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LATE SIR T. SADASIVA IYER.



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.

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VOL. IX

NOVEMBER, 1931

No. 8

LATE SIR T. SADASIVA IYER.

We love to remember him as a fearless and conscientious judge who did not let the obsessions of his high office submerge his individuality as a man. We love to remember him as a public leader, who saw farther than the men of his generation the tendencies of his time. We love to remember him as one who adopted views far in advance of his times, and regulated his conduct in strict accordance with his views during the whole of a life time of exceptionally rich and varied human contacts. We love to remember him as one who more than any other helped to develop the necessary inhibitions and impulses that will enable men to walk in the path of Dharma in the changing condition of a Renascent India.

We love to remember him as the great Krishna Bhakta who delighted in calling himself as Krishna Daza indicating to the world that the goal devotion's ambition is the attainment of Daza Yoga.

THE Bharata Dharma

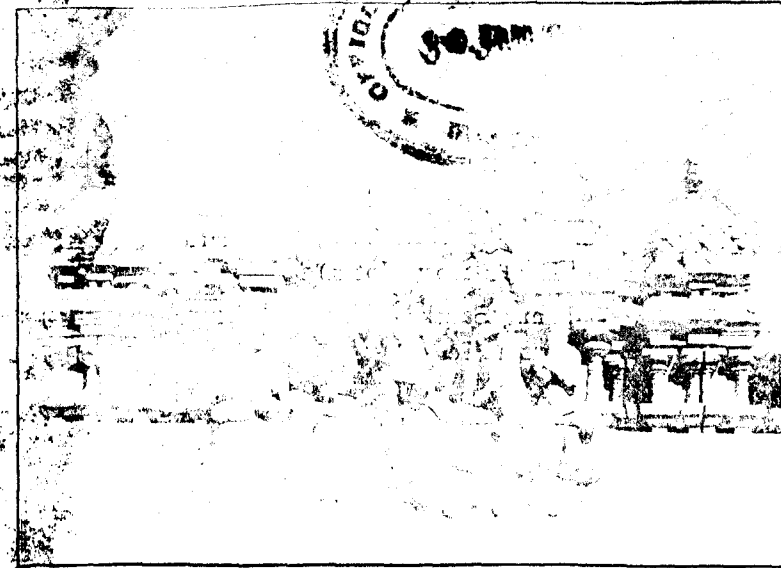
Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

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

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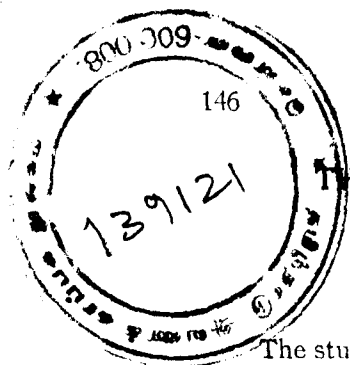
On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar :

चित्रं वटतर्गमूले 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.

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THE PERMANENT AND THE TEMPORARY IN
DHARMA SASTRAS.

BY

Mr. A. RANGASWAMI AIYER.

The student of Hindu sociology has to bear in mind in his study of Hindu society whose history stretches back far away into the mists of time, what are the eternal principles which run through it as silver threads, making it a continuum amidst the age long ramifications marking its chequered past, and what are the changes which have taken place from time to time in its bosom, as new conditions faced it from age to age during that past. Such a study is necessary at the present time when Hindu society is passing through one of those periodical processes of rejuvenation which have taken place during the course of its past history. But this time the external conditions to which that society must adopt itself and react, if it is to live, grow, and flourish are far subtler, deeper, and mightier than at any time in the past, and the changes have to be wrought more swiftly, and not left to the slow work of the passage of time. Social ideals are rapidly changing in the world; and new values are being given to the several factors which enter into the moulding and the re-fashioning of those ideals. Hindu India differs in a unique manner from other countries of the world. The present day civilisation of Europe and America, although participating in the legacies left by ancient Greece and Rome, has been influenced in the main, by the ideals and concepts reared on the basis of the Christian religion. Similarly the culture and civilisation dominating the western countries of Asia owe their origin and development to the religion of the Prophet. Japan has largely assimilated herself to the west, while China with her ideals, culture and civilisation to which no mean contribution has been made by this country from about the beginning of the Christian era is in a melting pot, the result of which the future alone can clearly show. The adjustment between the past and the present, the old and the new, in the west is the adjustment between a comparatively recent past, and the present, while the adjustment between the past of the Hindu India and its present, out of which the future would be the outcome is an adjustment between a far more ancient past, and the present.

The complexity of the problem, and the safety of the solution both co-exist in the peculiar conditions of Hindu ideals, culture and civilisation as they have descended from the ancient to modern times, and as they are operated upon by the forces of modern progress. The complexity is

caused by the variance between the distant past, and the present. The safety is the presumption that as Hindu culture and civilisation have survived so many onslaughts made on those weak points in their capacity to adopt themselves to the changing conditions in their age long history, there must be some stable elements which must have contributed to give them successive leases of new life age after age. Both for one who venerates ancient tradition, and the ardent social reformer intent on change, it is necessary to discover and recognise these stable and essential elements, and distinguish them from the accidental and the temporary which whatever their value in one epoch of time, cease to have that value in another period of history. In India, of all countries in the world, with its history continuing uninterruptedly over such a distant past it is essential that the future should be built on the lines laid in that past. Though several social and cultural ideals not always identical with the Hindu have their mutual play and interaction in modern India, it is undoubtedly true that the Hindu will predominate, and even profoundly influence the rest, both by strength of numbers and of being of the race of the soil.

There are some typical problems which have arisen in our midst, and are making insistent demands for their solution, and adjustment. In other parts of the world, the woman's place in society, her rights, her duties, her opportunities for growth and service in the family and outside it in the life of the nation demand a new orientation. The course of recent events in India is bringing it rapidly into the domain of the practical as distinguished from the theoretical or the academical stand point. Her marital rights, her economic position, her rights of inheritance, her part in the public life of the country and its institutions, as legislator, official, professional and the like, her moral standards and a host of other considerations will rapidly emerge into view if they are not already doing so. Similarly the forces of modern democracy which from their very nature are calculated to weaken rights deriving their strength from heredity must introduce deep reactions in the system of castes and *Ashramas* which is a notable contribution made by ancient Hindu sociological founders and builders to the stability of society and in a particular form has done service during the past a few thousands of years. What would be the position of the many millions outside these castes, and yet bound to Hindu society in a loose manner; when their 'pathetic contentment' is broken by their approaching political enfranchisement and freedom, and the early opportunities of mental and moral development, and physical cleanliness which a widespread system of national education

would surely bring within their reach? Would their present loose connection in the bosom of the Hindu society be rivetted into a close and enduring bond having their proper and legitimate place therein contributing to their dignity and self-respect or will it drift further and further? These and similar other questions rise into view which will have to be duly considered by responsible leaders, students and thinkers in Hindu society, and suitable solutions found and acted upon. For the present age, quick in its operation, rational in its outlook, scientific in its examination and conclusion, differs from the past in its opposition to 'drift' as a method of solution.

In helping us to come to reasoned conclusions, and adopt well conceived methods of action instead of a policy of 'Drift' a rational understanding of *Hindu Dharma Sastras*, as human documents and works of men actuated by high ideals and steeped to the core in the stable elements of Hindu tradition and culture while at the same time not exempt from the transitory concepts and influences of the time they lived in, is essential. It would be equally prefunctory if we treated these writings as sacrosanct and beyond criticism, and their interpretation as matters of textual inspiration, or if we relegated them as the primitive expressions of the exponents of a semi-civilised humanity in the early stages of its civilisation, possessing no value for the future.

As an illustration, we shall take the status and position of women in Hindu culture and civilisation up to the present and their bearing upon her future in the bosom of Hindu society. We can trace two parallel positions accorded to her, one a position equal to man whether spiritually or in the realm of mind or economically as a member of society, and the other which placed her in various degrees of subordination ranging from a chattel or an object of possession to an inferior human being who should always be under the control of man. These parallel conceptions are found side by side from the *vedic* age and right up to the period of the late *Smritis*. While the former belongs to the stable and permanent elements of Hindu culture which imparted to it an eternal youth, the latter reflects the several passing stages through which the subordination of woman to man has passed from time to time up to the present.

The charter of woman's equality with man according to Hindu philosophy and the culture reared thereon is that *Jiva* which is divine in its essence and incarnates as man or woman is sexless, and that sex is its differentiation in lower bodies for gathering of individual experiences. This deep basis for equality cannot be said to be stressed in other racial

cultures to the same extent as in the Hindu in which it is as old as the *Upanishads*. It is as valid now for the fresh evaluation of woman's place in society which is taking place around us at present as it was at any time in the past.

Marriage is an all-important institution in the life of a woman which may vitally affect this equality of status for the worse. The most ancient *Mantras* used on the occasion of marriage from the *Rig Vedic* times up to the present show that this equality of status was expected to be observed in practical life.

"By thy right hand for happiness I take thee, that thou mayest reach old age with me; thy husband Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitar, Purandhi gave thee to me to rule our house together".

"Here may delight be thine through wealth and progeny. Give this house thy watchful care. Live with thy husband, and in old age may you still rule your household."

"Here now remain, nor ever part; enjoy the full measure of your years; with sons and grandsons, be glad in heart within your house."

"Children and children's children may *Prajapathi* give us; may *Aryaman* bless us with wealth unto old age. Enter, not evil-bringing, thy husband's homestead. Within the home may man and beast—increase and thrive. Free from the evil eye, not lacking wedded love, bring good-luck even to the beasts: gentle of mind, bright of countenance, bearing heroes, honouring the Gods, dispensing joy.—This bride, O. Gracious Indra, make rich in sons and in happiness. Grant her ten children, and spare her husband as the eleventh. Rule them and govern over thy husband's father and mother, over his sisters and brothers:—may all the Gods unite our hearts."—

(In *Rig Veda*, 10th Mandala translated in Ragozin's *Vedic India* Pages 371 & 372.)

The wife had the right to perform the sacrifices with her husband. The childless widow inherited her husband's property as a matter of right. The unmarried daughter who lived all her life in her parents'

home with her parents demanded and got a share of the ancestral property for her maintenance. (Das's *Rig Vedic Culture*, page 250)

Any human society howsoever it may be uplifted by noble ideals of conduct and social relationship cannot but be influenced in varying degrees by the contemporaneous ideas characteristic of the times. It was the average human conception from ancient, right quite up to modern times that woman was inferior to man. This was present in the midst of all ancient civilisations. So in the *Rig Vedic* times we met with uncomplimentary sentiments towards women occurring in passages in the *Rig Veda* as follows:—"Woman's mind is uncontrollable" "Woman's love is never stable" and her heart is like that of a hyena." (*Ibid* page 106)- These latter sentiments are entirely out of tune with the noble conceptions of womanhood illustrated by the wedding hymns of the *Rig Veda*, and must be traced to the current ideas of the age dominated by masculine superiority.

(To be continued)

A RESTATEMENT OF FAITH.

BY

MR. V. V. SREENIVASA AIYANGAR.

II

CHANGE OF FAITH.

In my first article under this series, I emphasised the necessity for co-ordination between faith and life, and concluded by calling it the first article of my faith.

I shall now proceed to discuss and determine the question of what the faith of man should be or consist in. The most remarkable feature of all the religions and faiths of the world is that the followers of each of them claim to hold the monopoly of spiritual truth and claim also with the certainty of absolute truth and all the arrogance born of such ignorance, as if the salvation of the soul is their exclusive property. Not only that but many of them even postulate indubitably the converse viz., the damnation of all who do not belong to that particular faith.

It is sad to contemplate what all atrocities have been committed in the course of history and almost in every country in the name of religion.

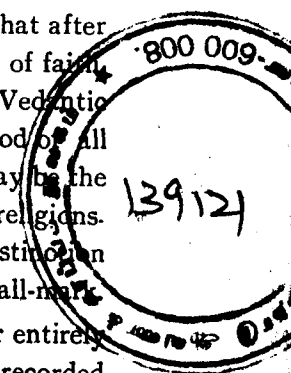
It may from a particular point of view indeed be beautiful to come across or conceive of a person who is so thoroughly imbued with the abso-

lute truth of his own faith and the falsehood of every other, as even at the point of the sword to seek to convert others to his own faith only for the purpose of saving their souls. What is bewildering is that such a claim should be made by the followers in respect of every religious faith however silly or insignificant it may seem. Such blind and zealous faith claiming the right even to proselytism by interfering with the liberty of faith of others, may have its aspects of aesthetic beauty even as the character of a monomaniac on the stage. But such an attitude and outlook are thoroughly inconsistent with the finiteness of the human mind. That is probably the reason why most, if not all the religions of the world have claimed a divine origin and seek to justify the omniscience and omnipotence claimed on account of the infallibility of the origin.

It almost seems that there is something in religious faith itself which excludes, so to say a poised middle. On the one side there is the zealot reckless of everything else and at the other end there is the merely nominal follower to whom the faith is less than a cloak to be put on and put off at pleasure. When one comes to look at the matter with deep anxiety and taking a bird's eye view of the evolution of the various religions of the world, one cannot but come to the conclusion that after all perhaps what matters is the faith itself and not the content of faith. In that beautiful classic simile with which the followers of Vedantic religion are familiar, it is explicitly announced that God is the God of all religions and that He alone comes to be worshipped whatever may be the name and object of worship. That is indeed the religion of all religions. That aspect from such high altitude is the most characteristic distinction and quality of vedantic thought. Such universal tolerance is its hall-mark.

But when all is said and done, religious faith is a matter entirely between the individual and his God. No doubt, in the evolutions recorded by history social and political, it has come about that all the followers of one faith have been organizing themselves into units of various degrees of cohesion and that professing one religion has been, as it were, a sort of a ticket of admission into the circle. The converse of it has also been unfortunately the fact, viz., that the loss of such a ticket has often entailed not only the exclusion from the circle but has often been followed up by forcible ejection therefrom.

When, however, one comes to look at the reason of the thing, there is no reason whatever why the members of the same family should not each of them follow a different faith. I have come across numerous such cases in our neighbouring island of Ceylon, but that is unfortunately due not



to the religious zeal of the individuals concerned or to respect for individual freedom but to religion being regarded more or less as a matter of convenience. The religious faith of a person being to him a matter of permanent importance, it cannot but be considered absolutely necessary for each individual to determine what his faith is or should be.

This, however, will be seen in most cases to involve for each individual the enormous and almost impossible task of his having by himself to examine in all detail and particularly, the fundamental doctrines of every religion or religious faith actual or possible and then come to a conclusion with regard to his own choice.

To most men such a task is impossible of achievement. They have neither the tendency nor the equipment for it. Even in the case of men in whom there may be discovered some tendency towards such examination and research they are not all possessed of the requisite mental and other equipments for carrying out such examination and research. Perhaps only one in a million may be found to essay the task possessed of the requisite faculty and facility.

As a matter, however, of experience we do not generally come across cases of choice or change of religion by the mere process of examination and discussion. In most cases in which the new religious faith or zeal has come to a person it comes not as the result of mere ratiocination but as a sort of spiritual birth in his mind as the mere effect of innumerable, unknown, and unknowable causes.

It follows from these reflections that it will be well and good if a man should be blessed with such births of faith in him, or, if he should be in a position by his own examination and research to come to a conclusion in his own mind about the faith he should embrace and profess. But to most mortal men, to all ordinary folks, both these are denied. What should they do indeed? It seems to me, that having regard to the fundamental identity of most of the chief religions of the world, with regard to the matters that do matter, to such persons, it cannot be a matter of any great consequence what the particular religion it is that they are supposed to profess.

In the case, therefore, of all persons who are not blessed with the birth of a new faith in them, it were prudence that they should adhere to the religion they may happen to be born to. Such a rule is wholesome, even in the case of persons who do care for religion, and who do not care for it in that sort of way as the Hebrew of old did, as if religion was everything

and there was nothing else in life. Hellenism as Mathew Arnold wrote, is by far preferable to Hebrewism.

Further, the establishment and maintenance of a new religion for the individual is fraught not only with calls upon time, trouble and resources in such a manner that the question may well be asked whether after all it is worth one's while to break away from the old moorings. And further so long as social and political organisations have any relation to religious faiths, the profession of the traditional faith operates even like oil in machinery, making for the decrease of friction and for smooth working. On the whole it seems quite reasonable to hold that if a man has not a faith born to him, has not felt the call of a new faith, he may as well keep to the faith he is born to.

It is not merely even a question of lubrication and smooth working, but also of economy so essential in modern times. If all religions are more or less the same why should a man suffer himself to put up with all that waste which is necessarily involved in cutting off from the old and embracing a new faith.

Again it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that most of the religions of the world include observances and directions which are more or less of a social character and which are based on local, climatic, and similar conditions and considerations.

Further more, if it is a question of casting off what one has, one is bound before he makes up his mind to do so, to investigate and examine it properly, to learn all that there is to learn about it, to compare it with all other systems of thought and faith, and then alone, if compelled by overmastering considerations, to change to the new. It is, however, a matter of common and almost daily experience that most conversions owe their origin not to any such result of contrasts, comparison, or conclusion, but even in cases of sincere conversions only to some stray aspect or quality which happens to appeal for the moment. If heredity in body and mind and surroundings play such an important part in man's life, as we are assured it does, no one can be said to be acting seriously in changing the faith or religion which has come to him by tradition and heredity unless satisfactory cause is shown by one at least to one's own conscience. One can be good and pious and spiritual in every religion or in any religion, and one can attain such salvation as he hopes for even professing the religion of his forefathers.

Lord Sambhu! Kicking the chest of the Lord of Death, crushing the demon of Epilepsy, wandering over mountains, coming into contact with the crowns of gods who prostrate before thee, are not these unfit to be done by Thy gentle foot? Please accept the sandals of my heart and use them always.

आशापाश क्लेशदुर्वासनादि
भेदाद्युक्तैः दिव्यगन्धैः अमन्दैः
आशाशाटीकस्य पादारविन्दं
चेतः पेटां वासितां मे तनोतु.

Let the Lotus Feet of the Lord for whom the ten directions constitute the garment make my mind the box filled with the strong divine smell capable of suppressing all bad odours like desire, sorrow and evil tendencies,

छन्दः शाखिशिखान्वितैः द्विजवरैः संसेविते शाश्वते
सौख्यापादिनि खेदभेदिनि सुधासारैः फलैर्दीपिते
चेतः पक्षिशिखामणे! त्यज वृथासञ्चारं अन्यैरलम्
नित्यं शङ्करपादपद्मयुगलीनीडे विहारं कुरु.

Oh, my mind, best of birds, don't wander aimlessly; others are of no use; take refuge in the nest of the lotus feet of Sankara. It is sought after by birds (wisemen) who frequent the branches of the tree of Vedas. It is eternal. It gives comfort and removes all misery. It is full of fruits whose juice is nectar.

नित्यानन्दरसालयं सुरमुनिस्वान्तांबुजाताश्रयम्
स्वच्छं सद्भिजसेवितं कलुषहृत्सदासनाविष्कृतम्
शंभुध्यानसरोवरं व्रज मनोहंसावतंसस्थिरम्
किं क्षुद्राश्रयपल्लवभ्रमणसञ्जातश्रमं प्राप्स्यसि?

Oh! my mind the good Hamsa! Please go to the lake of contemplation of the Lord Sambhu. It is filled with the water of eternal happiness. Into it flow the thoughts of gods and sages. It is frequented by other birds (wisemen). It is clear and filled with fine odour keeping down all impurities. Why do you undergo the trouble of going to small ponds frequented by inferior birds?

One more verse of this type.

कारुण्यामृतवर्षिणं घनविपत् प्रीणमच्छिदशकर्मठम्
विद्यासस्यफलोदयाय सुमनः संसेव्यं दृच्छाकृतिम्
नृत्यत्नक्तमयूरं अद्रिनिलयं चञ्चलमण्डलम्
शोभो! वाञ्छति नीलकंठर! सदा त्वां मे मनश्चातकः.

Oh Sambhu! Lord of the blue neck! my mind the Chataka ever longs for Thee. Thou art a cloud raining the shower of mercy, able to put an end to the hot season of dangers, approached by learned men on behalf of the plant of learning so that it may bear fruit, capable of assuming any shape, making thy devotees, peacocks dance with joy, dwelling on mountains, and decorated with lightning like plaited hair.

[The high suggestiveness of the language wherein words are capable two interpretations cannot be fully brought out in translation. It is hoped this failure to translate correctly will induce abler hands to attempt the same.]

BACK TO FIRST PRINCIPLES.

II

RAMA DASA.

Though the operation of public opinion as a moulding influence is through moral persuasion, its coercive pressure can be as great as that of legislative sanctions. Its influence is certainly greater than the fear of postmortem penalties which constitute the main sanction for religious injunctions. The force of public opinion does not exhaust itself with the generation of moral pressure. It generally receives unexpected accessions of strength when it relates to a live issue and is directed and regulated by capable leaders. With sufficient momentum public opinion finds its way sooner or later into the legislative forum.

The tendency to invoke legislative aid for bringing about social changes is almost irremediable in a democratic state. There is in such a state an irresistible temptation to call in to aid the powerful machinery of legislation for achieving distant objectives, for speeding up the pace of a lethargic society, or for coercing an obstinate and untractable minority. The reason is not far to seek. Democracy enlarges the mental vision of the average citizen and arms him with a power that grows with its use. In the very nature of things there is a larger up-welling of idealism and a greater desire to turn the ideal into the real. It is inevitable in these circumstances that a larger proportion of idealism should find its place into the Statute Book. Such a process need not necessarily be evil. The legislature of the land is the proper tribunal to decide whether the time has come to attach the recommendation of statutory approval and the urge

It therefore follows that every man will do well to keep to the faith he is born to until and unless there is for him the call of a new faith which he finds or feels irresistible.

This is the second article of my faith.

SANKARA AS A BHAKTA.

(Continued from page 121.)

By

S. K. Y.

We saw how the great Acharya taught us the lesson that *Bhaktimarga* was accessible to all beings and that for practising it very little of accessories is necessary; only the mind must be concentrated on the lotus feet of the Lord.

In this study let us confine our attention to another aspect, the difficulty experienced in so concentrating the mind. This is expressed in various ways by the Acharya. In a century of verse sung under perhaps different moods and conditions the same idea is repeated in various places in different ways and it is by following a single clue through the collection that we gather the materials necessary to illustrate the point.

One important matter to be noted about the great Bhakta is this, that he was a poet to the very tip of his fingers and his poetic inspiration could not be dried up by all his intellectualism. Hence we find that he is following the true poetic tradition of making an idea clear to us, ordinary folk, by means of vivid imagery.

In some verses Sankara requests the Lord to accept his mind compared now to a monkey, now to an elephant and on another occasion to a horse; in others he implores Him to come and dwell in his mind compared to a tent, a fort or a forest; or he addresses his own mind referred to as a Hamsa or Chataka to seek shelter in the Lord. We shall take up some illustrative verses only.*

*See verses 20, 21, 22, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 52, 64, 74, 75, 96, 97. (Vani Vilas Edn.) Sivanandalahari.

सदा मोहाटव्यां चरति युवतीनां कुचगिरौ
नट्याशाशाखासु अटति हृदिति स्वैरमभितः
कपालिन्! भिक्षो! मे हृदयकपि अत्यन्तचपलम्
दहं भक्त्या बद्ध्वा शिव! भवदधीनं कुरु विभो!

My mind, the monkey, lives ever in the forest of illusion, dances on the mountain of women's breasts, wanders as he pleases on the branches of desire. Thou Beggar with the skull! bind fast this exremely capricious monkey with *Bhakti* and make it thine own. [The literary beauty revealed in choosing appropriate epithets deserves to be noted.]

कल्याणिनं सरसचित्रगतिं सवेगं
सर्वेङ्गितमनघं ध्रुवलक्षणाढ्यम्
चेतस्तुरङ्गमधिरुह्य चर स्मरारे
नेतः समस्तजगतां वृषभाधिरूढ.

Oh Lord! Leader of all the worlds! Rider on the Bull! Please take my mind the horse which has been taught all paces, quick moving, knowing all Thy intentions free from faults and having good marks. [The poet hints that it ill-becomes the leader of all the worlds to be riding upon a slow moving bull and offers a horse which is in every way better.]

प्रचरत्यभितः प्रगल्भवृत्त्या
मद्वानेष मनः करी गरीयान्
परिगृह्य नयेन भक्तिरज्वा
परमस्थाणुपदं दृढं नयामुम्.

My mind, the mad elephant, wanders here and there with confidence in its own strength. Get hold of him skillfully, bind him with the rope of *Bhakti* and Oh! the Supreme one! Keep him steady in Thy feet, which is a place of Permanence.

मा गच्छत्वमितस्ततो गिरिश! भो! मय्येव वासं कुरु
स्वामिन्! आदिकिरात! मामकमनःकान्तारसीमान्तरे
वर्तन्ते बहुशो मृगा मदजुषः मात्सर्यमोहादयः
तान् हत्वा मृगयाविनोदरुचितालाभं च संप्राप्स्यसि.

Oh! Lord of the Mountain! My Lord! Old Hunter! Please do not go hither and thither. Within the confines of my mind, the forest, there are many wild beasts like jealousy, desire and others. You can well earn the pleasures of hunting by killing them.

वक्षस्ताडनमन्तकस्य कठिनापस्मारसंमर्दनम्
भूभृत्पर्यटनं नमत्सुरशिरः कोटीरसंघर्षणम्
कमेदं मृदुलस्य तावकपदद्वन्द्वस्य किं वोचितम्
मन्त्रतो मणिपादुकाविहरणं शंभो सदाङ्गीकुरु.

of legal sanctions to public efforts for amelioration or advancement. It is for the legislature to decide whether an imperative measure of reform is being obstructed by a perverse minority and whether it is moral inertia that is at the back of the resistance to desirable steps for improvement in various spheres of civic welfare. The legislature of the land is the most powerful medium through which the pace of progress in backward countries can be accelerated, and systematic changes in public conduct achieved rapidly and upon a large scale.

It is inevitable however that some of the measures brought before the legislature should be Utopian and have little merit in them except a praiseworthy motive. It is equally inevitable that some of the legislative attempts are either premature or ill-conceived. Some of them may be incapable of enforcement for want of adequate executive machinery. Many of them may be mere statutory of social idealism declarators calculated by their futility to detract from the respect due to the laws of the land, and not rules enabling citizens to realise a larger life by co-operative effort. Excessive legislation may easily become an intolerable hindrance to the expression of individual freedom.

As a nation facing a future of democratic sovereignty we are interested in the study of the reaction of religious life and beliefs on the working of the democratic machinery. It would be an advantage to know the dangers that can be safeguarded, the enrichment that can be made, the possibilities that can be successfully explored by invoking the unexhausted and inexhaustible powers of religious faith. We would like to be specially instructed on the limits of formal spiritual interference in secular matters and on the regulation of such interference in a land of competing religious ideals and methods. What is the place of the religious dynamic in political and social life? How to secure the maximum benefit from its operation? How to minimise the incidence of the dangers that in the past have followed an extravagant and indiscriminate play of religious obsessions in public life? These questions spontaneously arise in the mind when appeals are made—and they are made with frequency of and insistence—to expand the inlet of the incalculable influence of religious forces on a country whose social and cultural composition is exceedingly heterogeneous and where the exploitation of religious susceptibilities has not always made for peace and progress.

We cannot afford to ignore the lessons of the past on the serious drawbacks in permitting an unrestricted sway of religious influences in political and social life. There are few tragedies more profound than that of the

degeneration of religious beliefs and institutions in time. In a few generations the purest and the loftiest ideals become mere moulds. Inert formalism takes the place of a faith which was once vital and growing and giving healthy reactions to surroundings. Disputations replace research. Authority is substituted for reason. Spiritual curiosity which constitutes the primary urge in spiritual growth disappears under the blighting influence of dead tradition, and mental inhibitions multiply with startling rapidity in an atmosphere of intellectual repression.

The past thus becomes a vast prison-house imprisoning the expanding life. It draws a line and says: "thus far and no further". It digs a groove and says: "this way and no other". All social energy is consumed in ensuring conformity to a weary round of rituals and observances. The theory is that life is ordered on a co-ordinated basis between spiritual and secular aims. The reality is that the country walks blindly in the long shadow of its past, missing all the education that would otherwise result from the spiritual adventure in life. It was a great law-giver who said 'Walk in the path of righteousness in the footsteps of ancestors.' It was a great poet endowed with vision that said "All that is old need not necessarily be good."

The capture of the machinery of the state by religious formalists or zealots, men who see either too little or too much as compared with the average citizen may be a danger to be guarded against. There are few chapters in human history more dark and distressing than the record of well-meaning but misguided religious zeal come into possession of secular power. The tremendous limitations of the physical world as compared with the Utopias of their imagination have no place in their calculations. Their corollaries or deductions from first principles have nothing but logic for their justifications. They proceed by ignoring of the profound imperfection of human life evolving in different degrees of development. Their proposals are often thoroughly inexpedient and unpractical. Under their rule social life will become static instead of dynamic and human society will have to move if it moves at all with its vision backward.

Much as we may admire the past and its greatness we cannot close our eyes to the obvious fact that the India of today for which the structure has to be designed is more composite and its problems more baffling than the India and its problems which our ancestors had to face in ancient times. It is doubtful whether at any time in the history of India or even in the history of the world, the leaders of the people were called

upon to frame a constitution for 350 millions of people under conditions similar to those prevailing in India today. Certainly they did not have to do on the basis of adult franchise and representatives government. The economic ambitions and cultural aspirations of the people today are incomparably more complex than what they were in times past. The strains and stresses in the modern constitutional structure have to be distributed on considerations which found no place in the scheme of our ancient legislators.

(To be continued.)

THE LORD OF THE FLUTE

BY

SADHU T. L. VASWANI.

The daisies all look up to the sun. So the different religions. They all turn to Him, the Sun of suns. God is the centre of all.

Hinduism has from the beginning of its days felt the inspiration of this idea of the One Spirit in all.

Sri Krishna, in a sense, may be regarded as the founder of Hinduism. He gave a wonderful synthesis. The *Bhagavad Gita* is, I believe, the greatest single poem in world literature. The *Bhagavad Gita* gives us a synthesis which you will look for in vain in Shakespeare.

And they who would enter into the heart of Hinduism must see its profound synthesis of life. Critics see in the Hindu faith only a "forest" of creeds. The "forest" is not without a plan; and the Hindu faith is not credal. What the critics complain of as the "accommodating" or "omnivorous" character of Hinduism is really its profound synthesis which sees the Eternal—Infinite *Atman* in all. Hinduism is neither "Pantheism" in the Western sense of that word, nor eclecticism. Hinduism is spiritual syntheticism. Krishna came not to destroy but to reconcile and build. He gave us a synthesis which stands. Many streams of thought have entered into Hinduism. It has been influenced by the Greek, the Persian, the Moslem, the Christian. Today science is influencing the ancient faith. Today we live in a vaster world. There have been changes in Hinduism; but through them all is a continuity. This continuity is due to the synthesis given by Sri Krishna. The *Gita* is, essentially, a scripture of synthesis. As I associate Sri Krishna with Hinduism, so with Sri Krishna's message I associate the *murli*, the flute.

It is a symbol, to my mind, of the Spirit of Love, the deepest synthesis of life.

Each world-religion expresses its genius through a symbol. Thus the special symbol of Christianity is the Cross,—a symbol which in modified forms appears in the Trisula of Siva, the Hittite thunder-god Addu, and the Arabian goddess Lat. The Cross expresses the great Law of Sacrifice,—a Law of Manifestation.

Zoroastrianism has its symbol in Fire—a symbol which, in a modified form, appears in the three-forked fire of the Arabian god, Ahod. This symbol expresses the Law of Purity. The fire of Zoroaster is the consuming flame of the Spirit which burns our sins and purifies us.

The Murli (Flute) is the symbol of a profound synthesis wherein are the Laws and Prophets, Systems and Scriptures. The Great Ones have oft taught in parables and pictures and *sutras* and songs. And song is, perhaps, next only to silence. Nature's language is more ancient than the tongues of men. Nature teaches through flowers and stars. Sri Krishna taught through music. How much we learn through music! How tears stream down our faces, and our hearts are opened at the touch of a song. Krishna brought with Him the matchless music of the *murli*. No music without a synthesis of sounds. And through the music of the flute Sri Krishna expressed a rich synthesis of life.

This synthesis is *Vignana* or Realisation. As you distinguish yourself from the outside environment and enter through the Gate of Silence into your Hidden Depths, you begin to know who you are. The Gate of Remembrance opens; and you recover a consciousness of your royal birth. You pass into the *Antar Jyoti*—the Inner Light. This truth has been glimpsed by the three great western thinkers of today, Bergson, Croce, and Eucken, who in their systems of philosophy trace the evolution of consciousness from instinct to intellect, and from intellect to intuition. Only a few today even think of attaining to this stage of consciousness. The modern mind finds it difficult to believe in the Immaterial Values of life; yet these has India been in search of through the long centuries. "Gnan" has been her dominant aspiration. In quest of this higher knowledge princes left their palaces and kings their thrones. Buddha, Prince of the Sakyas, renounced the palace in search of the Path of Realization. It is not the Path of Scholarship. *Vignana* is not the *Vidya* of books. You may study ever so many books yet know nothing of the inner encyclopaedia of the soul. Sri Rama Krishna Parmahansa did not read books but he had *Vignana*. He had wisdom of the soul. Read his "Sayings."

What profound philosophy in them! Nor must we confound *Vignana* with *hathyoga* or psychic powers. Psychism may not mean spirituality. You may have psychical powers; but you may use them for selfish, immoral purposes. *Vignana* is knowledge of your real self. Your deepest self! Your God-self! As it is you identify yourself with a superficial self. You are greater than you know.

With *Vignana*, with the opening of *Antardrishti*; there grows a vision of the one in all. A vision of Wonder, of Beauty, a vision of *Ananda*. He who glimpses even a little of this vision worships the One Living Face behind all masks. He enters into what is deeper than "reason;" he enters into Inner Illumination. He sees that death is *Maya*, for all death is re-birth in life, and all life is an eternal moment in the Eternal Now. He has no quarrel with any religion; for in all shines the One Light. He has no hate for any nation; for all nations are limbs of the One Divine Humanity. He sends out his love even to the most "fallen;" for none is absolutely separated from the One Life that flows into all and makes Humanity one Divine Organism. In a western drama, the author, Sudarman, makes Herodias reproach John the Baptist thus:—"What right have you to judge the guilty, you who flee from human life into the loneliness of the desert? He who would presume to be a judge over men must have a share in their lives and be human with his fellows." The man of inner illumination gives love to all, knowing that separateness, is an illusion and a fruitful source of Forgetfulness. He has recovered the Lost Remembrance and so attained to a new strength, a new Idealism of action. As Arjuna exclaims after having the *visvadarshan*:—"Gone is my delusion. By Thy favour, O Sinless One, the memory of the sacred knowledge is restored to me; I am fixed, with doubts dispelled. I will fulfil Thy word."

How many give heed to his message to-day? Fifteen years and more have passed since I returned from my wanderings in the west. I returned with deeper love for India; with richer appreciation of the Indian Ideal. I returned from the west and surveyed the situation in India, and I asked: "Where art Thou, O Lord?" I looked into the Temples: I found so many no better than market-places: several, indeed, were dens of ungodliness; and I asked:—"Where art Thou O Lord!" I looked into Schools and Colleges; I found they were cradles of an imitation-cult or at best centres of cold intellectualism: the culture of the spirit was not there; and I asked:—"Where art Thou O Lord?" I looked into the intellectual faces of the young. I found them busy about many things but forgetful

of the One Thing needful, and again I asked:—"Where art Thou, O Lord?"

In the shouts and shows of today I find Him not. Nor in the conflicts of parties and creeds. I see civilisation still dominated by financial materialism. I see imperialism still sitting heavily upon India, the Birth place of the Beloved. I see racial arrogance still triumphant. I see Hindu society still torn into castes. I see Christian churches still swayed by the dogmas that divide. I see the poor still trampled upon by the pride of power and wealth. I see the animals,—limbs of the Body of the Lord,—still led to the slaughter-house. And my aching heart cries again and again in the silence of the night, and the silence of the dawn:—"O Lord Krishna! Come! we have banished Thee, long! India's agony calls Thee! Come! and set all things right! A broken, bleeding humanity calls Thee! Come! Come! And be thou the music and message of this ancient people to the modern world! Come! and fill it with light and love!" Then me thinks, I hear Him say:—"Behold! I stand gazing with eyes of Love, longing to come; but will ye open the Temple of the Heart to receive me? I stand with the flute on my lips to sound the great note of Harmony. But will ye cease fighting? I stand eager to come and reconcile nations and races and religions; but are ye ready to answer the Call?" Friends! I ask you in deep humility to bring back the banished Lord. O! bring Him back to your Cities and Civilization! Bring Him back into your politics, your culture, your daily life. And He, the Lord of Love, He will lead the nations to the Freedom that heals.

Reviews.

Self Realisation.*:—In this book Narasimha Swami (more widely known in the public life of the Presidency by his name in his previous Ashrama as Mr. B. V. Narasimha Aiyar) relates the spiritual biography of Sree Ramana Maharishi of Tiruvannamalai and the history of the Ashramam that he has founded on the slopes of a hill in the precincts of the sacred city of Thiruvannamalai, North Arcot District.

We are told that the Maharishi was born at Thiruchuzhi in the Ramnad District and that he comes of an ancient stock of orthodox

* Self-realisation, Life and Teachings of Ramana Maharishi by B.V. Narasimha Swami.

Brahmins. Born in 1879 on the Ardhra Darsanam day the Swamiji passed through an uneventful boyhood until 1896 when the crisis occurred that started him on the road to Arunachala. The story of that eventful journey and of the period immediately following the Swamiji's arrival at the sacred shrine are related with sympathy and reverence and furnish an illustration of the vicissitudes that attend upon the pursuit of spiritual quest, even when the quest is conducted in the very seat of sanctity. Those years brought the Swamiji more than the usual share of indifference and ill-treatment which are the lot of spiritual aspirants. Seated in Samadhi the young Rishi bore all these things without a ruffle like a true Viragi, 'his mind shut out from sense storms and burning bright to heaven.'

It was not long however before neglect and insult were replaced by respect and awe and those who came to scoff remained to pray. The fame of the Rishi soon attracted troubled souls from far and near and in a short time the Ashrama became a place of pilgrimage for truth-seekers. The foundation and growth of the spiritual centre of which the Maharishi is the presiding spirit and the history of the group of men and women in many stages of spiritual evolution that gathered around him, constitute an interesting study in conversion that is taking place in Hindu society today.

Readers of Bharata Dharma will be interested to know that the basic principles of the Maharishi's saintly life naturally lead him to approve of the liberalising and humanising aspects of social reform. Persons of the depressed classes have long been his immediate attendants and are treated exactly as though they belonged to the higher classes. Women and Sudras are held eligible for Vedic teaching and initiation. The Maharishi is in full sympathy with the tendency of the present day ethics to stress social service rather than the perfection of the individual ascetic in isolation.

It is a pleasure to read a book telling us of the life story and spiritual experiences of a living Rishi and of the hermitage which he has helped to found in the secluded precincts of a town famed for its holiness. The author is one who has inside-knowledge of the machinery of modern social life. He heard the call of the Ashrama as a summons which could not be disobeyed. The book gives an interesting picture of life, and conditions which are as rare as they are exalted, and of experiences which are dearly prized by every Hindu.

The spiritual biography of Sri Ramana Rishi the presiding spirit of the Ashrama is written with insight and appeal. Though there is no conscious attempt to present the life of the Rishi and the atmosphere and the activities

of the Ashrama against the back ground of modern thought and ideals there is an irresistible suggestion that the Ashrama has not only a place in modern life but also that it is a natural stage in spiritual evolution today as it was when the four-fold division of life was vigorously functioning. By those who had hitherto to satisfy themselves with vague and hearsay accounts of the Rishi and his Ashrama the book will be welcomed as an authentic record whose literary charm only enhances its intrinsic merit. To the English reading public in general the book will give a much needed introduction to the reality of ascetic ideals and the practicability of their adoption amidst the perplexing and fatiguing distractions of modern life.

The appreciative foreword by the Honourable Mr. Justice Sundaram Chettiar gives us the correct attitude of approach to the ideals which the book embodies. For as the great poet Kalidasa has said 'विनीतवेषप्रवे-
श्यानि तपोवनानि नाम' "hermitages have to be entered with reverence and humility."—

K. V. S.

Message :—We are glad to see the "Message" which is the organ of the Ananda Asrama has entered upon its fifth year of its usefulness. Its range may be judged from the fact that it includes articles on the Rishis on the Vedic texts, on the evolution of religion and upon Religion and Science. We have no doubt the message has a bright future before it and that its contribution to the moulding of India's thought and effort will be even more widely appreciated in the days to come.—

K. V. S.

[The following extracts from the news of the month are a conspicuous illustration of the social movement of our time.—Ed. Bharata Dharma.]

GURUVAYOOR SATYAGRAHA.

Dramatic scenes are being witnessed at the gates of the temple of Guruvayoor (South Malabar), where for several days past an extraordinary contest has been in progress—a contest in patience and moral persuasion.

The two parties in this contest are the temple authorities on the one side, and "untouchables" (non-caste Hindus) supported by numbers of caste Hindus on the other; and the subject matter of the dispute is the claim of the "Untouchables" to enter the temple.

For long hours in the day and till a late hour in the night, batches of Satyagrahis consisting of caste Hindus and "untouchables" are waiting at the entrances to the temple, saying prayers, reciting sacred verses and

supplicating the temple authorities to allow them to go in and worship at the *sanctum, sanctorum*. The temple officials and priests are not convinced that the Satyagrahis' demand represents any widespread desire of the people or that there is any justification for abolishing an old-established custom and throwing open the temple to castes for whom it was never meant and who have not contributed to its upkeep to any large extent. The temple gates are still barricaded and temple servants are there to keep the Satyagrahis at their distance.

The ceremonies in the temple continue from 3-30 A.M. to 1 P.M. with a break of 3½ hours from 1 P.M. to 4-30 P.M. Satyagrahis are "in action" during all the hours of service and do not withdraw even when it rains. Public meetings are held every evening. The police are on duty at the locality.

It is said that arrangements are being made to bring a contingent of Sikh Satyagrahis from Bombay to support the local Satyagrahis. Should the Sikhs come, it will mean that not only the "untouchables" of Malabar, but also the Sikhs will have to be admitted into the temple, and this will make the problem more difficult.

The annual Ekadesi festival which draws thousands of people to the temple, will be celebrated from Nov. 20 to 22. It has been the custom during the festival to allow Thiyyas into the temple on two days though Thiyyas, being an untouchable caste, are not ordinarily permitted to enter the temple. At the end of those two days a purificatory ceremony is performed. The present Satyagrahis include Thiyyas and the problem has arisen whether Thiyya Satyagrahis should be admitted, like other Thiyyas during the Ekadesi, and whether, if they be admitted, they will easily move out of the precincts after the festival.

The Satyagraha has been organised by the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee and is executed by a special Committee called the Temple Entry Satyagraha Committee.

The roads immediately surrounding the temple belong to, and are maintained, by the temple.

* * * * *

From the *Madras Mail*.

KEELAKARAI CONVERSION.

Reports have been received here of attempts at forcible conversion of Hindus to Mahomedanism at Keelakarai in the Ramnad District. Keelakarai has a large population of Mahomedans—about four thousand—while the caste-Hindus are a negligible fraction. Excepting for a few shopmen most of the caste-Hindus are dependent on the Mahomedan population for their livelihood, a good proportion of them being Adi-Dravida work people. Complaints were made to the authorities about some forcible conversions four months ago, but when the police went to make enquiries, they were told that conversion was only of a voluntary nature and in the ordinary manner. About three months back a Pandaram, belonging to a Hindu temple, was it is alleged, forcibly converted, and a Mahomedan shed was put up near the temple. Some time after this, it is alleged some of the Mahomedans began to molest Hindus. Petitions were sent up to the authorities. Thereupon, about a month ago the police instituted security proceedings before the joint Magistrate, Ramnad, against 52 Mahomedans of the place. The case is still pending.

* * * * *

From the *Hindu*.

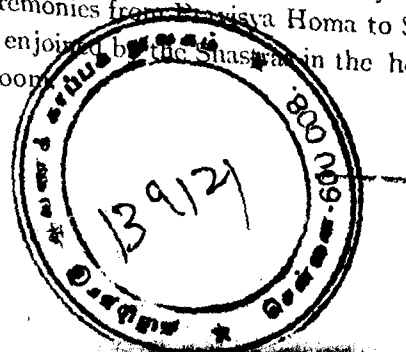
SANATANA CONFERENCE AT CHITTOOR.

RESOLUTIONS

- (1) (a) This Conference strongly condemns the Sarada Act as an unwarranted interference with Hindu religion and religious observances and as a negation of the pledge of religious neutrality guaranteed to the Indian subjects by Queen Victoria and her successors.
- (b) This conference accords its full support to the bills introduced by Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamacharya to totally repeal the Sarda Act and to exempt the Brahmins, Vaisyas and other communities amongst whom postpuberty marriage is forbidden by their religion and their religious usage.
- (2) This Conference resolves that until the Sarda Act is repealed it should be imperative duty of every religious Hindu to disobey the Act and celebrate marriages before puberty. (b) That all facilities should be given to persons brought to trouble, by such disobedience of law, (c) That Madathipathis be requested to help by sending purohits to

help the celebration of such marriage where no purohit is prepared to come forward for fear of punishment.

- (3) (a) While in full sympathy with all real movements to improve the condition of the "Untouchables" and the backward castes, this conference condemns the bill of Mr. R. K. S. Chetty as calculated to subvert the Hindu social fabric and the immemorial custom and usage of religious and charitable institutions, which custom or usage has been the only and safe guide to the ascertainment of the term of the original dedication. (b) Further, this conference is of opinion that this measure if passed, will breed endless social strifes and internecine quarrel, really antagonistic to the best interests and happiness of all classes and communities.
- (4) (a) This Conference demands that in any new constitution that may be framed, absolute freedom of religious faith and practice should be guaranteed to every citizen and to all groups and communities as a fundamental and inalienable right, subject only to the maintenance of public order and tranquility. (b) Distinct and unambiguous provision should be made prohibiting the legislature and Executive Government from passing any legislation, ordinance or order affecting the religion and religious rights and socio-religious observance and usages of any class or community, or affecting prejudicially the cultural life of any sect or community and (c) if any question should arise as to whether a particular measure is calculated to affect the religion, religious rights and observances or personal law, of any sect or community, the matter shall be taken up for consideration unless it is decided to be one not so affecting by the highest court or by a majority of four-fifths of the sect or community affected.
- (5) This Conference reiterates its condemnation of Dr. Gour's Age of Consent Amendment Bill, in so far as it affects inter-marital relations as they are of opinion that the same is unnecessary and uncalled for and that it is bound to bring about and encourage ill-motivated and indecent intrusions into the sacredness and privacy of domestic life.
- (6) This conference, while it does not object to the festivities of marriage being confined to the first day recommends that the further ceremonies from Pravisya Homa to Sesha Homa be duly performed, as enjoined by the Shastras in the house of the bride or the bridegroom.



From the Hindu.

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