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THE Bharata Dharma

Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

Joint Editors: { Mr. S. Raja Ram
Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar

[Vol. IX]

OCTOBER, 1931

[No. 7]



On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar :

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Ah! The wonder under the Banyan tree! There sits the Teacher, a youth; the disciples, elders. The teaching is silence, and the disciples' doubts are dispelled.

PUBLISHED ON THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH AT "MORYALAYA", ROYAPETTAH.

Yearly: India, Rs. 2; Foreign, 4s. Single No.: India, As. 3; Foreign, 4d.

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THE BHARATA SAMAJA PUBLICATIONS

The following publications of the above Samaja are available for sale and can be had from the Joint Secretary at Adyar.

- (i) Nityapujavidhanam. (Sanskrit Text, Translation and translation in English and Explanatory Notes.) Price As. 6.
- (ii) Nityapujavidhanam. (Sanskrit Text in Telugu characters, with meaning and notes in Telugu.) Price As. 4
50 Copies Rs. 10.
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THE BHARATA DHARMA

*Sadhu T.L Vaswanji writes :—*The "Bharata Dharma" is precious to me for its noble aspiration to interpret the ancient wisdom in the light of the modern spirit. Great is India's destiny and great the mission of the Hindu Dharma in the new age. May you and your work be ever increasingly blessed in the service of *Satyam Sanatanam*!

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BHARATA DHARMA





THE Bharata Dharma

N.B.—The Arya Mata Sabha is not responsible for any opinions expressed or statements published in this magazine unless they are contained in an official document.

All communications should be addressed to: THE MANAGING EDITOR, THE BHARATA DHARMA, "Moryalaya", Royapettah, Madras.

VOL. IX

OCTOBER, 1931

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THE FRONTISPIECE

SARASVATI RAHASYA.

The Hidden Truth of Sri Sarasvati is revealed in the Upanishad of the same name:—"The Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad." It does not appear so far so widely known as the subject deserves. Though the Hindus perform formally every year a worship at this season of what is known as Sri Saraswati Puja, it is often confined to a formal ritual worship of books, implements and tools of earning livelihood on the ninth of Navaratri days dedicated to the worship of Parashakti. Parashakti embodies all the separated shaktis, powers of Devas, is pictured in nine forms one of which is described as the chief and the others as subordinate for each day. (1) Maheswari (2) Kauwmari (3) Varahi (4) Mahalakshmi (5) Vaishnavi (6) Indrani (7) Brahmi (8) Narasimhi and (9) Chamundi.

During the nine days of Navaratri, the first three forms of Maheswari, or Durga are worshipped in the first three days. Worship is directed on the 4th, 5th and 6th days to the aspects of Mahalakshmi, and on the 7th, 8th and 9th days to the forms of Brahmi or Sarasvati.

The last three days being dedicated to Saraswati, the last day is called Sarasvati Puja day, though Chamundi is the chief form of the day and all others subordinate.

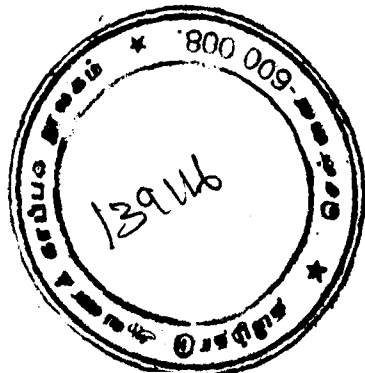
In the Puja Mantra however, all the three dominant forms are described Durga-Lakshmi-Sarasvati Puja.

The hidden truth is described in the Upanishad which forms number 6 of the series of the 8 Shakta Upanishads in volume 5 of the Adyar Mino Upanishads.

The Upanishad opens with the question of the Rishis to the great Ashvalyana, "By what means have you attained to the wisdom indicated by that word "Tat," "by what worship, Oh Lord,"? The reply:—"I secured the supreme goal by repeating the praise and the worship of the Sarasvati Dasa Slokas with their appropriate Riks (Mantras) with the Bijas.

The Dasa Slokas (ten verses) are reproduced below as also the Dhyana sloka and the concluding Devata-prarthana slokas.

The corresponding riks (Mantras), chandas (Metre), presiding deity (Devata), the seed (Bijam) and other necessary details, such as Shakti, Kilakam, Viniyogam and the Anganyasa of the Mantras are given in *extenso* in the above Upanishad which may be secured and the Mantras carefully received from a competent teacher, if one desires the result (Phala). It is described in the closing stanzas of the Devata-Prarthana thus:—"He who daily praises Sarasvati and worships the Goddess with sincere devotion for six months gets inner conviction. Then flows in voluntarily *Vani* in easily running words, in verse and prose in immeasurable clearness. He who has not previously learnt becomes fully aware and gradually becomes a true knower.— सारस्वतः कविः



— 52
Rajawade, 2 N23 R1
N23.9.7

॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ ध्यानम् ॥

नीहारहारधनसारसुधाकराभां

कल्याणदां कनकचम्पकदामभूषाम् ।

उत्तुङ्गपीनकुचकुम्भमनोहराङ्गीं

वाणीं नमामि मनसा चक्षसां विभूत्यै ॥

॥ सरस्वतोदशश्लोकी ॥

या वेदान्तार्थतत्त्वैकस्वरूपा परमेश्वरी ।

नामरूपात्मना व्यक्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

या साङ्गोपाङ्गवेदेषु चतुर्ष्वेकैव गीयते ।

अद्वैता ब्रह्मणः शक्तिः सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

या वर्णपदवाक्यार्थस्वरूपेणैव वर्तते ।

अनादिनिधनाऽनन्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

अध्यात्ममधिदैवं च देवानां सम्यगीश्वरी ।

प्रत्यगास्ते वदन्ती या सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

अन्तर्याम्यात्मना विश्वं त्रैलोक्यं या नियच्छति ।

रुद्रादित्यादिरूपस्था सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

या प्रत्यग्दृष्टिभिर्जीवैर्व्यज्यमानाऽनुभूयते ।

व्यापिनी इतिरूपैका सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

नामजात्यादिभिर्मैद्वैरुद्धा या विकल्पिता ।

निर्विकल्पात्मना व्यक्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

व्यक्ताव्यक्तगिरः सर्वे वेदाद्या व्याहरन्ति याम् ।

सर्वकामदुघा धेनुः सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

यां विदित्वाऽखिलं बन्धं निर्मेथ्याखिलधर्मेना ।

योगी याति परं स्थानं सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

नामरूपात्मकं सर्वं यस्यामावेश्य तां पुनः ।
ध्यायन्ति ब्रह्मरूपैका सा मां पातु सरस्वती ॥

॥ देवताप्रार्थना ॥

चतुर्मुखमुखाम्भोजवनहंसवधूर्मम ।
मानसे रमतां नित्यं सर्वशुक्ला सरस्वती ॥
नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनि ।
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं विद्यादानं च देहि मे ॥
अक्षसूत्रांकुशधरा पाशपुस्तकधारिणी ।
मुक्ताहारसमायुक्ता वाचि तिष्ठतु मे सदा ॥
कम्बुकण्ठी सुताम्रोष्ट्री सर्वाभरणभूषिता ।
महासरस्वती देवी जिह्वाग्रे संनिवेश्यताम् ॥
या श्रद्धा धारणा मेधा वाग्देवी विधिवद्ब्रूया ।
भक्तजिह्वाग्रसदना शमादिगुणदायिनी ॥
नमामि यामिनीनाथलेखालंकृतकुन्तलाम् ।
भवानीं भवसन्तापनिर्वापणसुधानदीम् ॥
यः कवित्वं निरातङ्गं भक्तिमुक्ती च वाञ्छति ।
सोऽभ्यर्च्यैनां दशश्लोक्या नित्यं स्तौति सरस्वतीम् ॥
तस्यैवं स्तुवतो नित्यं समभ्यर्च्य सरस्वतीम् ।
भक्तिश्रद्धाभियुक्तस्य बाष्पमासात्प्रत्ययो भवेत् ॥
ततः प्रवर्तते वाणी स्वेच्छया ललिताक्षरा ।
गद्यपद्यात्मकैः शब्दैरप्रमेयैर्विवक्षितैः ॥
अश्रुतां बुध्यते ग्रन्थः प्रायः सारस्वतः कविः ॥

DR. ANNIE BESANT'S 85th BIRTHDAY.

The celebration at Adyar opened early, in the morning of October 1st in quiet enthusiasm and worship at a special puja at the Temple of light—Jyotiralya immediately followed by the solemn and sonorous Vedic chants of *Swastivachana mantras*.

The audience then moved in procession to the Head-quarters upstairs where the Brahmanas presented her with purna kumba. A large number of residents and others paid homage to the great leader who then received

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We love to think of the Masters as our Elder Brothers, as They graciously call Themselves. Are we as eager to claim the lowest criminal as our baby brother, needing our tenderest care? Let us each day throughout the coming year send a loving thought to our babes, all the world over.

Annie Besant.

the sanskrit slokhas composed in honour of the occasion and read by Dr. Sreenivasamurti. Friends who had assembled in the hall downstairs had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Besant upstairs and wishing her happiness and sound health. It was half past nine when the assembly dispersed with the rejoicing of having met the great lady who had just passed the thousand and eighth month of her beneficent life on earth.

In the afternoon, Dr. Besant was at home to the residents under the picturesque banyan tree when she had a cheerful word for every person present.

॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

॥ श्रीवसन्तापञ्चकम् ॥

श्रीमान्नः कुशलं तनोतु भगवान् सर्वेश्वरः सन्ततं
 श्रीमद्भारतभाग्यकल्पलतिकां श्रीमद्वसन्तां नमः ।
 पञ्चाशीतितमे प्रमोदजनके नूतनेऽद्य जन्मोत्सवे
 यस्याः प्राप्तसुखानुभूतिवसतेः सर्वे प्रमोदामहे ॥
 यस्मात्त्वं परदुद्रतैरतिरां क्रूरैर्मुहुर्वाधिभिः
 संपीड्यामितशोकभारगमिता तस्माद्वयं मोहिताः ।
 क्लिन्नाः शोकविमूढचेतस इमे धातारमव्याहतं
 दातुं ते परिपूर्णमायुरनिशं संप्रार्थयामः सुखम् ॥
 स्वाराज्यं परिकल्पितं करुणया यत्सर्वसौख्यास्पदं
 कार्याकार्यविवेचने निपुणया हि प्राग्भवत्या हितम् ।
 तत्संपादयितुं तथैव निपुणं त्वत्तुल्यधीरं वरं
 नेतारं परिकल्पयेदपि विधिर्धन्या भवेमाञ्जसा ॥
 अस्मिन्जन्ममहोत्सवे समुदिताः सर्वे वयं भक्तितः
 श्रीसर्वेश्वरमीप्सितार्थघटने कल्पद्रुमं देहिनाम् ।
 दीर्घायुष्यमरोगतामथ खलु श्रेयांसि सर्वाणि च
 प्रीत्या ते प्रददात्विति प्रतिदिनं संप्रार्थयामः सदा ॥
 जयतु जयतु लोके ब्रह्मविद्यासमेयं
 जयतु जयतु माता श्रीवसन्ता सदा नः ।
 जयतु जयतु नित्यं सत्यमेव प्रियं नः
 जयतु जयतु लोके सर्वमूलो हि धर्मः ॥
 अड्यार्ग्रन्थशालायां पण्डितो भक्तितो व्यधात् ।
 पलाशूर रामनाथः श्रीवसन्तापञ्चकं शुभम् ॥

A TYPICAL FUNCTION.

On Dr. Besant's 85th Birthday Mr. M. S. Sarma, Artist, presented a portrait of Dr. Besant to the South Indian Association, Mylapore, Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., who presided over the unveiling function in his opening speech spoke as follows :—

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a special propriety in coupling this function of unveiling the portrait of Dr. Besant with the celebration of her 85th birth-day. We rejoice that Dr. Besant is still spared to us and we wish to join in the felicitations that will be poured on her to-day from all quarters. We wish to avail ourselves of this happy occasion to pay our humble tribute of admiration, respect and appreciation to the high-souled lady who has adopted India as her own country, whose love for India exceeds her love of her own country and who has, in fact, become one of us and has spent the most precious years of her life in working for the uplift of India. This portrait will serve to remind you of her noble ideals and character her spirit of devotion and sacrifice, her marvellous gifts and magnetic personality, her unstinted service to this country and her achievements in many spheres of activity, religious, social and political. She wrote in her autobiography that as a girl, she used to fret that she was born so late, when the grand things had been done and when there was no chance of preaching and suffering for a new religion. Opportunities have not failed her and she has made splendid use of them. She had an instinctive longing of the soul for sacrifice and the wailings of down-trodden or suffering humanity have stirred her heart through life. Her youthful ambition to serve humanity has been fulfilled in more than abundant measure. It is not possible to recount all her services to India. She has been identified with the Theosophical movement for about 40 years and, whatever differences of opinion there may be about Theosophical doctrines, no one can deny that it has played a great part in the renaissance of India and in the revival, strengthening and uplift of Hinduism. The Central Hindu College at Benares, which has evolved into the Hindu University was the monument of her educational labours. Her Home Rule movement quickened the national life and prepared the soil for the exuberant manifestation of nationalism which we are now witnessing.

India has been fortunate in the possession of two unique personalities in our generation. Though they have given their best to the service of

India, their fame is not confined to this country, but has spread throughout the world and they have impressed the minds and captured the imagination of all. In spite of many differences of views and methods, there are many points of resemblance in character between Dr. Besant and Mahatma Gandhi. Both of them have had the advantage of a combination of western knowledge and culture with that of the East, though perhaps in different proportions. Both of them have combined religion, mysticism and politics. Both of them are born fighters and rebels against restraint and oppression. Both of them are persons of undaunted moral courage and unfaltering resolve. One of them, a disciple of the anarchist Tolstoy and of Thoreau, has spread the cult of passive resistance. The other has a greater faith in constitutional methods of struggle for liberty, which is due to her own special traditions and up-bringing. The gifts of each are special and unique. Dr. Besant has matchless gifts of oratory and melodious utterance. She is heir to all the refinements and graces of western classical culture. The other, in his telling directness of speech and withering denunciations of a 'satanical Government' reminds one of the accounts of the Jewish prophets of old. One supreme achievement of Mrs. Besant is her demonstration of the possibilities for achievement, distinction and sacrifice latent in womanhood. She has been the crown and glory of womanhood and is a noble exemplar to her sisters. She has raised the status of women in India, and the emancipation of women in India is the indirect result of the example of her life and work and of her influence. There is a singular propriety in your choice of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi to perform the function of unveiling the portrait of Mrs. Besant. She was the first woman legislator in the whole of India and the record of her devotion to the cause of womanhood and of her social services is fresh and known to all. Let us pray that Dr. Besant may be spared to witness the fulfilment of her dreams and hopes for the future of India.

Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddi unveiled the portrait. She said it gave her a very great pleasure to unveil the portrait of one of the greatest woman of the 20th century. Dr. Besant was the pride of the women of India. She believed in the equality of rights and opportunities for both men and women. She believed that the human soul was limitless. The speaker described the various activities in which Dr. Besant took a leading part and said that Dr. Besant appealed to the spiritual side of men and women. She had demonstrated that a woman was capable of rising to the mental, moral and spiritual heights that a man could rise to. Her



Dr. ANNIE BESANT.
(Completed her 84th year on the 1st October 1931.

keynote of work was religion. Any training devoid of religion was, in her opinion, no use either to the individual or to the community. The speaker then referred to the starting of the Women's Indian Association at Adyar and how it improved the lot of women in the century. She said that Dr. Besant had appealed to the men and women of India and that appeal had not yet gone in vain. Women's power had been liberated and they would make any sacrifice which no man could make. The speaker wished that Dr. Besant would live to see her ambition fulfilled.

Mr. K. V. Sessa Aiyangar in accepting the portrait on behalf of the South Indian Association said there was a unique appropriateness in the portrait of Dr. Besant adorning the gallery of portraits of great Indians for all time. Though belonging by birth and descent to the races of the West Dr. Besant was an Indian of Indians in ideals and affections, in habits of life and ways of thought, and in her selfless and devoted service to the cause of India's advancement. Thinking of her the speaker was often reminded of the mighty Ganges, the sacred river of India which takes its traditional source at the feet of Vishnu and which with its waters irrigates and fertilises a whole stretch of country bringing enrichment and joy into the lives of countless millions of human beings. Dr. Besant's was such a life. The South Indian Association was proud of acquiring a portrait which is bound to be an inspiration and a guidance to many an aspiring soul in the years to come.

A RE-STATEMENT OF FAITH

BY Mr. V. V. SREENIVASA AIYANGAR, ADVOCATE

[Sometime Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Madras]

On the invitation of the Editor of this Journal I proceed to essay what he has been pleased to style a re-statement of my faith. I am not sure that it would be correct to call it a restatement, because I am not conscious of having ever before made any formal statement with regard to the matter. It may indeed be more accurate to call it a statement of my revised faith-revised in the course of study, thought and experience extending over half a century-revised in the light of modern Science and thought and in the view of the innumerable problems facing humanity like a phalanx of interrogation marks.

The poet has spoken of Faith as believing where we cannot prove." We may accept it as a working definition though its correctness may be

open to criticism from the point of view of the fundamentals of psychology. The relation and correlation between proof and faith is often forgotten or ignored. A proof is based on faith, and faith subsists only so long as it is not proven to be false. That is why it seems to me that the poet aptly and with true instinct referred to our inability to prove, thereby clearly intimating the true nature, significance and limitations of faith.

Faith therefore which is not in accord and harmony with proven facts, that is to say, actually proven and not merely supposed to be so, is not the kind of faith that the poet was speaking about or the faith with which we are concerned.

A statement or restatement of one's own faith is a difficult and delicate task. It may almost seem a piece of super-erogation, and if not called for as in this instance, almost a piece of impertinence. But in these days of doubt and dismay any little spark of light that there is to be derived even from the failures of others may not be without its use. Such feeling, apart from the mandate of the Editor, is my only excuse for venturing on the task.

The first and foremost note of the regret I have to give expression to, is the absolute divorce between life and faith at the present day. Centuries there were and time there was when the faith of man was the governing principle of his life. The steering of the wheel, so to say, of this motor of life, the sum total of the daily activities which we call life, was organically related to one's faith and determined and directed by such faith. But divorce of every kind is becoming in modern times increasingly fashionable. The difficulty of the co-ordination of life to faith is now solved not by the necessary readjustments but by sundering the connecting chord. There was a time when every step of man took him nearer and nearer the goal or supposed goal of his being and moving. But at the present day when the ideals of life are not those founded on the faith of man, what we observe everywhere is either floating helplessly down the current of time and circumstance or else madly and desperately struggling against it and very little of what may be called sailing with the help of oars and winds and by the direction of the rudder.

It has been said that few men become great who have not at some moment or other of their lives stood very near suicide. Equally truly can it be said that no one can make a claim to be a thinker who has not at some period of life passed through agnosticism, if not also atheism. Every man in the course of his life represents in some manner of measure the history

of the race. The 'obstinate questions' of which the poet has spoken are characteristic of every human mind though in most cases they are left unanswered and unheeded. To some natures however such questionings are only too real and persistent and serve to bring about revolutions in mental and spiritual life. Such men alone are men. The rest only partake in greater or less degree merely of the animal.

It seems to me therefore that it is even more imperative that such questions should be answered somehow or other falsely or even foolishly and even though only for the moment than that people should be content to go about the world even without realising that there are such questions and as though the questions were unheard or unheeded of.

In this view an honest agnostic or a thorough going atheist is to be preferred by far to a mere milk and water follower of any religion. It has been said of John Stuart Mill that he was religiously irreligious, a very significant expression calculated to shed much light on the present discussion.

The questions What? Whence? Whither? Why? have been asked from the beginning of time. Attempted to be answered, it has been, by every people in every age in one way or another. Attempted to be answered, it has been, by millions and millions of human beings that have lived on this earth and passed away. But just at the present day and in this country the spectacle that confronts us is that of the great indifference which has resulted from the conflict between the Western and the Eastern ideals during the last century.

Life has ceased to be founded on faith and faith has ceased to be the director of life. This is the most regrettable feature of modern Indian life.

My view therefore is that there should be greater co-ordination between faith and life. This is the first article of my faith.

EPIGRAMS FROM EMERSON

Nature turns all malfeasance to good.

* * *

No sane man at last distrusts himself.

* * *

We acquire the strength we have overcome.

* * *

The joy of the spirit indicates its strength.

C. S. S.

BACK TO FIRST PRINCIPLES.

RAMA DASA.

These fateful weeks will see the decision of momentous issues for India. The constitution of India is going into the melting pot. Along with it the exact nature of the relationship that should subsist between India and England, a relationship that has meant—though among other things—a stable Government for India for over a century. The loosening of that bond will signify a larger freedom for India to mould its destinies and a correspondingly larger incidence of experiments, risks and possible failures in her attempts to realize her aspirations for a better economic and cultural life.

It is not in the political field alone that a protest is being registered against established forms. As has been said of the period preceeding the reformation in Europe "In every phase of life there was a rebellion of the individual against the old religious social system and its obsolete institutions. The old method of teaching, the old theological philosophy, the old legendary history, the old magical natural science—these, one and all, with myriad other matters, were to be rudely bundled out of the way! There were to be no restrictions on freedom of investigation and freedom of thought which formed the goal towards which the new spirit of individualism was, albeit unconsciously, striving".

It is obvious that we are heading towards a practical revision of spiritual and secular values. In the period upon which India is now about to enter there is bound to arise a competition of ideals and methods among the exponents of rival schools of thought. It is not unnatural that the protagonists of the various religions of the land should ransack the religious literature of the past and fasten upon the first principles of righteous life as preached and practised by their founders and their immediate followers as being of special helpfulness in building up the social structure that we want for future India.

The Christians consider India and the Indian consciousness as specially pervious to the absorption of Christian principles—theological and ethical—and the Christian religion as far superior to what they look upon as the primitive and exiguous faith of a considerable part of the Hindu population. In this belief many Christian missionaries spend their life in the presentation of the life and message of their Master in a form that would appeal to the heart of India. Some of them do their work under conditions that cannot but compel our admiration. Though the ultimate

ideal that inspires them is that of winning India for Christ in a denominational sense, they are the unconscious channels of transfusion of Christian values into Indian life to a far greater extent than the statics of conversion will indicate.

Our Muslim brethren are also claiming that in the religion of Islam the world or at least the Indian world will find all that it needs and aspires to. In an interview given a few weeks ago to a press correspondent Sir Muhammad Iqbal, after stating that he wished to see Indians living in peace and that he was convinced that such a thing was possible even while every community retains its culture and individuality, is reported to have said (we beg to apologise for the omissions) "I want* to see Islam return to its pristine simplicity——Islam is the only outlook on life which has solved the colour question——Pan-Islamism is simply Pan-Humanism.....Islam is a socialistic religion.....It is a social code. It originally conceived the unity and spiritual resemblance among the members of the human race. Islam is the only positive system the world possess to-day provided the Muslims apply themselves to it and re-think the whole thing in the light of modern ideas.....The Ulemas (Muslim Divines) if they properly apply themselves to understanding the real meaning of the problems political and economic which confront Islam to-day their knowledge of the past would be of immense use in the future reconstruction of Islam."

The Hindus themselves believe that in a right understanding and application of the principles of Sanatana Dharma, India as a whole will find its lasting salvation. There is this difference between the claim of the Hindus and that of others. The Hindus believe in variety of religious experience and religious approach. They believe in graded social organisation, in the existence of differences in the development of human personalities. According to them there is need for recognising and tolerating such differences and for ordering social life in a manner that will foster the growth of all. God fulfils Himself in many ways, and it is not necessary to compel the whole world to follow one custom however excellent it may be for some.

There are only two motives inspiring all these aspirations—love of humanity and desire for righteousness. These aspirations are the expression of the anxiety to see the lives of all men and women regulated in accordance with the laws of God so that all may live full lives upon earth and be made more acceptable to God. Such life and realisation are the birth

* From the Swarajya.

right of every soul. Social conditions ought to be so ordered as to enable all or the largest number to achieve them. How to order those conditions? Back to religion. Back to the vision, of the great founders of religion who saw life steadily and saw it whole. Back to the exhortations of those who have thought and worked on these lines in the past. There we find the simple laws of social construction laid down by those whom we may well consider to be the Messengers of God. There we find the beautiful blend of the spiritual and the secular, and the subordination of secular to spiritual aims. There we get the statement of the laws of God in terms of human relationship in its then prevailing forms. All that we need do is to study their import with faithfulness and care, discover the lines of their applicability to modern conditions, and apply them with courage. No coercion need be resorted to in securing the application. A persistent appeal to public opinion is sufficient for the purpose. Modern public opinion will readily respond to the humanistic aspects of the ancient religions. By an adequate displacement of emphasis from the otherworlds to the humanistic teachings of these religion we can achieve both their increased recognition and their enforcement in social life through the agency of an organised and efficient public opinion.

(To be continued).

"THIS IS MY NATURE "

V. NARAYANA IYER, M.A. M.L.

In the eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna, re-assuming his more lovable form, with four arms, wearing the Crown and having the discus and the mace in His hands, says to Arjuna :

"Yea! thou has seen, Arjuna! because I loved thee well,
The secret countenance of Me, revealed by mystic spell,
Shining, and wonderful, and vast-majestic, manifold,
Which none save thou in all the years had favour to behold.
For not by Vedas cometh this, nor sacrifice, nor alms,
Nor works well-done, nor penance long, nor prayers, nor chanted
psalms,
That mortal eyes should bear to view the Immortal Soul unclad,
Prince of the Kurus! This was kept for thee alone! Be glad....."

This passage gives a clue to the Real Nature of the Supreme Godhead. Again, the Lord emphasises the truth thus :

“ Yet not by Vedas, nor from sacrifice,
Nor penance, nor gift-giving, nor with prayer
Shall any so behold, as thou hast seen !
Only by fullest service, perfect faith,
And uttermost surrender am I known
And seen, and entered into, Indian Prince !
Who doeth all for me ; who findeth Me
In all ; adoreth always ; loveth all,
Which I have made, and me, for Love’s sole end,
That man, Arjuna ! unto me doth wend ”.

The Ultimate Truth cannot be seen or known much less realised and experienced by studies or by austerities or by gifts or by sacrifices. भक्त्या त्वमन्यथा शक्यः "The only way is the path of unique devotion" says the Lord. Arjuna, who hears it, wonders why the Ultimate Truth could be seen, known and experienced only by immaculate devotion and not by any other means. The Lord clears Arjuna's doubt even before he expresses it by an interruption. He says.

अहं एवंविधोऽर्जुन

“Arjuna, I am so constituted,” meaning thereby that the nature of the Ultimate Truth is such that It can be realised only by one who is unfalteringly devoted to It. That this is the meaning of the passage is made obvious by a verse of Sri Satagopa in his *Tiruvaymoli*. He is “எளிவரும் இயல்பினன்” The Lord is easy of access to His servants who have devotion for Him. To others, strange to say, He is impossible of access. பத்துடை அடியவர்க்கு எளிபவன் ; பிறர்க்கு அறிவித்தகன் ” This difference between His devotees and others does not affect the impartial nature of the Ultimate Truth. God stands for Equality for all living things, as the Lord says:

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

The same passage also shows that in spite of this characteristic of Equality or rather because of it, a difference is essential between those who have the grace-provoking quality of devotion and those who are lacking in it but have many other noble qualities. A right understanding of the True Nature of God as expounded in the above passages of the Bhagavad

Gita and the Tiruvoy moli will serve immediately to set the pilgrim on the right path, no matter how bad or wicked his nature might have been.

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मां अनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः ; सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥

The quality that is required is unflickering devotion. That alone gives the human soul its proper orientation ; thereafter, he works for Him ; he looks upon Him as the Ultimate Truth. He becomes His devotee, unattached to worldly possessions ; and lastly he develops the quality of Love towards all living things and thereby reaches Him who is the Goal. For the crowning lesson of the eleventh chapter as well as of the entire " Gita " is the advice to Arjuna with which this chapter concludes :

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥

For, Devotion to God gives the proper orientation to Life in its progress to the Divine.

PHILOSOPHY OF VIDYA

BY SADHU T. L. VASWANI.

Vidya is a word used, again and again, in Hindu Scriptures. It is one of the few central words in the Vedanta Sutras. It is often translated as " Knowledge." Yet of Western " Rationalism " with its empirical emphasis I find little in the Vedanta. The empirical data are referred to in Hindu Books as maya ; and we read, again and again, that Vidya is not for him who will not rise above the plane of maya. The Heart of the Universe is not maya but something deeper. The Hindu attitude is not anti-intellectualistic. But neither is it " empirical."

Over and over again are we told that Vidya is not " mere knowledge." Mere " knowledge," philosophical or scientific, does not always help humanity. When applied in a selfish way, it does harm to civilisation. Several years ago, the English Positivist, Frederic Harrison, attributed the unrest of our civilisation to three facts, viz., (1) that our science is not inspired by religion, (2) that our religion is not based on science, and (3) that our political life is but poorly guided by either religion or science. Mere " knowledge " may explain some changes and modifications in the world of phenomena. It does not explain the Life or the Inner Side of

the Cosmic Movement. The War showed to what sordid purposes such " knowledge " has invented poison gas and high explosives, and machine-guns, and the paraphernalia of " progress."

Vidya is a spiritual activity. It is energy of the soul. It is not mere awareness or conceptual understanding of some phenomenal relations. It is knowledge charged with spiritual emotion. So we read that Vidya is coupled with " devotion." In one passage, Vidya is even called " devotional knowledge." May I not say that Vidya is knowledge not of mere Facts but of Ultimate Values? The ultimate structure of Reality is not revealed to conceptual understanding, but to consciousness in which knowledge mingles with moral, aesthetic and spiritual emotions. Understanding gives us analysis and classification, not ultimate values. Understanding has been evolved under pressure of maya upon the soul. Understanding is, in a sense, a sign of subjection to maya. When the soul is vital, the veil of maya is lifted and the ultimate is intuited.

What is the Ultimate? Not a pleasure. Sensations are not what a wise man seeks. " Freedom " is regarded by many today as the ultimate of life. Recent French thought bears upon " the Philosophy of Freedom." And young India can think of nothing higher than Freedom. There is a sense, indeed, in which Freedom is the highest, noblest thing we know. The Hindu books name it Mukti. But nation-cults in Europe have often degenerated into cults of " power." And the result is exhaustion of European civilisation. True Freedom does not seek to dominate others. True Freedom is self-realisation for the Service of Humanity.

Vidya is a spiritual activity—an activity, therefore, which knows the Atman, the Self. Such " knowledge " charged with spiritual emotion becomes worship ; and indeed, in one passage, Vidya is defined as " Worship of the Atman." And Atman is more than once called " Purusha," the Self. So in an Upanishad, the poet sings :—" I know the Purusha of sunlike lustre beyond the darkness. To know Him is to cross death : there is no other path to go." To know the Self is to worship Him ; and to worship Him is to be Immortal. This knowledge is thus different from what is secured by discursive, analytic intellect. A glimpse of this knowledge-state comes in moments of Love. Not Love as it is described in most of the " novels," but Love as it is sung in the great Sufi and Bhakti poems, and in the lives of mystics and saints. True Love knows not analytically but by union. As a Muslim mystic says : " There is no admission for separate personality within Thy Sacred Chamber." Such knowledge is, indeed, worship.

"Vidya is worship of the Atman." And the great truth is set forth in the Scriptures that we are to worship Him in life. The mysticism of Vedanta is not sundered from dharma, the obligations and appointments of life. All things, all creatures, we read, are a "body" of the Atman. "The Self," we read, "must be seen through hearing, thinking and reflecting." We are to worship the Self in the exercise of our natural function. Again and again the teaching is given that Vidya itself is not open to him who will neglect karma. And the highest form of karma is Sacrifice! The Vedantic Sages were not ascetic who stood aloof from life. They worshipped the Lord in life. Several were good householders. Some, indeed, influenced with their counsels the conduct of kings and shaped the laws of the land. They entered into the great realm of Silence; but they were also men of action. These sons of Silence were, also Servants of the People. And India fell into a state of distracted anarchy when she ceased to worship the Lord in life. Many of her sons put on the yellow robe giving up the simple duties of life. Many in the pride of ceremonial "religion," looked down upon millions of their countrymen as "untouchables." Sons of India ceased to be sons of Liberty, ceased to respond to the Call of Life: and India fell. Will India be great again? Then must we worship the Atman in life realising the truth that religion and service are inseparable. For to worship God in life is to fight injustice, is to combat wrong, is to oppose the autocrat who sins against the weak, is to stand boldly for great human values above caste and privilege and creed. Not till we strive to worship God in life, may India hope to be a Free Nation. If the West worshipped God in life, it would not suffer from the orgy of industrialism or that cult of domination which has resulted again in wars and violence. Europe's *avidya* has been the world's great tyrant.

There are conditions to be fulfilled by those who would have the vidya that lifts the veil. Three of them, according to my reading of the Vedanta sutras, deserve a special notice: (1) Discipline under a dynamic personality. There is no knowledge without discipline. A dynamic personality is named "Guru" in the books. Ancient India did not believe in impersonal teaching of "Knowledge." Vidya, like character, cannot be externally taught. It must be caught as a spark from a living Flame. It must pass into you as an influence from a Soul. Modern Universities in India prescribe many text-books. But in the absence of great teachers, most of the students alas! are little better than "dead souls." As water flows down from heights to a lower level, so does an

influence, a power, a shakti, flow down from a great Teacher to some of his pupils, filling them with something of his radiance, transforming them into new men for the service of humanity. Ideas become forces, shakti, through creative personalities in whom lives the Infinite Ideal. Such Teachers-Transformers are needed today.

(2) Heart-Purity:—The senses were meant to be windows through which to receive revelations of the Real. But with many the senses are become as a prison-house. With, many "knowledge" is a power to procure sense-pleasures. Today many of the Indian students seek bhoga, (pleasure). Today many are still unprepared to live a simple life. And how many today are true brahmacharis? One of the Upanishads says that the Vedanta is "not to be taught to him whose passions have not been subdued." "Knowledge" with many is not a power to subdue, but to forge fetters for living within the prison of passions. Science today is studied with eagerness; but how many of those who study science are disinterested in the pursuit of Truth and have in their hearts love for Humanity? "Knowledge" of which the motive is personal gain or ambition cannot help us; such "knowledge" is a separative not a unifying force. Science without good-will is a danger, not a gain to the life of man. There are "scientific" men who employ their knowledge and talents to help a cruel, aggressive Imperialism. Is it that men have come to know too early some of Nature's secrets? Science should really be an instrument of help and healing; science, as applied today, is often a servant of Mammon and Materialism. Mighty stores of energy lie in Nature. Men are discovering them more and more. But if we have not love in our hearts nor the discipline of humility, we can only misuse Nature's sources of power, and science will become, as it became in the war, a mighty weapon of destruction. The man of Vidya must have an unselfish heart so that he may use his knowledge for the service of Humanity. Dr. Vaillant is a French X-ray expert. He has undergone 13 operations for injuries caused by X-rays. He has lost his left arm, his right hand, his right wrist, and a part of his left shoulder, and is unable even to feed himself! But he has welcomed these operations in a sportsman's spirit. "An operation", he said, "is a sort of adventure I am now getting used to." And he asked that the papers should say nothing about him. "Silence," he said, "pleases me the best." Such men glorify science. And with the martyrs of science, knowledge is, indeed a "Sacrifice."

(3) Dhyana (Meditation):—This is another condition of knowledge. That knowledge involves an act of attention is easily recognized. That

there is no lifting of the veil without meditation is not often realised. It is said in the Scriptures that Vidya, even if acquired, does not stay with him who has not the power of meditation. Meditation is spiritual assimilation. In a sense, the Law of Knowing is Being. Establish kinship with Nature if you would know Her. The things which the common-sense world apprehends—tables, chairs, houses, streets, etc. are when carefully understood, abstractions. The continuous process of changing and the reality behind the veil of forms are intuited not through the “intellectual” method which is one of abstraction and logical analysis but in meditation. Much of what passes current as “knowledge” to-day is the result of shravana and manana; it has not developed in and through meditation. “The world is too much” with many of us. Much hurry has made us poor. One malady of modern life is its “fatigue.” We use our energy too fast. We feel fatigued. And fatigue is system-poisoning. Meditation is needed for the mind to recoup its health. Periods of silence are needed for renewal of the soul’s youth. Modern life needs the healing power of meditation.

Knowledge which grows into us in these three ways becomes a creative shakti. And with such knowledge comes Fearlessness. For to know is to recognise the One Great Force which is mightier than all opposition. “While small and vulgar people,” says a Scripture, “are always quarelling backbiting and abusing each other, great ones seem to have obtained a portion of the gift of dhyana (meditation). How many such men, men of knowledge, has India to-day? Yet only such men can do the dynamic work of national emancipation. Only such men—and women—may take us to a new dawn in our history, passing on to India’s waiting millions the Ancient Message:—You, you only, are your own obstacle. Arise in faith and love, and achieve your Freedom.

EPIGRAMS FROM EMERSON

Without war, no soldier; without enemies, no hero.

The sun were insipid if the universe were not opaque.

That we are here is proof that we ought to be here.

We are used as brute atoms, until we think: then we use all the rest.

C. S. S.

THE ENERGY OF THE HEART.

In the course of a talk in the Sanctuary of the Shakti Ashram, Vaswani said:—

Who are the immortals of history? Dhruva, Prahlad, Mirabai, are they not among the immortals? They drank the *amrita* of the Name! This *amrita* is not given *gratis*. There is a price for it. Self-surrender! Kings renounced their thrones to have this *amrita*. The immortals of history are the men and women who renounce themselves in the service of the Name. Blessed are they!

Speaking on the “Yoga of Samadrishti” at the Shakti Ashrama on Thursday morning, Vaswani said:—

He who practises the Yoga of Samadrishti lives in a vision of unity. He realises that Life is one. He sees the one in all creatures, all nations, all races. (2) Such a man serves the Cosmic purpose in whatever sphere he may work. It is not for him to renounce the world and retire to a forest. It is not necessary for him to have the yellow robe or any of the other marks of outer renunciation. He has what is better *viz.*, inner renunciation. He may be in the *grihastha* ashrama; he may be in this profession or that; the still dwells in the Eternal. To him the family is a temple: to him a profession or occupation is a sphere of the Spirit; to him nothing is secular; to him every sphere is a channel of God’s grace. Such a man has risen above form values to the values of the Spirit. (3) The Yoga of *Samadrishti* is realised in a great measure when the man feels within himself the pain of others. He says to himself. “I feel the pain in my brother’s body”. Such a man feels the passion of the Cross. He is at one with the world in its painful pilgrimage. He has blent himself with humanity—with all creatures travelling in pain. He hath entered into the flame of sacrifice.

Vaswani left Rajpur for Sind on Wednesday noon. In his parting message in the Shakti Ashrama Sanctuary on Wednesday morning he pointed out that there were two energies. (1) the energy that spent itself in pursuit of pleasure or honours or silver and gold: these were passing things; and (2) the hidden energy of the heart. It was the energy of character, the energy of love that must shape national life. Without it, the so-called practical was no better than the bestial, the brutal. What was truly practical was vital; and history’s vital Principle was character, was sacrifice.—Notes of addresses by Sadhu T. L. Vaswani.

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Registered No. 2196.

THE Bharata Dharma

Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

Joint Editors: { Mr. S. Raja Ram
Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar

VOL. IX]

DECEMBER, 1931

[No. 9



On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar :

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिष्या गुरुर्गुवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Ah! The wonder under the Banyan tree! There sits the Teacher, a youth; the disciples, elders. The teaching is silence, and the disciples' doubts are dispelled.

PUBLISHED ON THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH AT "MORYALAYA", ROYAPETTAH.
Yearly: India, Rs. 2; Foreign, 4s. Single No.: India, As. 3; Foreign, 4d.

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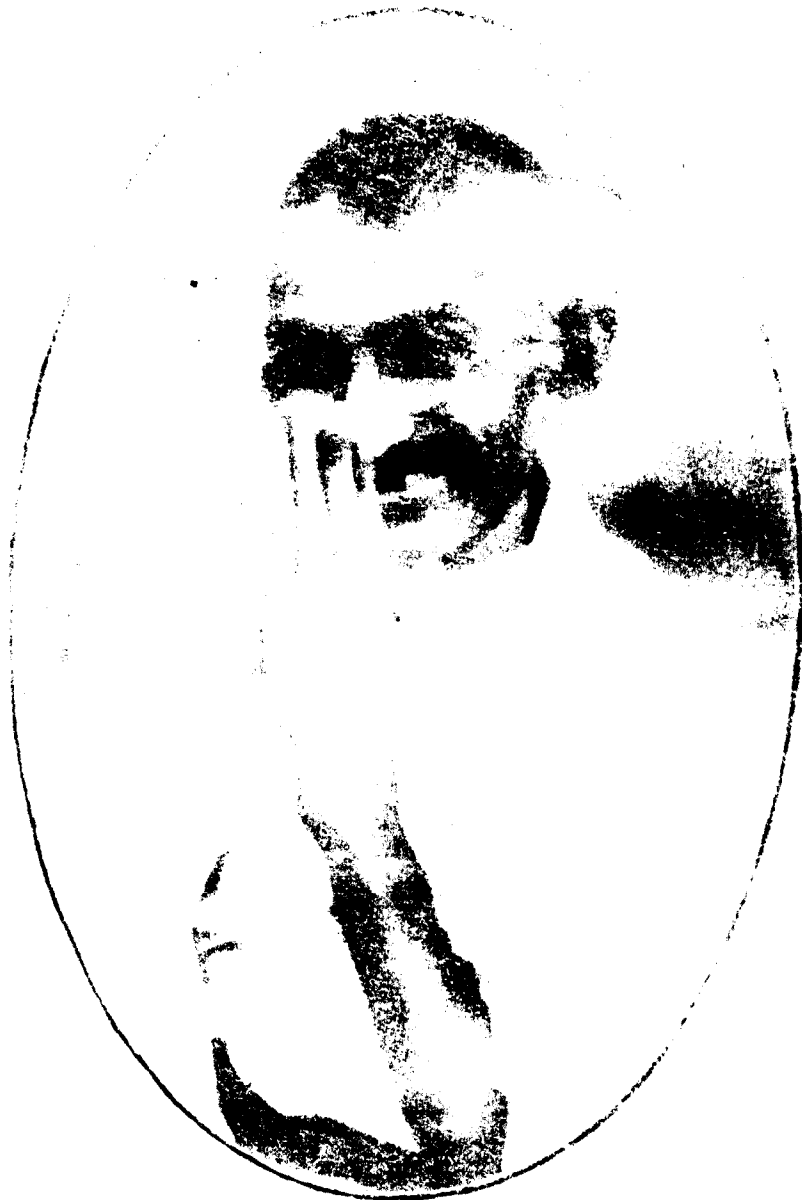
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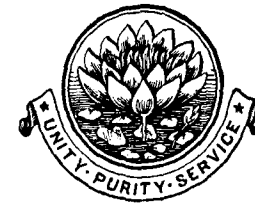
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All communications should be addressed to: THE MANAGING EDITOR, THE BHARATA DHARMA, "Moryalaya", Royapettah, Madras.

VOL. IX

DECEMBER, 1931

No. 9

ON THE PATHWAY OF LIFE.

WAYFARER.

To the aspirant on the path of spiritual progress the possibility of falling away from the path is a source of continuous anxiety. All along the path there are spread green and gliding slopes of sense attractions which temptingly invite him to descend. These are the fields of *Rajasic* pleasures the taste of which is as nectar but the result is as poison. The course of that descent takes him imperceptibly to lower and lower levels of life from which he has been ascending with painful slowness through ages of effort. It leads him inevitably to the *Asuric* group wherein during life upon life of uninstructed existence.

"Tread they that nether road

Till they find and worship Me sweet prince."

It is fearful to contemplate that the affinities of an out-grown personality can persist in a nascent condition for incredibly long periods and are capable of being roused into dangerous activity under conditions propitious to their growth. It is a career the very thought of which pulls one down the precipice where ultimately the discriminating reason itself may be lost which is the hall-mark of the human personality.

Fortunately for human evolution there are a number of obstacles even to the downward course. In the first place the capacity to fall in a single birth is itself limited. The flesh is weak and the moral resistance collapses many a time under pressure of temptation. But the spirit is willing. In the second place the freedom to sin and fall is hedged in with restrictions legal and social. Legal sanctions and social opinion constitute permanent warning signals on the path of descent. Pain and suffering constitute another set of arresting factors speaking in more emphatic and insistent tones. A number of minor miseries physical and mental proclaim the afflictions of the unredeemed life of the lower levels. The haunting memories of regenerate days are a disturbing element in the placid acceptance of a fallen state. The vision of higher altitudes which religion opens up to all fallen or redeemed and the exaltation of life demonstrated by the great religious ministers are an unceasing urge towards emancipation.

It is not therefore surprising that in the scheme of every religion there are to be found extensive provisions for diverting the thoughts of men from low obsessions into ennobling channels and that no pains are spared to extol the attractions of the life lived in piety and devotion. In all religions there are hymns which hold out promise of reward in the shape of all the good things in heaven and earth. Many of them promise incredibly large results for spiritual exercises involving little exertion. It is not unusual to find in Hindu hymns statements that the sins committed in a crore of births are destroyed by a mere thought. Benefits are promised to speakers, to listeners, to those who expound, and to those who cause them to be expounded.

The question may be asked how far are we justified in seeking earthly comfort through spiritual media and if it is a right thing to do to exaggerate for purpose of attraction the rewards of an act the spiritual significance of it ought to be its own commendation. Different answers are possible depending upon the manner in which we approach the question. It has to be recognised as a hard fact that most men do seek the good things of the earth and do invoke the agency of religion for that purpose. The history of the growth and expansion of religious movements all over the world contains many conspicuous instances of the acceptance of a religious faith by reason of miraculous cures effected by its expounders for a king or a nobleman. Neither the spiritual heads nor their disciples nor their beneficiaries have hesitated to use (if that term can be used) their spiritual powers for attaining earthly ends. Today all over the world from all Temples, Mosques, Churches, and all other places of worship one incessant prayer goes forth, a prayer which though rationalised in infinite

varieties of forms, embodies the one fundamental longing of the soul, that the Kingdom of God may come, and that life on earth may be as rich fruitful and happy as it would be when lived in the intimate presence of God.

The search for material objectives through spiritual means is a fact that cannot be hid from ourselves any more than it can be hidden from God. But is there need for doing so? Are not our spiritual affiliations the ultimate motive forces of life? Do they not furnish the ultimate dynamic and orientation to our thoughts and actions? Ordinarily when through a religious exercise we renew and strengthen these contacts it is our expectation that they will enable us to have a happy time in the next sphere of existence. Where is the harm in expecting, and in 'using' these contacts for giving us a good time on earth, provided—and this a primary proviso—that the good time in this life is one in which our life is lived in accordance with the Will of God as we hope it will be in the future life. It is not an illegitimate ambition to entertain desires that are righteous. The Lord himself has said that he is such desire.

'Yet am I right desire in all who yearn'

Again if we are not able to free ourselves from the desire for good things and do seek them in the pathways of life it is better that we bring those desires into the field of spiritual consciousness and give them their proper place. It is just possible that in such a process we may drop some that are positively evil, and that we may be able to see the relative importance or insignificance of some which are our obsessions at other times. If we do retain them it is an advantage that we seek them through prayer, and recognise that all good that comes to us has to come through God. There may then be a probability that we do need them and that we will seek them through right means and use them for right ends. There is also the probability that if the desires are not realised we are likely to reconcile ourselves more easily to their absence and take our failures in a sportsmanlike spirit.

At the same time it looks as if we are exploiting our access to God for things of low value, when after coming into the Divine presence we cannot think of better things than bread and all that it stands for. For does He not know that we have need of these things without our asking for them? Is not the labourer worthy of his bread? Shall not these things be added unto us if we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? Do not Artha and Kama naturally accrue to those who seek to do Dharma? Did not the ancient *Rishis* refuse to exchange their spiritual wealth for

earthly joys? Do not the Hindu scriptures always hold out the search for worldly wealth as an inferior pursuit. Did not Vasudeva repent that he was deluded into asking for the father-ship of the Divine child instead of for the Ultimate Bliss? Are not the *Asuras* and *Rakshasas* looked down upon because they abuse the great gifts which are the prize of *Thapas* and use them for the Over-Lordship of the Earth? This is one aspect of the conflicting considerations that arise in discussing the question.

It is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavata* that फलश्रुति (i.e., statement of result) is रोचनार्थ (for attraction). Perhaps that is an important aspect of it. The ancient leaders were anxious to divert the human mind into higher channels by all means. The idea that even earthly objects could be realised by spiritual effort gives such effort a sugar coating. It was not intended that these objects exhausted the fruitage of spiritual culture. They were looked upon rather as bye-products. It was expected that those who had once made the contact would keep it up. Neither delay nor disappointment would deter the man of faith from persisting in his spiritual efforts, to those who take their reward and go away from the Divine presence for them also a time will come when they will renew their contact. Once we get the recognition that He is the source of all good, we cannot but desire to preserve our contact with Him at all cost. That meant growth step by step in the understanding of His personality, in the knowledge of His purpose, and in the desire to fulfill His will. We get started on the path that inevitably leads us to His Sonship. The world changes gradually before our vision. We once wanted to exploit its contents for our selfish gains. We desired to draw the wealth of the whole world within our narrow circle, and stamp it with our lower "I". As we learn our limitations and the direction of the Divine Laws, there comes a stage when we desire to exploit ourselves even to exhaustion for fulfilling the Divine Plan through *Yagna*, *Dhana*, and *Thapas*, the threefold duties on which the Lord lays such stress in the *Gita*. It may be that there are further stages wherein we get the capacity to function as partners in the governance of the world with full knowledge and delegated powers and earn our right to be recognised as true Sons. For we shall become perfect some day even as our Father in Heaven is perfect.

The फलश्रुति is no more than a statement of the nature of the pathways of Dharma, and what it may mean to us in time measured not with the small measures of human standards but with the measures used in spiritual evolution. It must be that those who tread the Path of Dharma must have all necessary things added unto them. It must be

that they that work Righteousness shall be exalted. There is, therefore justification for diverting the thoughts and aspirations of men into invoking Divine intervention in their lives. From such invocation there may soon follow a firm affiliation to the Path of Dharma.

Yet the question must remain, how far are we justified in invoking spiritual forces for material purposes. Is earthly prosperity connected with righteousness? Or is it an evil? Under what conditions are we justified in seeking it? When should it be shunned? Is religion exhausted when it is made to cater to selfish needs of the individual even to the extent of taking him to his salvation? Is it right to invoke religion for personal gain when that gain has to be achieved by the misery of many. Is there a natural conflict between the laws of economic ethics and those of religion? If so which is to prevail and to what extent? We are brought face to face with the whole range of the problems of social evolution, the relative claims of the individual, the community and the state, and the best manner in which we can co-ordinate the conflicting aims and methods of social organisation.

Religion is merely the name for the path of the spiritual ascent of man. The great souls of the world have trodden the path in the past. Travelling along different routes, reaching different altitudes they have revealed to those below prospects which though differing in some features are one in their surpassing glory.

"Manifold tracks lead to yon sister-peaks
Around whose snows the gilded clouds are curled
By steep or gentle slopes the climber comes
Where breaks that other world."

The path and the progress along the path must necessarily vary with individuals and with groups. It must vary with the urge which religion provides and with the social environment in which one has to function in life.

"Strong limbs may dare the rugged road which storms
Soaring and perilous, the mountains breast;
The weak must climb from slower ledge to ledge,
With many a place of rest".

Through all the religions of the world there goes forth a perpetual call to the human race to enter the path.

" There spring the healing streams
Quenching all thirst ; there bloom the immortal flowers
Carpeting all the way with joy ; there throng
Swiftest and sweetest hours."

Through all the leading social systems of the world there runs only one purpose ; that of helping in the forward march, individuals and groups so that they may pass easily from stage to stage.

" To clearer heights and find
Easier ascents and lighter loads of sins,
And larger will to burst the bonds of sense."

A SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER OF LAKSHMANA*

BY

V. RAGHAVAN. B.A., (HONS).

यस्यैष दक्षिणे पार्श्वे शुद्धजाम्बूनदप्रभः ।
विशालवक्षस्ताम्राक्षः नीलकुञ्जितमूर्धजः ॥
एषोऽस्य लक्ष्मणो नाम भ्राता प्राणसमः प्रियः ।
नये युद्धे च कुशलः सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः ॥
अमर्षी दुर्जयो जेता विक्रान्तो बुद्धिमान् बली ।
रामस्य दक्षिणो बाहुः नित्यं प्राणो बहिश्चरः ॥
न ह्येष राघवस्यार्थं जीवितं परिरक्षति ।
एषैवाशंसते युद्धे निहन्तुं सर्वराक्षसान् ॥

—Suka informing Ravana ; Y. K. S. 28 ; Sls. 23—26.

भ्राता चास्य महातेजा गुणतस्तुल्यविक्रमः ।
अनुरक्तश्च भक्तश्च लक्ष्मणो नाम वीर्यवान् ॥

—Surpanakha informing Ravana ; Ar. K. S. 34. Sl. 12.

These two pictures of Lakshmana given by Suka and Surpanakha, even on their first acquaintance with him, convey to us a complete idea of the various phases of the character of Lakshmana, the dear brother of Rama, his servant, his careful watch, his consoling friend, his sage counsel and invincible aid in battles.

* Awarded first prize on the Valmiki Day, Celebrated by the Sanskrit Academy Mylapore, Madras.

Of golden complexion, as great as Rama in qualities, Lakshmana, of all the sons, resembled most his father and his face was a consolation to Rama whenever the latter thought of the great departed Dasaratha. Says Rama himself to Lakshmana, fondly embracing him,

भावज्ञेन कृतज्ञेन धर्मज्ञेन च लक्ष्मण ।
त्वया पुत्रेण धर्मात्मा न संवृत्तः पिता मम ॥

Ar. K. S. 15. Sl. 18.

Praising Lakshmana to Hanuman, Sita says—

यं दृष्ट्वा राघवो नैव वृद्धमार्यमनुस्मरेत् । S. K. 38. 63.

When Rama kills Tataka, saves Visvamitra's yagna, breaks Siva's bow and quells his Brahmin name-sake, we hear little of Lakshmana. He is always by the side of Rama, but is something like an apprentice in the Balakanda. From the dissolution of the coronation of Rama to the killing of Ravana, we see him side by side with Rama, his character coming out in bold relief, every now and then, in many a capacity. The various aspects of Lakshmana's character get explained by the one and only main thread in him. There is one central and vital thing which is the motif of all his manifold doings. Having understood that, we have understood Lakshmana, in whatever he may say or do, in his long service of Rama through thick and thin. It is his great love for Rama, which takes many a shape—of service, of paternal care, of respect, of faith, of guidance and advice. Angrily pleading for over-riding the King's boon to Kaikeyi, he says to Kausalya—

अनुरक्तोऽस्मि भावेन भ्रातरं देवि तत्त्वतः ।
सत्येन धनुषा चैव दत्तेनेष्टेन ते शपे ॥
दीप्तमग्निमरण्यं वा यदि रामः प्रवेक्ष्यति ।
प्रविष्टं तत्र मां देवि त्वं पूर्वमवधारय ॥ Ay. K. 21. 17 & 18.

When Rama tries to prevent Lakshmana from following him to the forest, it was a futile plea to one who says that he has already been permitted and who is already starting ahead.

स्थितं प्राग्गामिनं वीरं याचमानं कृताञ्जलिम् । Ay. K. 31.

Lakshmana's mother readily blesses him to follow Rama, advising him—

रामं दशरथं विद्धि मां विद्धि जनकात्मजां ।
अयोध्यामटवीं विद्धि गच्छ तात यथासुखम् ॥

though Saumitri does not require to be advised in this matter. And without the slightest suggestion even of his ever thinking of even taking leave of his own wife, Urmila, he starts. In the forest, when he and Rama are being dragged by Kabandha, Lakshmana says to Rama—

पश्य मां वीर विवशं राक्षसस्य वंशगतम् ।
मयैकेन विनिर्मुक्तः परिमुञ्चस्व राघव ।
मां हि भूतबलिं दत्त्वा पलायस्व यथासुखम् ।
अधिगन्तासि वैदेहीं अचिरेणेति मे मतिः ॥ Ar. K. 69. 36 & 37.

In the forest he was a 'pundit' and arranged things so well that the loving couple, Rama and Sita felt nothing to be done or improved. For the beautiful hut he erected at Panchavati, Rama presented him an embrace and praised him for his knowing Rama's इङ्गित, for his रासिक्य. Rama told him previously, सर्वतश्चार्यतां दृष्टिः कानने निपुणो ह्यसि । Of his service to Rama, Kausalya says to Sumitra (in Citrakuta, 103. 6.)—

जघन्यमपि ते पुत्रः कृतवान् न तु गर्हितः ।
भ्रातुर्यदर्थसहितं सर्वं तद्विहितं गुणैः ॥

Guha, when asked by Bharata to relate to him how the brothers went, praises, in ardent language, with tears trembling in his eyes, the devotion, the service and the care, Saumitri had for Rama. Guha asked Lakshmana to sleep, promising him that there were himself and his army to protect them all through the night. Lakshmana, in his sorrow at the pass to which even such a great man as Rama had come, replied—

कथं दाशरथौ भूमौ शयाने सह सीतया ।
शक्या निद्रा मया लब्धुं जीवितं वा सुखानि वा ॥ Ay. K. 51.

His love often had to take the aspect of protection of Rama. Even as early as their boyhood we hear—

यदा हि हयमारूढो मृगयां याति राघवः ।
तदैवं पृष्ठतोऽभ्येति (सौमित्रिः) सधनुः परिपालयन् ॥ B. K. 18. 28.

Manthara says to Kaikeyi, 'गोप्ता हि रामं सौमित्रिः' Sumantra tells the dying Dasaratha 'अग्रतो लक्ष्मणो यातः पालयन् रघुनन्दनम् ।' And Rama himself tells Lakshmana, on crossing the Ganges, 'भव संरक्षणार्थाय सजने

विजनेऽपि वा ।' Sumitra consoles Kausalya that she need not have fear of any mishap to Rama.

धनुर्ग्रहवरो यस्य बाणखड्गः खभृत्स्वयम् ।
लक्ष्मणो व्रजति ह्यग्रे तस्य किन्नाम दुर्लभम् ॥ Ay. K. 45. 20.

Through winter nights, darker and longer by their sorrow at the loss of Sita, we find the standing figure of Lakshmana, his eyes red with night watch, protecting Rama, as a brother, as a friend, as a father. Rama remembers these days and weeps over the body of Lakshmana that lies struck by Ravana's Sakti :—

शोकार्तस्य प्रमत्तस्य पर्वतेषु वनेषु च ।
विषण्णस्य महाबाहो समाश्वसयिता च कः ॥ Y. K. 102. 19.

He now weeps with Rama ; now controlling himself, props up the drooping frame of Rama, now gets angry that such a great soul should suffer, and now gives Rama an effective sermon on courage and action. What more proof of his care of Rama do we want than these words of Sita herself,

आनुकूल्येन धर्मात्मा त्यक्त्वा सुखमनुत्तमम् ।
अनुगच्छति काकुत्स्थं भ्रातरं पालयन्वने ॥ S. K. 38. 59.

And amply did Rama return this love.—

बाल्यात्प्रभृति सुस्निग्धो लक्ष्मणो लक्ष्मिवर्धनः ।
रामस्य लोकरामस्य भ्रातुर्ज्येष्ठस्य नित्यशः ॥
सर्वप्रियकरस्तस्य रामस्यापि शरीरतः ।
लक्ष्मणो लक्ष्मिसंपन्नो बहिःप्राण इवापरः ॥
न च तेन विना निद्रां लभते पुरुषोत्तमः ।
मृष्टमन्नमुपानीतं अश्नाति न हि तं विना ॥ B. K.

As the Kingdom is about to be given to Rama, he says to Lakshmana,

लक्ष्मण इमां मया सार्धं प्रशाधि त्वं वसुन्धराम् ॥
द्वितीयं मेऽन्तरात्मानं त्वामियं श्रीरुपस्थिता ॥

* * * * *

जीवितं च हि राज्यं च त्वदर्थमभिकामये ॥ Ay. K. 4. 42-44.

And in the end also Rama first offers the Yauvarajya only to Lakshmana. What else shall we expect of Saumitri than his refusal to accept it, when

there is Bharata to inherit it? Rama calls Lakshmana, now and then, so lovingly as, आर्य and प्रभो. Such a brother is twice thrown down in the battle. Lakshmana lies hit by Ravana's 'Sakti'. Rama weeps and determines to die. He thanks the monkeys and asks them to return. He says—

अयं स समरश्लाघी भ्राता मे शुभलक्षणः ।
यदि पञ्चत्वमापन्नः प्राणैः किं मे सुखेन च ॥

* * * *

न हि युद्धेन मे कार्यं नैव प्राणैर्न सीतया ॥

* * * *

देशे देशे कलत्राणि देशे देशे च बान्धवाः ।

तन्तु देशं न पश्यामि यत्र भ्राता सहोदरः ॥

किं मया दुष्कृतं कर्म कृतमन्यत्र जन्मनि ।

येन मे धार्मिको भ्राता निहतश्चाग्रतो मम ॥ Y. K. 102. 1-20

And as Lakshmana recovers, Rama embraces him and says—

न हि मे जीवितेनार्थः सीतया चापि लक्ष्मण ।

को हि मे विजयेनार्थः त्वयि पञ्चत्वमागते ॥

Previously, when Indrajit's Nagapasa has thrown Lakshmana down, Rama cries—

यथैव मां वने यान्तं अनुयातो महाद्युतिः ।

अहमप्यनुयास्यामि तथैवैनं यमक्षयम् ॥ Y. K. 49. 16.

There springs a conception in the minds of Rama's and thus Lakshmana's, enemies that Lakshmana is quick to anger. (अमर्षी) No doubt he has less of Rama's स्थैर्य as Valmiki remarks in two places. No doubt he is forceful and passionate in his criticism of others. All later poets and dramatists have preserved this aspect of Lakshmana in tact. Except once (and that is when Kabandha dragged him more easily than Rama) Lakshmana has never shown दैन्य in his spirits. He never shows the weakness that Rama is afflicted with often after the loss of Sita. Lakshmana is a typical Kshatriya, the image of उत्साह and पुरुषकार, of energy and manly action. In his deep sorrow at the loss of Sita, in his कामकार्पण्य, Rama will now and then sing anthems on दैव—fate. Even in other circumstances, such as the break up of his coronation, Rama is addicted to giving out hymns on fate. But Lakshmana will meet him with a call to cast

off all weakness and take to energetic action, *purushakara*. To gain his point, he will grow hot and will say angry words of Rama's enemies, as well as, sometimes, of Rama himself. He aptly describes his own function to Rama thus,—

अहं तु खलु ते वीर्यं प्रसुप्तं प्रतिबोधये ।

दीप्तैराहुतिभिः काले भस्मच्छन्नमिवानलम् ॥ K. K. 27-38.

(to be continued.)

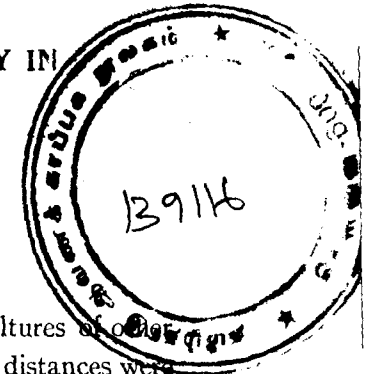
THE PERMANENT AND THE TEMPORARY IN DHARMA SHASTRAS.

By

MR. A. RANGASWAMI AIYER.

(Continued from Page 150).

Indian culture was not entirely isolated from the cultures of other civilized nations of the ancient world although intervening distances were great, and communications were slow and attended with danger. In 1909 a clay tablet was discovered in the regions bordering on the Euphratic Valley containing the terms of a treaty made in the 15th century B.C. by a Mitanian king in which the Vedic gods Mitra—Varuna, Indra, and the Nāsatyas (the twin Asvins) are invoked, shewing the emigration from India to those regions. There is a hymn in the *Rig Veda* addressed to Indra "O Indra, bring us jewels, cattle, horses, and Inanas of Gold" (*Rig Veda* VIII 78, 2). In ancient Babylonia and Assyria, this coin was known as *Mina* which afterwards passed into the Greek monetary system as *Mana*, and still later Latinised into *mina*. The old Babylonian name for Muslin was *Sindhu* derived from the country from which it came. The recent discoveries made by the Indian archaeological Department at Mahenjo Daro and Harrapa in the Valley of the Indus carries the ancient civilization of that part of India to 30th century B.C. contemporaneous with the Lumerian civilization of the Euphratic Valley and having communications with it. The modern river Helmund flowing west-ward into an inland lake in western Afghanistan is the old Eranian "Haragaete." This Avestan name is the equivalent of the Sanskrit "Sarasvati" and this river may perhaps be one of the three *Sarasvates* mentioned in the *Atharva Veda*, the other two being located in the Sapta-Sindhu of the *Rig Veda*.



Thus there were opportunities for the commerce of ideas between India and the countries of the west even as far as Egypt and Greece, and later Rome. The second and thirteenth edicts of king Asoka speak of the messengers of Dharma sent to preach the gospel of the Buddha to Anteyoka (Antiochus of Syria) Turamâya (Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt) Antikini (Antijonus Gonatus of Macedonia) Maka (Magas of Cyrene) and Alikasudara (Alexander of Epirus). The vulgar idea that woman was inferior to man was a common possession in all these ancient countries which had opportunities of exchanging their mental prejudices as well as their physical goods. Therefore it is not surprising that from the earliest *vedic* times, through the period of the *Sutras*, down to the age of the *Smrities*, there have been two different conceptions of the place, status, and relations of woman in society existing side by side, mutually contending, or interacting with each other, the one of equality though not of identity based on fundamental principles, *Sanatana* or eternal, valid in the past the present and the future, and the other of inferiority, belonging to early civilizations, and therefore temporary, and not a distinctive characteristic of Hindu culture.

We can illustrate the latter conception by taking an account of the womanhood in Greece in the Golden age of Athens--the age of Pericles. "For girls, there was provided no education at all save such as their mothers might claim to give them, and their mothers had learned nothing but sewing, weaving, and cooking. But in the city of the Maiden Goddess, neither wife, nor maid had any recognised existence. No respectable woman was ever seen in the streets except at a few festivals; her functions were solely to keep the house, and breed males and their subsidiary wives' and her glory, as Pericles defined it in his great funeral oration, was that she should not be talked about for good or evil among men * * * Emotionally in that age woman had very little existence. Apart from the prostitute class their lives were simply those of housekeepers and breeders of children. No girl at Athens had any education at all and could not possibly be a companion to a man except for one purpose. She was usually married at an early age, she had probably never seen her husband before she met him at her marriage feast, and she became henceforth a prisoner in his house, intermittently pregnant, with no occupation except to sew and paint her face; if she wanted exercise the most intelligent and enlightened husband could only suggest that she should fold up and arrange the clothes in her linen cupboards. Her respectability was measured by the rareness with which she was spoken of either in praise or blame * * * Socially boys after the age of 6 or 7 and girls never

mixed at all, neither at games, nor meals * * * Women were invisible * * * The social life then of Athens did not concern women and girls at all unless they were of the class to which Aspasia originally belonged or until they became wives and henceforth ceased to exist for any one but their husbands, and even they could never owing to their total lack of education be the intellectual companions of this quickwitted race" (*The Life of Alcibiades* by E. F. Benson pp. 24, 60, 61 & 62).

I have quoted the above extracts at some length to shew that the status of inferiority which some of our orthodox friends would urge is conferred on woman by Hindu religion has no connection with religion at all but was a characteristic of the civilizations of those early ages, and that the distinctive contribution of Hindu culture to the status of womanhood is a noble one.

Coming down to Manu, as the typical *Smriti* we find the same parallel sentiments as regards the position and status of woman. The one the permanent, the stable and therefore *Sanatana* which can inspire the civilization of the future as well as the past and the other the characteristic of an age that is fast passing away.

"Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law who desire (their own) welfare.

"Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards.

"Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers.

"The houses on which female relations, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse, perish completely, as if destroyed by Magic"

(*The Laws of Manu*, S.B.C. III 53 to 58)

For illustrating the other parallel view no texts can depict it in darker colours than the following:—

"It is the nature of women to seduce men in this (world); for that reason the wise are never unguarded in (the company of) females.

"For women are able to lead astray in (this) world not only a fool, but even a learned man, and (to make) him a slave of desire and anger."

"One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are powerful and master even a learned man."

(*Ibid* II 219)

"Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world)."

"Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures laid in them at the creation, to be such, (every) man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them."

"'When creating them' Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct."

".....Women (who are) destitute of strength and destitute of (the knowledge of) *Vedic* texts, (are as impure as) falsehood (itself), that is a fixed rule." (*Ibid* IX 15 to 18)

Both these sets of opinions represent different view points and can hardly be reconciled with each other. Instead of making futile efforts to consider all of them as of equal authority and of equal validity, it will be more rational if we dissociate the permanent and the stable from the transient and the changing. Since Hindu culture has, for its underlying basis, cardinal truths which suffice for all time, though superimposed and altered beyond recognition by half truths, temporary expedients or accretions gathered according to the needs and prejudices of the time, it has been able to survive the choking effects of these changing environments, and retain a capacity to renew its youth from time to time. When a new Era is opening out before us, it is essential that we should distinguish between what is of permanent value and what is only of temporary interest in the *Hindu Dharma Sastras*. We can approach questions relating to caste, the *Ashramas*, the problem of untouchability and the like, and examine them from the stand point of the basic truths of Hindu Religion, and the stable elements of Hindu culture. We will then find that though outer forms must radically change to suit the inexorable demands of modern times Hindu culture would nevertheless possess a distinctness and a continuity, and from its vast experience gathered during ages would contribute elements of value and stability to human institutions of marriage, family, social relations, government, and humanitarianism.

SANRARA AS A BHAKTA

S. K. Y.

(iii)

We noted in our first article how the great Acharya who is generally known as a शुष्कवेदान्तिन or dry intellectualist was an ardent devotee and exalted the path of devotion and showed how easy it was to follow. In the second we saw how he was laying great stress upon the pivotal point of devotion, making our minds concentrate upon the Lotus Feet of the Lord. There are many other interesting points in the devotee's approach to the Lord touched upon by the Acharya in the century of verse under review. We shall deal with some of them only in this and bring the study to a close.

First he dedicates his whole self to the worship of the Lord. "Let my mind dwell for ever at Thy feet, my speech be ever in Thy praise, my hands be ever engaged in placing flowers on Thy feet. Let my ears ever hear about Thy stories; my intellect be ever engaged in contemplating Thee and my eyes ever beholding Thy form" (verse 7) and the same idea is repeated in other places as in verse 90.

There is the well-known story about Vishnu and Bramha attempting to see the feet and head of Siva and not succeeding therein and that is pressed into poetic service by Sankara. "Supposing I worship you and you become pleased with me and confer upon me great boons such as becoming Bramha or Vishnu. I have thereafter to become a bird or a beast and begin my quest of you and suffer untold agonies; how can I bear that?"¹ In another verse he says, "In virtue of Thy grace or of my own merits Thou manifestest Thyself to me. How can I see Thy lotus feet as crowds of angels prostrating at Thy feet hide them by their crowns studded with gems?"²

Sometimes the Acharya is in a playful mood and exclaims "Your food is poison; ornaments, serpents; dress, elephant's hide; vehicle, a big bull, What can You give me? What have You got? Please give me only devotion to Your lotus feet."³ Referring to Arjuna's fight with Siva mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (and made later on, the subject of Kiratarjuna) and similar incidents Sankara adds, "My Lord! You would not become pleased with my prostrations, my praising You and my worshipping You and contemplating You. Shall I become dearer to You if I begin to handle the bow, the club or stones?"⁴

1. Siv. 23; See also verse 86.

2. Siv 17,

3. Verse 87.

4. Verse 89,

There is another mood in which the poet insists upon his being saved "In this ever-returning cycle of births and deaths, far from ever worshipping You I wander blind without any hope. It becomes You, my Lord! to save me through Your grace. You cannot get a better person to be saved; nor I better Saviour in all the three worlds"¹ again, "You are the Lord of the poor and their best friend. I am the most prominent amongst them and this is our relationship. All my sins have to be pardoned by You and this causeway of relationship has to be constructed slowly by Your protecting me."²

'You create the worlds in sport and all the people are for Your sport. Therefore whatever I do must be to Your pleasure. Certainly my deeds must go to please You and hence it is Your bounden duty to protect me.'³

There are some moods of the author which may not appeal to modern minds. One is exalting his favourite Deity at the expense of others. This is a common characteristic of all devotees in this country. Vaishnavites look upon Vishnu as the Supreme Lord and other manifestations as being relatively inferior. So do the Saktas. Sankara seems to be a Saiva at times establishing the पारम्य or supremacy of Siva. "Thousands of gods there are in the world capable of giving to their devotees short-lived blessings. I do not care for them even in my dream. Everyone reaps the fruits of his action. I long to get the worship of Your feet which even Vishnu, Bramha and others who are ever by Your side, do not get."⁴ In another place he adds pressing into service some of his famous Vedantic similes. "as people mistake mother of pearls for silver, glass pieces for gems, water mixed with corn flour for milk and mirage for water, so they seek gods other than You as Saviours without worshipping You, O Great Lord!"⁵ In verse 83 the same idea is repeated.

Another aspect that may not commend itself to us is seeking salvation from the individual point of view. There is very little of group-consciousness, the longing for social service and the desire to see the meanest of the mean to be saved before he would ask for his salvation; an attitude typified by the famous episode in the *Mahabharata* where Yudhishrta refused to enter Heaven unless the stray dog that accompanied him was also admitted; an attitude to be found in many a Bhakta of later schools who say 'Lord! let me be born again and again to be Your instrument

1. Verse 13.

2. Verse 14.

3. Verse 66.

4. Verse 4.

5. Verse 8.

to bring salvation within the reach of the lowliest of the lowly'; an attitude which is generally associated with Buddhism.

Let us remember the words of the poet.

एकोहि दोषो गुणसन्निपाते
निमज्जतीन्द्रोः किरणेष्विवाङ्कः

One defect gets lost in the group of virtues as the spots of the moon get lost in its effulgence.

Let us bring this imperfect study to a close by taking up verses where we find the lyrical outburst at its best. 'When shall I see thee O! my Lord!' asks the poet and expresses his conception of his God in terms of phrasology most familiar to him¹

एको वारिजबान्धवः क्षितिनभोव्याप्तं तमामण्डलम्
भित्त्वा लोचनगोचरोपि भवति त्वं कोटिसूर्यप्रभः
वेद्यः किं न भवस्यहो घनतरं कीदृग्भवेन्मत्तमः
तत्सर्वं व्यपनीय मे पशुपते साक्षात्प्रसन्नोभव.

One sun is able to dispel all the darkness between the earth and the sky and to make himself visible to us all. Your effulgence exceeds that of crores of suns. How is it, then, You do not become manifest to me? Is the darkness in me so thick? Dispel all that, my Lord! and present Yourself before me (verse 58)

दुराशाभूयिष्ठे दुरधिपगृहद्वारघटिते
दुरन्ते संसारे दुरितनिलये दुःखजनके
मदायासं किन्नव्यपनयसि? कस्योपकृतये?
वदेयं प्रीतिश्चेत्तव शिव कुतार्थाः खलु वयम्.

Why do You not put an end to my troubles in this cycle of birth and death which is full of evil desires, wherein we have to hang upon wicked masters, which is full of sin and producing only misery? For whose benefit is this torture? If You derive any pleasure therefrom, I have no complaint at all and would feel perfectly satisfied.² Lastly my own favourite verse out of this century.

त्वपादांबुजमर्चयामि परमं त्वां चिन्तयाम्यन्वहम्
त्वामीशं शरणं वृजामि वक्षसा त्वामेव याचे विभो.
वीक्षां मे दिश चाक्षुषीं सकरुणां दिव्यैः विरं प्रार्थिताम्
शंभो! लोकगुरो! मदीयमनसः सौख्योपदेशं कुरु.

1. Verses 24, 25 & 26.

2. Verse 19.

I shall ever worship Your Lotus feet. I shall be ever contemplating You, seek refuge in You the Lord, and shall ever ask for You only. Cast upon me that glance full of mercy which gods long for and O! Sambhu! World Teacher! teach me that which would win me peace of mind.

(Concluded)

BACK TO FIRST PRINCIPLES.

BY

RAMA DASA

III

THE RISE OF COMMUNALISM.

The first fruits of the glorification of the past have been an extraordinary revival of communal consciousness. Not a month passes but that some community or other meets in conference and passes resolutions emphasising the distinctiveness of its communal life and the necessity for furthering and consolidating communal interests. In these conferences references are made to the traditional Divine origin of the community, to its ancient greatness, and to its present decadence. Comparisons are made with other communities believed to be more organised and aggrandising. The need for communal effort is pointed out and everyone is called upon to assist in the reinstatement of the community in its pristine glory. These conferences understand the past in terms of communal growth, interpret the present by its reaction upon communal interests and think of the future along the lines of communal betterment.

It is a strange phenomenon. The recrudescence of group consciousness has spread through the country like an epidemic. In major groups and minor groups a veritable dragons's teeth of communal organisations have sprouted up all over the country in less than a generation. With roots extending into a dim, obscure and mythic past, these organisations are being reared to function on the offensive and defensive as against other communities in the country. Their name is Legion. Their basis is religion, language, locality, profession etc. anything that brings people together on the pretext of a common temporary past. In these conferences not infrequently differences are exaggerated; jealousies and fears are exploited; appeals are made to the baser emotions; and old animosities are rehearsed with implied suggestions for aggressive class warfare against communities supposed to be offending. Men are not wanting whose moral strength is not robust enough to withstand the temptation to exploit the situation for personal ends.

It may be difficult to deny to these gatherings an element of usefulness. They may be justified as the expression of the desire of stationary communities to shake off apathy and come into line with the times. They may be also looked upon as the initiation of collective effort for betterment along lines of least resistance. A communal organisation is ordinarily a grouping of persons on inter-marrying, inter-dining, inter-worshipping or inter-working basis on hereditary lines. The sympathies that have been evolved through centuries of association have produced a cohesion that is of advantage in conducting joint enterprise. The communal organisation calls forth considerable sacrifice from its promoters. It helps to pool the enthusiasm for voluntary betterment. In the sense in which the prosperity of the country is the sum total of the prosperity of its groups, the growth and activity of group organisations may even be said to be an aid to the growth of national life. To the extent to which these groups have exclusively developed qualities of cultural or economic value the group activity may be rationalised as an attempt to preserve the vital parts of social activity and to enrich the public life. To the extent to which other groups with better organisation, cleverer direction, and accidental advantages, seek to monopolise power and exploit weaker groups, these organisations may be deemed to be necessary in the present conditions of social development.

ASCETICISM, EAST AND WEST

Again and again the question is asked whether we believe in asceticism. We reply that we do not. It is based on a fallacy, namely that the material is base and is to be discarded as an evil thing.

The material is neither good nor evil. All depends on what is behind the material. If there is a spiritual purpose running through the material then the material is spiritual for it is dedicated to spiritual ends. But if there is a selfish, base purpose behind the material then it is evil. But it cannot be said too often that the material is not of itself an evil. It is the raw material out of which the spiritual can be developed.

It is not in India alone that religion has run into a barren asceticism, for there was a period that it was rampant in the West. St. Jerome said, "It is the duty of the monk not to teach, but to weep." For six months it is said, St. Macarius of Alexandria slept in a marsh, and exposed his body naked to the stings of venomous flies. He was accustomed to carry about with him eighty pounds of iron. His disciple, St. Eusebius, carried one hundred and fifty pounds of iron and lived for three years in a dried up well.

St. Besrion spent forty days and forty nights in the midst of thorn bushes, and for forty years never laid down when he slept. This last penance was also practised for fifteen years by St. Pachomius.

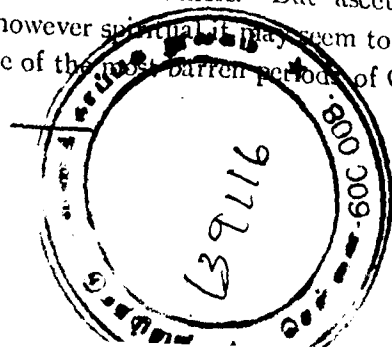
Of another famous saint, named John, it is asserted that for three whole years he stood in prayer, leaning upon a rock; that during that whole time he never sat or lay down, and that his only nourishment was the Sacrament which was brought to him on Sundays. In Mesopotamia and part of Syria, there existed a sect known by the name of "Grasers" who never lived under a roof, who ate neither flesh nor bread, but who spent their whole time for ever on the mountain side, and ate grass like cattle.

St. Athanasius relates with enthusiasm how St. Antony had never to extreme old age been guilty of washing his feet. St. Abraham who lived for fifty years after his conversion, rigidly refused from that day to wash either his face or his feet.

St. Simeon Stylites sat night and day for many years on a high pillar. He rapidly prostrated himself in prayer. A spectator attempted to number these rapid motions, but desisted from weariness when he had counted 1,244. For a whole year St. Simeon stood on one leg, the other being covered with hideous ulcers, while his biographer was commissioned to stand by his side, to pick up the worms that fell from his body, to replace them in the sores, the saint saying to the worm, "Eat what God has given you."

These were not isolated cases. An Egyptian city named Oxyrychus devoted itself almost exclusively to the ascetic life and included 20,000 virgins and 10,000 monks. At the close of the fourth century the monastic population in a great part of Egypt was nearly equal to the population of the cities. The extremities to which they went were appalling. Many of the hermits made it a rule never to look on the face of a woman, and the number of years they had escaped this contamination was commonly stated as a conspicuous proof of their excellence. St. John of Lycopolis had not seen a woman for forty years. One of the monks who was a great linguist made it his penance to remain perfectly silent for thirty years.

All of this was beside the point and hence barren. The centre of the New Testament ethics was love for God and love for man. But these ascetics centered themselves on themselves and the whole thing ended in barrenness. The Christian is to deny himself on certain planes in order to release himself on other planes for the sake of others. But asceticism for its own sake is essentially selfish, however spiritual it may seem to be. This period of fierce asceticism was one of the most barren periods of Christian history.—*The Fellowship*.



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VEGETARIAN FOODS

We append a short list of Vegetarian Foodstuffs, which can be recommended for their nutrient value and for their appetising flavours. Some are ready for use, and others may be made to form the basis of a variety of delicious dishes. Many are rich in vitamin content.

CEREAL FOODS (Breakfast)

Quaker Oats, Grape Nuts,
Force, Puffed Rice, Corn-
Flakes, Shredded Wheat, etc.

CEREAL FOODS (Various)

Macaroni, Vermicelli, Sago,
Tapioca, Semolina, Corn Flour, Barley
Oatmeal, etc.

DRIED FRUITS

Currants, Raisins, Sultanas,
Figs, Apricots, Peaches,
Prunes, Apple Chips and Rings, etc.

HONEY

Various, with or without comb.

SYRUP

Golden and Maple.

JAMS AND MARMALADE

Various, best English Brands.

BISCUITS

Various, Huntley and Palmer's etc.

FRUITS IN SYRUP

Apricots, Peaches, Pears,
Pineapples, Greengages,

FRUITS IN SYRUP (contd.)

Strawberries, Cherries,
Fruit Salad, etc.

BEVERAGES

"Tomango" Orange and Lemon
Squash, Rose's Lime Juice, etc.

MARMITE

A Yeast Extract, purely vegetable
yet having the properties of meat
extract.

VEGETABLES

Asparagus, Tomatoes, Green Peas,
Corn, Succotash.

Vegetarian Baked Beans (containing no
meat), Mushrooms, Parsnips, etc.

SALAD OIL

Pure Olive.

BUTTER

Government Dairy, Finest Australian,
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CHEESE

Cheddar, Dutch, Cream, etc.

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