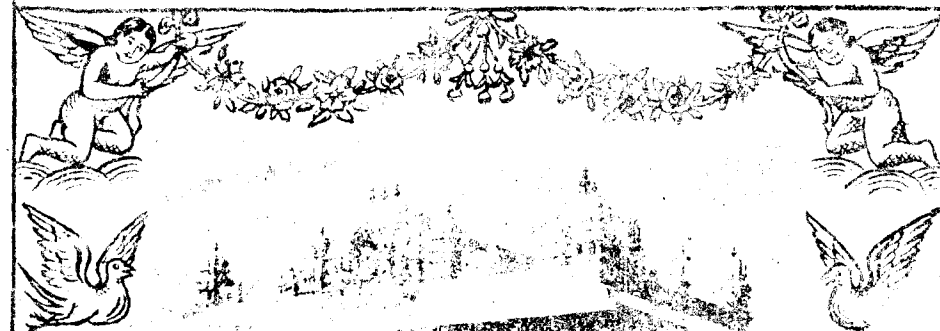


BHARATA DHARMA

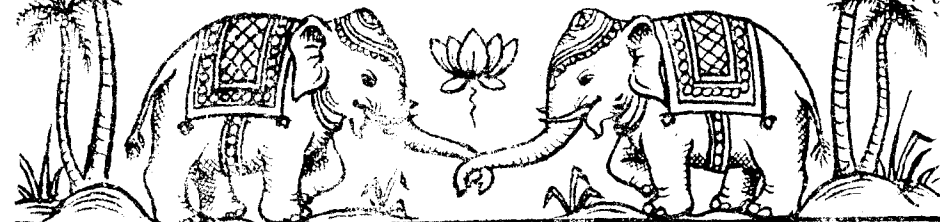
(The Official Organ of the Bharata Samaja)

A MAGAZINE OF LIBERAL HINDUISM

Editor: Mr. S. RAJA RAM



THE HINDU TEMPLE, ADYAR.



PUBLISHED EVERY FULL-MOON DAY AT ADYAR

Annual Subsn. India. Re. 1. Foreign, 2s. Single No.: India. As. 2. Foreign, 3d. (Post Free)

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NOTES

WE have very great pleasure in welcoming the learned series of Krishna Dasa's contributions on "Caste in the Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-Gita," the first part of which appears in this issue. Our readers will have the benefit of having Sri Krishna Dasa's views on this very important question and particularly so at this time when Hindu Dharma is in the crucible and requires all the earnest thought and courageous practice of its eternal principles, sadly neglected in recent times by the sons of India. Sri Krishna Dasa's considered thoughts, born of life-long and devoted studies of the essentials of the Bharata Dharma, and his clear judgment of the facts of the past in their relationship to the present, will surely be extremely helpful to students of our religion and social justice to enable them to understand and practise the essentials, eschewing the non-essential accretions of later days.

We mentioned last month the message recently received from an Angel (Deva) inviting co-operation from men in the carrying out of the Divine Plan. Before we can intelligently co-operate we must have a clear conception of the constitution and functions of the Deva Kingdom.

What is our present conception? We call every phenomena-producing or healing agent, at present invisible to us, a Devata. Deva simply means a Shining One, because the matter of which his body is composed is comparatively finer and shining, and is ordinarily out of the range of the normal physical vision of humanity at its present stage of evolution. In the long past, people were naturally in a position to see and work with them or were trained to do so, especially with their higher classes. For, they have several classes—low, average and high—and their line of evolution is guided by their own laws and special interests. We cannot therefore judge their interference and actions from our standpoint. In the long course of the development of Hinduism, which is an all inclusive religion, it has found place within its wide bosom for all classes of worship and their followers whom as the Gods found and conquered, they assigned places in the various rungs of its comprehensive religion. We find the growth from the Rig Vedic Gods of Agni, Indra, Maruts, Varuna, Yama and others, governing the natural phenomena, to the impersonal, absolute One without a Second, the Brahman of the Vedanta. Then, to meet the normal human craving for a personal God, Ishwara in his various phases and forms came in. This went on as the Aryan conquest spread until we have had within the Hindu fold worship of sometimes even the mischievous Elementals indulged in by the still unevolved classes.

Even the Lord of the Gita has observed this in His time as the following shlokas indicate.

कामैस्तेस्तेऽर्हताः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥

They whose wisdom hath been rent away by desires go forth to other Shining Ones, resorting to various external observances, according to their own natures.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. VII (20)

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such object, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. VII (21)

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितानि तान् ॥

He endowed with that faith, seeketh the worship of such a one, and from him he obtaineth his desires, I verily decreeing the benefits.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. VII (22)

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्वत्यल्पमेवसाम् ।

देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥

Finite indeed the fruit, that belongeth to those who are of small intelligence. To the Shining Ones go the worshippers of the Shining Ones, but my devotees come unto Me.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. VII (23)

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः ।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यधिपूर्वकम् ॥

Even the devotees of other Shining Ones, who worship full of faith, they also worship Me, O son of Kunti, though contrary to the ancient rule.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. IX (23)

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञां गेता च प्रभुरेव च ।

न तु माम् विदन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥

I am indeed the enjoyer of all sacrifices and also the Lord, but they know Me not in essence, and hence they fall.

Bhagavad-Gita Chap. IX (24)

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मयाजिनोऽपि माम् ॥

They who worship the Shining Ones go to the Shining Ones; to the Ancestors (Pitris) go the Ancestor-worshippers; to the Elements (Bhutas, Elementals or nature-spirits) go those who sacrifice to the Elementals; but My worshippers come unto Me.

Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. IX (25)

Shri Shankaracharya has also noted the popular allegiance to the lower orders of Devas and the favors sought of them in his Shivanandalahari Stotra—

सहस्रं वर्तन्ते जगति विबुधाः क्षुद्रफलदा

न मन्ये स्वप्ने वा तदनुसरणं तत्कृतफलम् ।

हरिब्रह्मादीनामपि निकटभाजाममुलभं

चिरं याचे शंभो शिव तव पदांभोजभजनम् ॥

Myraids are the unseen forces on earth capable of satisfying the demands of man's lower nature. I do not even dream of propitiating them and receiving their benefits. I have been craving for long Oh auspicious One, the worship of Thy Holy feet, so hard of attainment even to Hari, Brahma and others always so near to Thee.

The lower classes of Hindus have not been however left in their own crude forms of worship.

Prof. Radhakrishnan writes in his *Hindu View of Life*:

"The Aryan idea of worship during the earliest period was to call on the Father Sky or some other shining one to look from on high on the sacrificer, and receive from him the offerings of fat or flesh, cakes and drink. But soon puja or worship takes the place of homa or sacrifice. Image worship which was a striking feature of the Dravidian faith was accepted by the Aryans. The ideals of vegetarianism and non-violence (ahimsa) also developed. The Vedic tradition was dominated by the Agamik, and to-day Hindu culture shows the influence of the Agamas as much as that of the Vedas. The Aryan and the Dravidian do not exist side by side in Hinduism, but are worked up into a distinctive cultural pattern which is more an emergent than a resultant. The history of the Hindu religious development shows occasionally the friction between the two strains of the Vedas and the Agamas though they are sufficiently harmonised. When conceived in a large historical spirit, Hinduism becomes a slow growth across the centuries incorporating all the good and true things as well as much that is evil and erroneous, though a constant endeavour which is not always successful, is kept up to throw out the unsatisfactory elements. Hinduism has the large comprehensive unity of a living organism with a fixed orientation. The Upanishad asks us to remember the Real who is one, who is indistinguishable through class or colour, and who by his various forces provides as is necessary for the needs of each class and of all.

* * * * *

"Heresy-hunting, the favourite game of many religions, is singularly absent from Hinduism . . . The main note of Hinduism is one of respect and good will for other creeds. When a worshipper of Vishnu had a feeling in his heart against a worshipper of Siva and he bowed before the image of Vishnu, the face of the image divided itself in half and Siva appeared on one side and Vishnu on the other, and the two smiling as one face on the bigoted worshipper told him that Vishnu and Siva were one. The story is significant . . . Hinduism does not mistake tolerance for indifference. Hinduism

requires every man to think steadily on the life's mystery until he reaches the highest revelation. While the lesser forms are tolerated in the interests of those who cannot suddenly transcend them, there is all through an insistence on the larger idea and the purer worship. . . . While Hinduism hates the compulsory conscription of man into the house of truth, it insists on the development of one's intellectual conscience and sensibility to truth . . . When the movement of the Upanishads became lost in dogmatic controversies, when the fever of disputes and dialectics lulled the free spirit of religion, Buddhism called upon the people to adhere to the simplicity of truth and the majesty of the moral law. About the same period, when canonical culture and useless learning made religion inhuman scholasticism, and filled those learned in this difficult trifling with ridiculous pride, the Bhagavad-Gita opened the gates of heaven to all those who are pure in heart. When the ritualists succeeded in imprisoning the living faith in rigid creeds the true prophets of the spirit, the Saiva and the Vaishnava saints, and the theologians like Samkara and Ramanuja, summoned the people to the worship of the living God. The influence of Madhva and Chaitanya, Basava and Ramananda, Kabir and Nanak is not inconsiderable. There has been no such thing as a uniform, stationary unalterable Hinduism whether in point of belief or practice. Hinduism is a movement, not a position; a process, not a result; a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation. Its past history encourages us to believe that it will be found equal to any emergency that the future may throw up, whether on the field of thought or of history.

"After a long winter of some centuries, we are to-day in one of the creative periods of Hinduism. We are beginning to look upon our ancient faith with fresh eyes. We feel that our society is in a condition of unstable equilibrium. There is much wood that is dead and diseased that has to be cleared away. Leaders of Hindu thought and practice are convinced that the times require not a surrender of the basic principles of Hinduism, but a restatement of them with special reference to the needs of a more complex and mobile social order."

That is indeed our present stage. In the present article it is our object to emphasise one phase of our living Faith, the securing of co-operation of Devas. They are now divided into seven classes, each having a distinct line of activity. They are:

The Angels of Power,
The Angels of Healing,
The Guardian Angels of the Home,

The Angels who build Form, ever embodying archetypal ideas,
 The Angels of Nature,
 The Angels of Music, and
 The Angels of Beauty and of Art.

At this time when ceremonial in temple and domestic worship is engaging serious attention and is full of promise of good results it is worthy of note that—

"At present, they find in ceremonial a natural medium for their gifts and for their desire to aid their human brethren. Ceremonial always attracts their attention and, properly performed, provides a channel in which they can pour their forces. They are present at every religious ceremony, participating according to the measure of their capacity, and to the degree which the ceremony itself permits; They can work more powerfully if the mental attitude of the officiants and participants is receptive."

The average classes of the Devas (Angels) are said to be more evolved than the average humanity and are therefore beneficently inclined. They are, as already observed, specially enjoined to throw themselves heart and soul into full co-operation with men in the service of Him who has come to help the world out of its present deadlock in all the departments of activity. What is urgently wanted is the cultivation of the *Love of Nature*, the usual habitat and delight of the Devas, and the development of the four virtues specially needed for the purpose—Simplicity, Purity, Directness and Impersonality. We shall examine these in our next issue.

A public address on the same topic was given by Mr. S. Raja Ram at the premises of Shri Yoga Bhoga Someswaraswami Temple at Madanapalle, on May 7th before a large and appreciative audience of orthodox Hindus, Mr. N. K. Venkatesiah M.A., of the Rajahmundry College, presiding. The audience consisted mostly of orthodox Hindus who had assembled for worship on the eve of the consummation of the rituals relating to the renovation of the Temple and the re-establishment of certain images with proper ceremonial. The existence and cordial co-operation of the Devas on such occasions were clearly explained and also the need for a better understanding of their place and functions in nature for the purpose of carrying on the Divine Will.

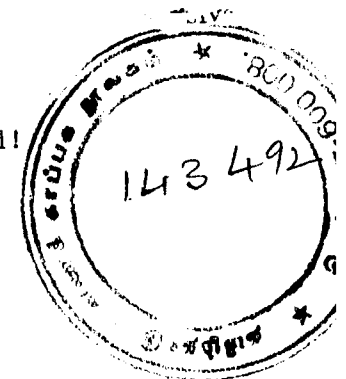
THE LOTUS OF THE HEART

By T. L. VASWANI

THE master blessed me beyond all expectation tonight;
 "Follow me," he said.
 And he taught me in the Temple of Silence.
 And in Silence I heard the Great Word
 -Music without instruments;
 And I saw the white Radiance
 -Light without lamp;
 And my limbs no longer ached in quest;
 But in my soul was a song:
 "I, too, have found the Lotus of the Heart."

And this the master taught me:
 Blessed are they that lose!
 For greater is their destiny;
 To lose is to gain
 In beauty, wisdom, strength.
 The bulbul and the rose—how beautiful!
 But greater is their beauty
 In death than in life.
 Sacrifice thy life if thou wouldst be
 Blended with the Blessed Beauty.

And this, too, my master said:
 The Lotus of Wisdom
 Grows in the Lake of Tears.
 Blessed are they that weep;
 Blessed are the wounded;
 Blessed they that are broken
 In the search and the struggle;
 Blessed they who walk with bleeding hearts;
 The Vision of the Beloved filleth them,
 And bright are they with the rich red colour of Love.



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BHAKTA SAMAGAMA

THEY say that in the Kali Age strength lies in co-operation and concerted action.

संघे शक्तिः कलौ युगे ॥

A constant commingling and co-operation on the part of earnest students and devotees of higher life in treading the path to reach the goal should obviously lead to great and speedy results. The characteristics of true devotees are described in Shlokas 9, 10 and 11 of Chapter X of the Bhagavad-Gita :

मच्चित्ता मद्रतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥

Mindful of Me, their life hidden in Me, illumining each other, ever conversing about Me, they are content and joyful.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

To these, ever harmonious, worshipping in love, I give the yoga of discrimination (Buddhi-Yoga) by which they come unto Me.

तेषामेवानुक्म्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

Out of pure compassion for them, dwelling within their SELF, I destroy the ignorance-born darkness by the shining lamp of wisdom.

It is a good sign of the times that the members of the Theosophical Society are taking advantage of the teachings in frequently gathering in communities and leading a life of devotion and dedication to their ideal. The idea of "community life" has always been attractive, but many who appreciated did not believe it possible to be put into practice in the present civilisation of strife and struggle and distrust and disharmony. There comes a time however in the affairs of men when the tide of progress is on and is felt and utilised by receptive and prepared minds. That the present is such a time is seen in the various attempts at community life that have been successfully carried out in recent years.

There was a noteworthy gathering of over 30 members under the hospitable roof of Krishna Dasa (Sir T. Sadasivaier) last year about this time at Kodaikanal for over a week and it was full of practical lessons to those who were there.

This year Madanapalle provided the opportunity. The real spirit behind the growing enthusiasm for community life in South India is the venerable and indefatigable worker, Mr. T. Ramchandra Rao Garu, who is

now seventy-five years 'young' and is incessantly travelling and preparing the ground for the great events. He thought of Madanapalle for this year's gathering even in December at Benares and fixed the matter with Principal Trilokekar there.

Thus did a group of about 40 members meet in May (8th to 22nd) at Madanapalle where the Theosophical College provided the necessary accommodation and the moving goodness and largeness of Mr. C. S. Trilokekar's heart supplied all the creature comforts to the group composed of a variety of units of different castes and classes, tastes and temperaments. There was a hearty and harmonious commingling of ladies and gentlemen—Iyers, Iyengars, Raojis, Acharyas, and Shastris, and Naidus and Chettiares—all students of the same school of discipline and followers of the same teacher lived a happy family life for a very pleasant and instructive fortnight.

The daily programme consisted of meditation, Puja, and a study-class in the morning, a conversazione in the afternoon and entertainments in the night. The classes which were highly inspiring were held under the guidance of Sir T. Sadasivaier, Messrs. C. S. Trilokekar and T. Ramchandra Rao, each for 5 days, and they brought down the spirit which all the members felt in a way in which they did not feel before. In Mr. C. S. Trilokekar's classes, one could feel 'the presence of God' as it were, and Sir T. Sadasivaier one-pointedly emphasised the need and the possibility of taking definite steps on the Path at this time, when forces are favourable for the helping of sincere seekers. Mr. T. Ramchandra Rao would not rest until all entered 'The Kingdom of Happiness,' vigorously taking to a life of serious endeavour so full of promise at this auspicious period of world's history. The community was in camp one evening at the Tetu valley, the site of the future University which is being planned by our beloved leader, Mr. J. Krishnamurti.

Those who assembled there enjoyed a freedom, equality and love which expressed itself in the way in which each excelled the other in making himself harmonious and useful and in putting forth his best at the variety entertainments arranged under the Aswatha tree behind the Olcott Cottage every night. Prominent among the ladies who took part in the shows and music were Srimatis Jayamma and Rajivi Bai of Trichy and Subhadramma of Adyar; and among the gentlemen, Messrs. K. Narahari Shastri, S. K. Parthasarathi Iyengar and L. Subrahmanya Iyer, ably aided by the youths—Miss Leelavati, Joshi, Rama and Lakshman. Sir T. Sadasivaier himself was on the stage and gave a delightful talk with comic songs. The community dispersed with hearts full of love and strength to achieve their goal.

We understand that similar community gatherings assembled for a few days in Chowara on the West Coast at the same time and at Chintamani, Chicknayakanhalli and Belur in the Mysore Province subsequently.

CASTE

IN THE BHAGAVATAM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

By KRISHNA DASA

I

I SHALL (D.V.) in this month's contribution take up the 1st chapter of the 1st *skandham* of Srimat Bhagavatam and continue in the succeeding months my contributions in reference to succeeding Chapters and *skandhams* and try to finish with the Gita references to caste.

The 1st shloka of the Bhagavatam (1st *skandham*) refers to God as the cause of the creation, preservation and indrawing of the Universe and as the simultaneous Knower of all things of all times (Abhigna) and as the Lord of All whom *we all men* (Dheemahi) ought to worship ("Param" which is the same as "Varenyam" of the Gayatri), no distinction of birth-caste as regards fitness for worship being even remotely alluded to.

The 2nd shloka about the contents of the work says that *all good men free from jealousy and contempt towards others* (*Nirmatsara Sata*) and eager to learn, can make God live permanently in their hearts by studying the Dharma found in the book. Here again, no qualification of birth-caste is laid down. The 3rd shloka invites all embodied men living on the physical plane who desire for and could appreciate "Rasam" — "essential juice" (that is, those who could discriminate and love the important and reject the unimportant, those "who know" in the language of *At the Feet of the Master*) — to drink the Book Juice. Again, nothing about any qualification as to birth-caste.

The 4th and 5th shlokas show that Shownaka Rshi and other birth-Brahmin seers paid their respects (satkritam) to Suta (a person of very low birth-caste being of one of the Pratiloma mixed castes to which persons born of a higher birth caste women by a lower birth-caste man belong, and hence lower than the Shudra or the lowest of the four Tretayuga ordained birth-castes and much lower also than any of the Anuloma mixed castes. He was made to sit in the teacher's place and the Brahmin Rshis as Shishyas questioned him with due and humble reverence (Adarat). The 6th shloka shows that the teacher Suta has been taught not only Puranas and Itihasas (including, of course, the 5th Veda or Mahabharatam) but Dharmashastras also by Veda Vyasa. The 7th and 8th shlokas declare that the highest secrets which were known to Veda Vyasa (the greatest of the knower of all the Vedas, (*Veda Vidam sreshta*) and that all things known to the *munis* versed in both Para and Apari Vidyas (Para apara Vidah) were all completely known to Suta because Suta was the beloved pupil of Vyasa and was therefore taught everything.

This 1st chapter, if well thought over, is, by itself, almost conclusive on the question that fitness to worship God, social respectability of the

highest degree, fitness for being shown reverence by the most highly born, fitness for teaching the highest Vedic secrets to the highest birth-caste persons, all depend on qualities of head and heart and not *at all* upon birth-caste, and that no man can teach spirituality to others who has not been taught by a Great Jeevanmuktha (like Veda Vyasa) who had been compelled (so to say) to part with the most secret knowledge, because his low-born pupil had by his mental and moral fitness and his eagerness and acts of loving service towards the Guru made the Guru to love him (the pupil) in return just as a loving dutiful son is beloved by his father and is given all the father's wealth. (In the present case, the gift of the wealth to the shishya-son does not impoverish the Father-Guru but makes the Guru a Krita Kritya. Nobody who knows spiritual truths can reach the Universal Friend till he had made the highest Dana by seeking a fit pupil-seeker and imparting that knowledge to that pupil, the pupil's fitness depending on his advance in the four qualifications and not on birth-caste).

WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT: SOME PRESENT WANTS

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

(Continued from p. 43)

School education.—I have often heard people ask whether girls are not spoilt by going to school, and whether it is not better that they should receive their education at home. The effect of school education depends, I may say, not so much on school life or on education as such, but chiefly on the innate character and tendencies upon which it is brought to bear. It may be that you cannot avoid some smoke when you light a fire, and that when land is cultivated, weeds too may come up with the crops: the remedy however is simply to get rid of the smoke in the one case, and to pull up the weeds in the other. And so with education: if mistakes are made, they must be set right; if evil tendencies show themselves, they must be patiently encountered; but it is not right to say that education, the object of which is to make a person better and more capable, has the opposite effect. Education may be likened to a sharp knife: in skilful hands, it proves a most serviceable weapon; but handled carelessly or maliciously, it may inflict serious injury: the result in either case depends on the agent, and not on the instrument.

As regards the other point, it is clear that, even if it be at all possible for the large majority of girls to have education given to them in their homes, it cannot ordinarily be as thorough and efficient, as systematic, as in

a recognised public institution, where trained teachers are employed and suitable appliances provided, and provision made for methodical instruction according to a carefully prepared curriculum. There are, too, various other advantages for girls in going to school: the discipline of school life, the freshness and receptivity to which its atmosphere is conducive, the healthy freedom of association with other girls, the cultivation of friendships and sympathies, the realisation of one's own aptitudes and capacities as well as weaknesses by comparison with those of others, the rubbing off of angularities, the effacement of superstitions and wrong beliefs, the getting beyond class prejudices and antipathies, and so on.

The objection is sometimes put forward that an educated girl is less useful at home than an uneducated girl; but this is usually because the education given is unsuitable or defective, and too much attention has been paid to book-learning to the exclusion of practical knowledge and training in household work. The remedy for this obviously is to improve the scope and quality of the teaching.

Selection of teachers.—The value and efficacy of all instruction to the young depends largely on the quality of the teachers. That being so, only those known to be of pure life and character should be selected for the purpose, those whose company and example, no less than their instruction and conversation, are likely to exercise an elevating influence on the pupils. In the case of girls the teachers should wherever possible be women. It is no doubt not always easy to find persons of the proper type, especially for the salaries offered nowadays, and that too more or less grudgingly. There would be much less difficulty were the profession of teaching better encouraged and honoured, and more generally recognised as the right sphere for merit, character and aptitude, instead of as the last refuge for the worthless, the incapable and the discontented. It is work which in former times was largely done by saintly men (*rishis*) in their hermitages; surely it is worthy of the energies of the best men and women in our day.

Mixed education.—I am strongly impressed with the necessity, at any rate for a long time to come, for having separate institutions for girls and boys after the infants' standard. Not only is the aim of education somewhat different (speaking generally) in the two cases, but experience shows that co-education is unsuited to the conditions of our country, besides being a source of anxiety and trouble to the school authorities. Our girls as a rule are still timid and wanting in self-reliance; and the rough manners and boisterous ways of young men are not exactly calculated to put them at their ease. For the matter of that, even grown-up women are afraid of speaking to quite respectable visitors of the other sex when they call and ask to see their menfolk. Conditions may no doubt change in time in all these respects; but it is not the part of wisdom to act as if they did not operate now.

Education and early marriage.—Now, if a girl is to be properly educated and trained on the lines I have ventured to suggest, it will not do to think of

withdrawing her from school, as is now generally done, as soon as she attains twelve or thirteen years of age. For, assuming that a child is not sent out regularly to school before seven (—to do so earlier is injurious to health and growth—), this gives barely five or six years' time in school, which is quite insufficient for any education worth the name. Even to acquire *sraddha*, or the abiding interest or zeal for knowledge which marks the true student, it takes most young persons ten or twelve years of study. To withdraw girls from school in half that time, in view to their undertaking the responsibilities of married life before either the body or the mind can have attained its proper development, is indeed prejudicial to their interest in every way, besides being calculated to bring discredit on the whole system of education.

Some people think that marriage need not interfere with education. But if we inquire what happens in the generality of cases after a girl is given away in marriage, how she is taken to her husband's home off and on, and is there usually engrossed in household duties of some kind or other, and burdened too, sooner or later, with the misfortune of premature maternity following on the heels of early consummation, we shall realise how many and serious are the difficulties and obstacles in the way of further education after marriage.

I have already expressed my conviction that education and social reform are intertwined, and must go forward side by side. We have a good illustration of this in the fact that the chief obstacle to women's education in India at the present day is the custom of early marriage. This custom has also operated most harmfully in a number of other ways. To it is directly due the existence of a large and unhappy class of young widows, constituting a blot on our civilisation; it has been a fertile cause of infantile mortality and of deaths among young mothers; it has shortened life both for men and women and weakened the racial stamina; by unduly increasing the size of families and diminishing the vitality and the productive power of the people, it has led inevitably to chronic poverty and distress. Child marriage has indeed been in every way the root cause of most of the evils from which our country is labouring, the tubercular germ growing on the body social and politic, the white ant fast eating into the once healthy wood. And unless it is eradicated utterly and promptly, there is no hope of advancement for our womanhood or of regeneration for the nation as a whole. The one sovereign remedy, without which nothing else will avail, is the postponement of marriage for the youth of both sexes till the completion of their education, and in any case for girls till after they shall have reached the age of sixteen years.

Shastras and the age of marriage.—There are many people who constantly put forward the objection that the postponement of marriage as suggested above is opposed to Shastraic injunctions. There is, I may say, much difference of opinion on this point even among those well conversant with the Shastras; and I leave it to them to carry on the argument. But in any

case it is hardly right to treat the Shastras as a collection of detached maxims to be applied or not at a man's choice and convenience. They are really a code of rules intended to regulate the whole of human conduct, purporting to embody the *dharma* for all spheres of activity. And they deal, let us remember, not only with the marriageable age for girls, but also with that for boys, in whose case marriage is clearly discountenanced before the completion of their education, an injunction which is much more honoured in the breach than in the practice. They lay down rules, moreover, which concern even more important matters besides marriage, such as moral conduct, purity of living, daily worship and ceremonial. But how many of these rules are being truly and rigidly observed? For instance, there is the duty of *avichchinna-agnihotra*, the uninterrupted maintenance of the sacred fire, enjoined on Brahmanas as a class; this has gone out of fashion, and we see only the ever-lighted cigar or cigarettes in the mouths of all classes. The injunctions as to the daily performance of *sandhya* and *puja* are rarely even remembered by most Brahmanas. The tuft on the head (*sikha*), which should indicate the position of the *brahma-randhra*, has now yielded place to the close-cropped hair. Sea-voyage was forbidden in former times, and entailed pollution which could only be removed by purificatory ceremonies; now, however, sea-voyages are a common incident in every well-to-do family, and create no difficulties of any kind. The performance of *srâddha* for departed spirits is going out of use; and the addiction to spirituous drinks is fast coming in. Even in regard to post-puberty marriage, the present attitude of the orthodox would seem to be that it is all right if the attainment of puberty is kept concealed; *dosham* or sin only attaches where no attempt is made to conceal the fact. Instead of all this fear, and inconsistency, and hypocrisy, is it not far better in every way that we should frankly recognise that conditions now are very different from what they were in former times, and that rules and conventions which may have been useful once are not necessarily useful always? My own conviction is that child marriages are not in accordance with the Shastras at all, and that they were not generally practised in ancient times; they came into vogue only in comparatively modern days, as a matter of precaution under Mussalman rule. Now that we are living under the rule of a nation which shows more respect to womanhood than even Hindus do, there is no reason for fear, and no justification for marriage before maturity.

Early marriage is not, as a matter of fact, being practised to any large extent among the non-Brahmana castes. Is it not a matter for irony that the Brahmanas, the highest of all castes, on whom *indriya-nigraha* (the control of the passions) is most incumbent, should practise it the least, if we are to judge by the almost universal prevalence among them of early marriage and immature parentage?

(To be concluded)

THOUGHTS ON DIET

(EVILS OF POLISHED RICE)

By THE HON'BLE JUSTICE V. RAMESAM

V

AT this stage I may refer to the sentence in Dr. C. Muthu's work on tuberculosis (Chapter 9) where he sums up in one sentence the evils in the diet of modern civilisation. "So all along civilisation, man has tampered with nature's foods—his wheat is hulled, his rice is milled, his barley pearled, his oats rolled, his potatoes peeled, his milk pasteurised, his vegetables boiled and his sugar refined." Thus whether it is corn flour or white wheat flour or pearled barley or rolled oats the mischief is the same. So early as 1907, Eijkman, a Danish scientist, observed that feeding on polished rice produced *Beri Beri*. He could not then trace it to its true cause. In 1912 Major Powell in his 'Food and Health'—Theosophists are familiar with his name as the author of 'The Etherial Double' and 'The Astral Body'—pointed out that the proteids, fats and salts in polished rice are 7·4, 3 and 4 per cent as against 11, 7·2, and 5·2 in unpolished rice—but even then he did not know the whole of the mischief. Funk, called attention to Eijkman's work, but still the reason was not known. Not until McCollum and McCarrison and their co-workers had developed the theory relating to Vitamins that it was established that *Beri Beri* was a deficiency disease due to the absence of B. Vitamins. The following table exhibits the vitamins in polished rice:

AUTHORITY QUOTED	A. VITAMINS	B. VITAMINS	C. VITAMINS
British Medical Research Council	0	0	0
Plimmer and Plimmer	0	0	0
Benjamin Harrow	0	0	0
Rajnor Berg	trace	trace	trace

The very small trace is that which has left civilised men alive, for as Dr. Leonard William says: "Had they not been able to do so, this civilisation would long since have passed away." That is, foods, in spite of man's processes (manufacturing and culinary), manage to retain a trace of their vitamins. Sherman in his 'Chemistry of Food and Nutrition' gives a table of minerals for the various foods. By taking the proportion of alkaline among those to the acid-producing minerals, one can estimate the measure of the acidosis—causing quality of a food and one comes to the conclusion that polished rice heads the cause of Acidosis causing foods. In connection with the epidemic of *Beri Beri* among the Chinese coolies in France, it was found that their staple food consisted of polished rice and tinned meat. The most notable fact in the epidemic was that the disease occurred in the rice eaters, it was only in those who consumed fully hulled and polished rice, and that partially hulled rice still invested with the pericarp or the silver skin was actually able to cure the disease. The Japanese observers Yamigava, Koyama, Midorikawa and Mogi found that the injection of

fermented watery extract of rice greatly accelerated the outbreak of the disease but only in animals that were being fed on polished rice.

Holst and Frolic noted that polished and other de-vitalised cereals induce scurvy in pigeons and barn-door fowls. After the spread of railway system in Japan there is an increase of *Beri Beri* among the Japanese peasants. They do not merely acquire facilities for marketing their own agricultural produce but have also become contaminated with the refineries of urban life and have been provided with financial resources enabling to buy polished rice milled in the towns and to abandon the use of partially hulled article formerly prepared in their own hand-mills and foot mills. But alas! exactly the same process is going on in Southern India. Men sell their paddy and purchase polished rice. One is ashamed of giving his guests a meal of brown unpolished rice. I am informed by a friend that when an officer visited a village in the Ganjam District and was served with a meal of unpolished rice, the guest asked his host in disdain whether the people of that village could not get polished rice and the host in bated breath and whispering humbleness apologised to his guest that as his village was at a distance from town he could not get polished rice!

UNTOUCHABLES AND TEMPLE ENTRY

A MESSAGE FROM GANDHIJI

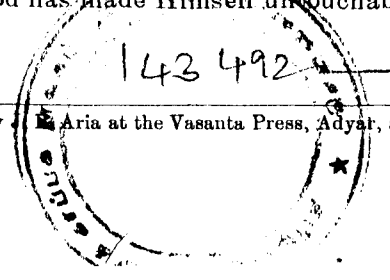
"GOD will re-enter our temples only when we have opened not merely our temples but our hearts to these (Depressed Classes) fellow-countrymen and fellow religionists." This was the message given by Mahatma Gandhi in reply to a letter written on behalf of the workers of Karwar (North Kanara) seeking his opinion on the question of "Untouchables and Temple Entry".

For the last three months there has been a movement set on foot at Karwar to secure for the depressed classes admission into a public temple of the place known as Vithoba's. The agitation was to have come to a head recently, but on receipt of the message from Mahatma Gandhi the general meeting of the Temple *Bhajaks* (subscribers to the temple funds) has been postponed to the month of Shravan (July-August).

In the course of his reply from Nandi Hills Mahatmaji wrote to Mr. S. D. Nadkarni, a worker of the locality:

"I am glad that you are moving our friends on your side to open a local Public Temple to the so-called untouchables. I hope that the forthcoming meeting will pass the contemplated resolution unanimously and if they do they will be doing justice more to themselves than to those whom we have so long held under suppression. My opinion is our temples have been forsaken by God. Because of our ungodly treatment of a portion of our countrymen, God has made Himself untouchable, unapproachable and unseeable."

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