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Bharata Dharma

Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

Honorary Editors : { C. V. Krishnaswami Ayyar,
K. V. Sesa Ayyangar.

VOL. XI]

AUGUST, 1933

[No. 5



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

चित्रं वटतगेमूले वृद्धा दिश्या गुरुयुवा ।

गुगेस्तु मौने 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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SOME APPRECIATIONS

MR. JINARAJADASA FOR DR. BESANT AND HIMSELF.—The attempt of the Bharata Dharma is most necessary if Hinduism is to survive as an effective force in the reorganisation of India to-day....Not only her (Dr. Besant's) sympathy but her enthusiasm is exactly with such a work as is being attempted by the Bharata Dharma.

SIR. P. S. SIVASWAMI AIYAR.—The Bharata Dharma has offered a platform for the discussion of our religious and social problem from the standpoint of modernised faith responsive to the requirements of intellectual progress and rapidly changing social and economic conditions. The articles in the journal have been thoughtful, broadminded and inspiring.

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VENKATASUBBA RAO.—The ideal of the Bharata Dharma is a lofty one that of enabling the readers to approach the problem of life in a spirit of reason....There is greater need in India to-day than ever to examine old customs and old conceptions and to discard courageously such as are bound to be unsuitable. The Bharata Dharma offers to its readers helpful suggestions in this direction.



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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THE HYMNS OF TYAGARAJA

By

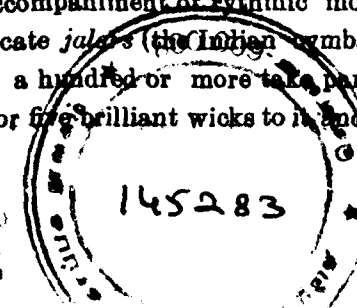
KIRTANACHARYA, ABHINAVA TYAGA BRAHMA
C. R. SREENIVASA AIYANGAR.



"The beloved of the Lord."

I find two keerthanas of the saint that take as their theme the deal Bhaktha. They are found in the collection of the Walajapet school (1921) edited by K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar (Adi & Co., Madras). The Umayalpuram edition of 1908, edited by Narasimha Bagavathar (Dowden & Co., Madras) gives us the text of one of them. I take the longer one for exposition this time; but the text is too long to be transliterated and explained word by word. In fact it has twelve *charanas*. I give a free rendering of it in English with my comments thereon. It begins with "*Atade Dhanyudu Ra. O Munasa.*" and is set to the *raga Kapi, thala Misra Chappu*. It is placed under the branch of the *Divyanama*, the songs composed by the Swami to be sung by large crowds at the same time, and in union. They form the choral and collective music of our people. Theerthanarayana Yati, Bhadrachala Ramadas Swami, Vijaya-gopalaswami, Bhadradrivasa Swami, Purandara Vithala, Ramalingaswami and other saints and singers have given us similar Namavalis. Of course these are sung to the accompaniment of rhythmic movements, punctuated by the tinkle of the delicate *jals* (the Indian bimbals, light and small). Sometimes as many as a hundred or more take part in it, round a tall bronze lamp with four or five brilliant wicks to it, and decked with flowers,

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sandal paste, scarlet powder, and the like. The movements gradually take a brisk and lively turn; the pace grows hot and fast; double, treble, and quadruple time is taken; and the effect is simply magnificent, weird, nay indescribable.

Let me come to the text. "O, my heart! Know you the beloved of the Lord? He is the thrice blessed one. The innermost sanctuary of his soul enshrines, for ever, the divine feet of the Lord of Seeta. In this he but devoutly follows the steps of the son of the Lord Vayu (The Swami voices the same sentiment in a hymn in Raga *Asaveri*, opening with "*Lekana*," the last of the *charanas* tells us that Maruti finds perennial delight and joy in meditating upon the glory of the feet of Sri Rama, while his brothers and Seeta appropriate to themselves other items connected with the Lord as the source of their bliss.)"

"His feet are firmly set on the path of service, that is but another name for evolution and salvation. His eyes are ever fixed on the beacon that shines from afar and beckons him towards it. Praise and prayer occupy him day and night. They elevate him to supernal heights of meditation; they bathe him in ineffable seas of bliss. The names and the glories of the Lord of Time find the best and the most beautiful expression through him."

"Like the *gandharva*, Tumburu, the premier singer of the heaven world, he handles the Tambura most delicately and deftly to evoke from it, strains of divine melody. To him is accorded the unique privilege of singing and dancing before the Lord and His holy presence, the Lord of Mercy."

"His place is for ever among the elect of the Lord, the good and the holy. He has his own ways of making a livelihood; he has his own ways of passing time; they are joyful, profitable and elevating. He is a past-master in quenching the fires of passion and desire, with the sweet and lovely streams of immortality. He knows from utter conviction that everything down here in this world is but a dream, a snare. He learns and passes on what he has learnt to those that crave for it."

"He has put behind himself all memories of desire and want and yearning and the pain and sorrows that follow them; he does not engage in any line of action that might not be useful and beneficial to the world. All his hopes, all his prayers, and his very soul are centred in the feet of Sri Rama, whose praise, the morning stars sing in boundless joy. He comes of a race and line and family and parents of the utmost purity, and spirituality. To them has been given the sole and unique privilege of transcending the realms of ignorance and delusion;

and this eminence, have they won for all time."

"It matters very little whether he is on the path of action or whether he is engaged in works of usefulness to others; it is enough that he is the master of the supreme secret of the divine names of Rama."

"The goods of this world, power, affluence, name, and such like have no influence over him; he is not the slave of passion; he is not clay to be moulded by the fingers of love and hate, greed and lust. He does not suit himself to all and sundry and ignore his individuality completely so that he might effect his purpose; he is not a shadow, an echo, a reflection of those from whom he expects anything. He does not set himself to work sorrow, and evil and destruction to those who stand in the way of the fulfilment of his desires."

"Even in the company of the devout, there may be some who have not passed beyond the stage of mere orthodox exoteric superficial repetition of the name of Rama; but he transcends them; he pierces through the veil into that which is behind; he sees right into the heart of the mystery of being and is not swerved from it by any influence whatsoever."

"He has trod the path of temptation, trial, and failure; he has groped his way through the valley of the shadow of death and ignorance; his heart has been seared deep and irrevocably with pain suffering and agony; he has seen slipping away from his grasp everything that seemed to him good, happy, fruitful, and helpful. Yet he falters not; he blenches not; his eye is as clear and calm and piercing as ever; the smile of contempt fades not from his lips and the mark of power indomitable, invulnerable, is set on his forehead. Nay, he has passed through the hall of learning, of wisdom, of service, and is now in the fathomless depths of bliss, the bliss that knows no end, the bliss unalloyed with any foreign element; the bliss of action, of usefulness, of being everything, to those whom his heart embraces. You cannot find him in the ranks of the souls whom passion drives on to sisyphus-like activities; you cannot come upon him in the fold of those that are weighted by sloth, idleness, carelessness, stupor, and hopeless sluggishness—the progeny of dark ignorance. He has surrendered himself heart and soul to the divine will and rests content in it."

Such is the ideal that the swami placed before himself such is the ideal towards which he marched on as a pilgrim, sorefooted and weary; such is the ideal he achieved; and such is the ideal that welcomed him; with the words "My beloved! come unto me; take your place by my side, and take my yoke upon thee."

VOICES IN THE GITA.*

BY

SADHU T. L. VASWANI.

Tonight let my words be very few and very simple. Truth is simple, and truth is not talkative. The Bhagavad Gita has borne witness through ages to wonderful truths concerning the deeper values of life. Sometimes studying the Gita in hours of silence, I have felt as though I were in a Temple listening to the temple-bells, ringing with voices, wonderful voices. There is time, I think, to refer, and very briefly, to two of these voices.

The first is expressed in the words "*Uttishtha Parantapa*" ("Stand up O Arjuna"). Every one of us is, potentially, a symbol of Arjuna; and so to every one comes the voice of the Gita:—*Uttishtha*! Stand up! Oh Arjuna, stand up! "Stand up"! What for? The Gita calls us to a cult of manhood. There are wrongs to be righted! there are evils within us and evils outside us. Current education is mistaken, just because it does not develop manhood. I wished the Gita were an integral part of the education of Young India. Arjuna feels despondent, and says to Shri Krishna:—"Master: I cannot fight." "Unto this despondent Arjuna, the Master says:—"Uttishtha; *uttishtha*! Stand up Arjuna;" For life is a battlefield. Look around you! There are evils; there are cruel customs which must go. Where are Arjuna's today? Manly men? Warriors of the Spirit? Soft men I find in schools and colleges. But to listen to the Gita is to know that soft living is wrong living.

The second voice I hear as I listen to the temple-bells of the Gita is:—"Sarva Dharman parityjya, Mamakem sharnam vraja". Shri Krishna says to Arjuna:—"Give up all dharmas"! Renounce, renounce, renounce the so-called 'religions'; are they better than creeds and controversies? "Come alone unto Me! says Krishna. Alas! We have fought, quarrelled, wrangled in the name of "religion". We have made religion a battlefield of sectarianism. All sectarianism must go; creeds must go; labels must go; dogmas must go; ecclesiasticism must go, if, indeed, we are to grow in the life of the Spirit. Renounce creeds, if you would announce the Divinity within you.

To live the true spiritual life, to announce the authentic Gospel of Wisdom, renounce credalism, ecclesiasticism. "Come unto me"? says the Master. In the first voice, the master-word is *uttishtha*! In the second the word is "*arpanam*". The truth of "*uttishtha*" needs to be blended with the truth of "*arpanam*". Often we "stand up" with courage to fight

* From a recent address at the Gita Class, Hyderabad (Sind).

evil. But we become aggressive, proud, selfconscious. *Ahankar* (egoism) sets in. In many cases, men of action are men of *ahankar*. Ambition grows. We say we are "active"; we become aggressive! Our "activity" is often stung by the serpent of ambition. A cult of ambition is broad. Shri Krishna rebukes the cult of ambition and calls us to a life of "*arpanam*", self-dedication. Activity without *arpanam* becomes destructive. He truly fights who surrenders himself and his "work" at the Lotus feet of the Lord. We need the truth of "*uttishtha*" but, also, that of "*arpanam*", self-dedication. "Work, work",—says the modern man. Carlyle preached the gospel of "produce! produce"! This "gospel of work" has its value. We are working; we are active. But consider calmly what it is we are "producing"! Abortions? Or children of life and love? We are active often to organise selfishness and hate. Modern life needs to understand the truth that mere "activity" is not the true goal of life. Let us be active; but let our activity be inspired by a spirit of self-dedication to the Lord. *Not the cult of ambition but the call to dedicated life is the Gospel of the Gita.*

Blend the truth of "*uttishtha*" with the truth of "*arpanam*", and your life will be filled with joy.

There is the story of Irania, a Persian, who is given a manuscript to read. To him the manuscript is a sacred scripture. He reads it carefully. Certain words attract his attention. In rough English translation, they read:—"O labourer! art thou lifting the wood? Lift it in faith, so that the wood may help in building the Master's temple! Oh peasant! art thou collecting cotton? Pick up cotton with the aspiration that thy cotton may become a wick in the lamp of the Master!" There you have, briefly expressed, the beauty of the life of *arpanam*. Yes; lift the wood in the faith that the wood you are lifting may help in building the Master's temple! Yes; collect cotton, but with the aspiration that thy cotton may become a wick in the sacred lamp. Individualism is in the air. The Gita calls us to a nobler vision,—calls us to that Life of the Spirit wherein the individual is "noughted" and the Lord of Love becomes our All-in-all.

He plays upon the Flute!
And lo! the Yamuna overflows!
He sits in Gokul looking silently!
And lo! the forest-flowers bloom!

SANATANA DHARMA.
UNTOUCHABILITY AND DIVORCE.

BY

C. V. KRISHNASWAMI AYYAR.

(Continued from page 77.)

On the question of divorce the two eminent speakers were equally hard on the reformers. Mr. K. G. Sessa Ayyar stated that marriage should be a life-long union and added that 'a little thought' will show it, as though anyone seriously suggested that it should be otherwise in ordinary circumstances. He said that though men may not suffer by a temporary marriage for the gratification of passion, in the case of a woman, as matrimony leads to maternity, her position and that of her child will depend materially on the subsistence of her legal relation to her husband, and that she and her children will be the victims that will suffer badly if there be a chance of uncertainty in the continuance of the marriage relationship, and that therefore the attempt to provide for dissolution and divorce cannot be too strongly condemned. But what about the cases where her position and that of her children would be materially endangered by the continuance of the relationship? What is the great advantage which she would gain by being tied to a penniless man—who, for example, has discarded her and taken another in her place either as wife or as concubine? There is no uncertainty there as to her degradation. Who in his senses wants the relationship of husband and wife to be uncertain? Not even the Soviet Russian. It is exactly in cases where the situation has become detrimental to the woman or her child that most reformers want divorce to come in and ease the situation. No one seriously advocates divorce at the pleasure or whim of either party. So no man can endanger a woman's position by divorcing her merely because his passion has been quenched. The right of divorce is to be hemmed in by numerous restrictions. There may be justifiable difference of opinion as to those restrictions. Some may want more and some less. Some may say, with much reason on their side, that the grounds for allowing divorce tabled in the Bill now before the Legislative Assembly are not such as should be permitted, at any rate are not such as should be taken for legislation at the beginning. But to condemn divorce altogether is a different thing. Evidently, it was a realisation of this that made Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar take the wider stand that according to the Hindu Sastras the marriage tie is indissoluble. He is too well read a lawyer to have missed reading Vishnu, Vasishta and Parasara Dharma

Sastras. The first two permit remarriage of a girl widow whose first marriage has not been consummated (even this is not allowed to-day) and Parasara permits a woman to take another husband when her first husband is lost (unheard of), or dies, or becomes impotent or an outcaste or an ascetic. No doubt some commentators have stated that this provision relates not to this Kaliyuga but to a previous Yuga. But Parasara's Smriti is intended specially for Kaliyuga, and it says so expressly. Even if it be otherwise, what becomes of Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar's wide statement. If she could have taken a second husband in a previous Yuga the prohibition can certainly not be Sanatana Dharma. It is on the commentators' own showing only a Yuga Dharma. There are also persons who would say that "Pathi" in that verse does not mean a husband. But that obviously is incorrect. This is not the opinion of the reformers only; so orthodox a scholar as Mr. R. Nagaraja Sarma stated recently that the text of Parasara means what it says, viz, a second husband. Others point out that Parasara himself says that a woman who does not take a second husband is not a *Sadvi*. But no one wants every woman to ask for divorce even when the law allows it. All divorce laws are only to be permissive, and social opinion will always see to it that they are not abused. Be that as it may, Parasara's recommendation does not show that the marriage is indissoluble. Further it would seem to be utterly unjustifiable to say, as Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar did, that divorce has become the breeding ground of legalised libertinism. Swami Vivekananda who knew America (where divorce is easy) well stated on more than one occasion that the level of womanly virtue and devotion to one's husband there was as high as anywhere else, not excepting India. Said the Swamiji of American women. "I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. How pure and chaste they are here." The truth is that women in general, in all ages and in all climes, knew what was to their interest and would not easily throw away their great virtues of modesty and chastity, whatever freedom the law may give them.

Should our present day legislatures be permitted to interfere in such matters? One may agree to say "no" if there is any other method available. But what is the alternative? Hindu Society is disorganised. Leaders do not care to lead, and even when they attempt to lead they are not followed. Mamool has become law and such legal obstacles can be set up against even healthy changes. Legal fetters can be effectively, and in reasonable time, be removed, only by the legislature. Even in cases where

the Sastras prohibit a thing there is no sanction to enforce obedience to the Sastraic prohibition. For example, no one, not even the most orthodox, can say that the Sastras permit the marriage of a girl below seven years of age or of a boy who has not finished his Vedic studies. Yet what is there to prevent such marriages in Hindu India to-day. Social opinion does not, and Sanatanists do not endeavour to set it right. So one has to rely on the one body that can prevent such a marriage, namely, the Legislature. If the Sanatanists would devise some other remedy, then there will be some justification for the objection to the legislature interfering. It may be that in such cases all the members of the legislature should not be allowed to vote but only those who are real Hindus. It may also be that when the measure is opposed by an appreciable minority the vote of the majority should not prevail. It may be that when a radical change is to be effected the Hindu members should be asked to resign and stand for election on that issue before being allowed to vote. It may be that other safe-guards should be provided for insuring the return of the candidates by the minorities affected, such as election by proportional representation, so that the no-changers may get as many as they can into the legislature. The Sanatanists do not take any such line of action, but would say that the legislatures should not touch any social usage because some Hindus honestly believe it to be a religious usage or is a part of what they consider to be Sanatana Dharma. To heed to such a cry is to assist at the petrification of Hindu Society at the instance of a few. Majority rule may be at times a tyranny, but the tyranny will still be there when the few, not always or demonstrably correct, are allowed to impede the many.

The Bengali wife worships her husband, and serves her children and her household with all the rapt idealism of the saints. The women of Maharashtra are as strong and as actual as any in the West. The Rajputani queen prides herself on the unflinching courage of her race, that would follow her husband even into the funeral fire, yet will not permit a king to name his wife as amongst his subjects. The woman of Madras struggles with agony to reach the spiritual pole-star, building up again and again, like some careful beaver, any fragment of her wall of custom that the resistless tides of the modern world may attempt to break away. And the daughters of Guzerat are, like the women of merchant-peoples everywhere, soft and silken and flower-like, dainty and clinging as a dream.

SISTER NIVEDITA.

GAYATRI AS EXPIATION.

K. V. SETHA AIYANGAR.

This is the month when the twice-born Hindus by reciting the *Gayatri* 1008 times do expiation for all the sins of commission and omission done during the year that has gone by. It would be relevant to ask the question how does *Gayatri* redeem a man from sin? Does it destroy or counteract the thoughtless and deliberate wrongs that he has done? Does it arrest and isolate the currents of evil thought and feeling that he has generated and prevent their doing further mischief in the world around? Does it confer on the reciter a personal exemption from the unpleasant but inevitable results of his own activity in the mental, emotional and physical worlds? How are we to interpret its working to ourselves if the faith of our forefathers is a well founded faith and not an illusion in a world of illusions.

In answering these questions it is assumed that every sin, wrong and evil is a lapse from Dharma, that is to say from that ideal reaction to the environment of the moment which will take the individual and the environment one step forward—however infinitesimal in the path of evolution. Dharma in this sense is relative and varying. Each one has to discover it for himself and conform to it. The standardisation of Dharma for different groups under different conditions is a matter for sociological science. If therefore a man has sinned, ie, done that which has reacted adversely both on him and on his environment, it ought to be possible to put himself right and make reparation for the harm that has been done. In the Hindu tradition there is nothing more effectively adopted for this purpose than the *Gayatri*. *Gayatri* is a *Mahamantra* which literally means the great redemptive influence. *Gayatri* itself means that which protects or redeems or elevates; we may understand it to represent the 'Evolutionary Urge,' 'the Power which moves to Good' by which 'that which was good doth become better, best.' By invoking the *Gayatri* men attract unto themselves to the measure of their capacity a portion of that urge. By its invocation the individual becomes gradually a conscious and deliberate conformist and co-operator with the scheme of evolution. A knowing and faithful recitation of the *Gayatri* is therefore one of the highest forms of worship. A prolonged and concentrated meditation upon it is a release of spiritual energy. Such release is calculated to purify the individual and set him right once again in his pursuit of Dharma. The lost pace in his progress is made up to some extent. That is not all. The energies that are liberated in such worship

have their inevitable reaction on the outside world. To what extent they neutralise the evil that has been done and which has had a start may be a matter of speculation. But that they do stimulate the good in the heart of things is of the very nature of the *Gayatri*. Though the working of the Law of Karma is immutable and though like the writing of the 'moving finger,' an act which has been done is ineffaceable, yet the individual responsible can by his own later exertion lift himself—and his surroundings too—to a plane where, in spite of the play of the former 'evil', the incidence of its injury is materially diminished. In this way the recitation of the *Gayatri* on a nation wide scale becomes a preparation of 'the way of the Lord' and making 'His paths straight'.

One further question arises, why not then make the *Gayatri* the national prayer for all Hindus—if it can be done—and the *Gayatri* day the day of National prayer? This question will be taken up on a later occasion.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on ;

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see

The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou

Shouldst lead me on ;

I loved to choose and see my path ; but now

Lead Thou me on ;

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will : remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still

Will lead me on,

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till

The night is gone ;

And with the morn those angel faces smile,

Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Cardinal Newman.

WOMAN IN SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION.

On equal Terms with Men.

BY

B. PAPERNOVA.

[Soviet Russia is the Utopia of many young men and women, in this country, who are not satisfied with their present conditions. Whether the ideals of the U. S. S. R. are desirable or not, no one who wishes to understand the mentality of a very active part of Young India can afford to be ignorant of what is being done in Lenin's Country. The following from the pen of a distinguished Russian writer will be found very instructive by many readers of the Bharata Dharma, and we therefore gladly give the article in full. We are indebted to the Soviet Cultural Review for it. Much that is found in it may not apply to Hindu India; much may be, in essence, undesirable, and there may be honest differences of opinion about some of the changes effected. But there can be little doubt that all that the writer says is of great interest. Ed].

"Social progress may be gauged with accuracy by the social status of the feminine sex."

K. MARX.

The woman under tsarism was oppressed by a threefold yoke : the tsarist rule, the church and the family

The old tsarist Russia was known as a country of crude, uncultured Asiatic traditions, and this was fully reflected in the status of the woman.

Our young generation, who has grown up during the Revolution, cannot even imagine all the base and rough treatment to which women were subjected in this country but a trifle over fifteen years ago.

The tsarist rule legalised the inequality, the degraded status of the feminine portion of the population. In Volume 10 of the Code of Laws of tsarist Russia there were clauses like the following :

"Clause 102. Wives may not be hired without the permission of their husbands."

"Clause 103. The wife must follow her husband."

And in clause 107 it is bluntly stated: "The wife must obey her husband as the head of the family, abide by him in affection, deference, and unbounded obedience, render unto him every accommodation and attachment."

Thus, the wife under the law became entirely the property of her husband. Without his permission she had no right to work, to earn the

means of livelihood; she was registered on her husband's passport and could not go away or live apart from him. If she did go away, or if she refused to follow him into another town, she was restored to her husband by the police, like an escaped criminal. She had no rights over her children; these belonged entirely to the husband. Add to all this the fact that marriage in bourgeois society is virtually a commercial transaction, and that in the majority of cases nuptial knots were tied without any mutual affection,—and it will be readily realised what a miserable existence it was for a woman to spend the whole of her life in abject obedience to an unloved husband.

Such was the status of married women. Still worse was the position of the girl who failed to get legally married and became a mother without matrimony. Under tsarist laws she had no claim whatever on the father of her child. She was subjected to humiliation and ridicule. Frequently she was driven away from home, ostracised by bourgeois society. The brand of shame reposed upon the brow of the "illegitimate" child for life. Frequently, in order to escape a life of unrelieved misery and starvation for herself and her child, the unfortunate mother committed suicide after strangling her child.

Needless to say, the major victim of those iniquitous laws was the working woman, the peasant woman, the humble and voiceless Eastern woman. Bourgeois women managed, by means of money and influence in official quarters, to escape the rigours of the law.

Capitalist exploitation doomed the working woman to misery and semi-starvation, to overwork, and to premature old age.

"We used to work, without rest days, from four in the morning till ten at night", relates Makarova a working woman of the Trekhgorny textile mill in Moscow. Though working such long hours, she earned together with her husband a paltry 12—15 rubles a month on which they had to support a family of four people. The living conditions of factory workers were the lowest imaginable. Frequently in one small room of the common barracks three or four families were domiciled. "There were four families of us living in one dingy room, and when I gave birth to a child, we were put in another room with another couple. They had four children, I had a baby and four adults", relates Meshcheriakova, a working woman of the Prokhorov textile mill.

In pre-revolutionary days there were no pre-school establishments to take care of the children of working mothers. Thus the working woman crouched under the double burden of excessively long working hours and

domestic drudgery. There was no time left for cultural recreation. No outlook for a better life. The manufacturer was not at all interested in raising the skill and the earning capacity of his working women.

Miserable was also the position of the peasant woman in bourgeois-landlord Russia. Driven by destitution, the poor peasant woman had to go out for work on the outside, slaving for the landlord, the kulak, or the village priest. Women drudged from dawn till dusk for a miserable pittance, with no conditions of contract. A life of ignorance and superstition, unbearable drudgery, complete disfranchisement, and illiteracy (no more than 13% of the women were literate), such was the lot of the peasant woman.

The worst exploited and the most inhumanly treated was the woman of the East

Hard as were the conditions of working women in tsarist Russia, infinitely worse were the conditions of the toiling women in the East.

Prior to the October Revolution the life of the Eastern woman was one round of misery from the cradle to the grave. If a mother gave birth to a girl she was subjected to universal scorn, and that day was to her one of grief and sorrow. It was considered impolite to remember a woman after her death. The woman was considered an unclean and despised creature. According to custom in North Caucasus, it was undignified for a man to shake hands with a woman. The woman was not allowed to bear a child in the living quarters of the house. In the mountain hamlets they used to build for such purpose a stone cell which resembled a dog's kennel, and in the villages the prospective mother was put in the so-called "filth hut". There the mother gave birth to the child in isolation, without any aid or assistance, on the cold earthen floor. Many women perished on account of those savage customs. Many mothers froze to death together with their babies, others died from blood-poisoning.

The life of the Eastern woman was confined within the four walls of her house. Recluseness of women was the usual thing in the East. An Uzbekian or Turkic woman was not allowed to leave her house without the permission of her husband or father. In the street her face and figure had to be covered by a thick veil called "parandaja." A girl began to wear this parandaja at the age of nine or ten and never left it until her death.

No one in the East asked for a girl's consent to marriage. Thus, according to the Adat unwritten law of Ingushetia, the parents of the

woman or the girl, having received a "kalym" (purchase price), gave her away in marriage without asking her consent. In North Caucasus for the least violation of the Adat the unfortunate woman or girl would be thrown down into the precipice or tied to the "black stone," and the whole village would gather around and spit in her face and mock her. It was already under Soviet rule that in one of the mountain hamlets of Caucasus a cellar was unearthed in which a girl had been kept tied by a chain to a post for disobeying her kulak parents.

The Moslem creed allows the "faithfull" to have as many as four wives and concubines "without number". He is enjoined by the Koran to be equally just to each of his wives; whereas the woman may have only one husband.

The wife is an unpaid working force, and polygamy was thus a means for the exploitation of women. Only the rich man could afford to purchase and keep many wives. Among the nomads (in Turkmenistan and Kazakstan) the hardest work was done by the women, and there were cases when the first wife begged her husband to purchase a second wife to help her. She would then, on her husband's orders, go out to look for a candidate.

Here is the story of the past as told by a Turkoman woman of Ashkhabad (capital of Turkmenistan): "Takko-Alla-Verdy-Kyzy, resident of the hamlet of Handjik in the district of Geoktepe; at the age of 17 was sold by her uncle for several camels and a few silver ornaments to the old man Redjeb-Ovez-Ogly. He had a wife and four grown up daughters. Kyzy was humiliated by the husband and by the whole family, they subjected her to superhuman toil while starving her. Once, having tied her legs to the roof of the tent, they beat her with stones, burned her body with fire, and pulled her hair. She lived in the gloomiest and filthiest corner of the tent; there, on a heap of ashes, she slept and ate."

The ancient customs of seclusion forbade the women to have any independent earnings. The Eastern woman was not even allowed to go out marketing or shopping. A Turkoman woman who had gone to town would be denounced as a "kiafir"—a traitor to God, an infidel, a vicious and immoral woman. The exploiters knew quite well that independent toil would give the Eastern woman freedom, and they deprived her of this means of escape.

The Eastern woman could not be a hired worker. The Moslem believer was forbidden to keep a strange woman in the house. A woman

could live in a strange house only as a close relative. This served as a cloak for the most cruel exploitation of poor women relatives.

And if for the wife of the merchant, or for any woman belonging to the bourgeoisie, the custom of seclusion was boresome captivity and idleness, for the poor woman it was a curse and a bane.

A poor Uzbek widow, having many children to keep, was doomed by the law of seclusion to starvation and most cruel exploitation. Forbidden to earn a livelihood out of the house, she was compelled to eke out an existence by needle work at home, stitching embroidered caps, carpets, and quilts for the middlemen, being entirely at their mercy. Unable to sell her own products in the market, she timidly handed them over to the middleman, holding out her hand through the half-closed door. The middleman, taking advantage of her helplessness, charged abominable prices for yarn and thread while paying her a paltry pittance for her work.

The poor people in town and village were cruelly tormented by the laws of seclusion. Many working hands were needed on the land, but the exploiters compelled the woman to stay at home, deliberately depriving her of the possibility to gain independence and to be engaged in socially useful labour.

Such were the conditions 15 years ago. All this has now gone into oblivion and vanished for ever. These stories are now being narrated by grandmothers to their grandchildren as a nightmare of the past. "The bolshevik Soviet Revolution", says Lenin, "hews as deeply at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as no party and no revolution in the world ever dared to do."

In the USSR there is not a trace left of the inequality of woman with man under the law.

The rule of Soviets has done away forever with the exploitation of the labour of women, and the women in this country now enjoy absolute equality. Everywhere in the USSR this equality of the sexes is recognised. Women take part in the government of the country. There are women judges, chairmen of Soviets, managers and directors of industrial concerns, specialists, research workers, trade-union and party officials, members of the government, people's commissaries.

During the very first months of its existence, Soviet rule brought about a radical change in legislation concerning women.

"The Soviet Republic", said Lenin, "has left no shred of those laws which subjected, wronged, and frequently humiliated women."

The Soviet Constitution establishes full equality for women. The laws on marriage, family, divorce, tutelage, children born without matrimony, are not only based on full equality, but they also assure all the essential conditions for raising a healthy offspring without impairing the health and working ability of the mother. Night work in factories is forbidden for pregnant and nursing women. A vacation of four months with full pay is given to mothers (two months before and two months after childbirth). During six months after child-birth the working woman is entitled to extra rest pauses totaling up to two hours daily.

The hypocritical stigma of "illegitimate" birth has been entirely banished from the Soviet lawbooks. The duty of maintaining the child rests on both parents. Thus hundreds of thousands of children who were branded by the stigma of "illegitimacy" under the old regime have obtained now the same rights as the "legitimately" born. If one of the parents fails in the duty of maintaining the child, the other parent has the right to claim maintenance through the court. The fact of registration of matrimony has no influence on the status of the child. If the father earns wages, he must pay the amount fixed by the court for the upkeep of the child. The father has no preferential rights whatsoever over the child. The child remains with him who can best educate it and make it into a worthy and useful member of the socialist society.

Clause 33 of the family code of the RSFSR says: "The Soviet Republics do not recognise the disfranchised status of the woman in the family. In the RSFSR there is no "head" of the family—father and mother bear equal rights and responsibilities in the family."

To the Eastern woman the revolutionary Soviet laws have opened up a new and unprecedented page which exceeds the boldest dreams ever entertained. They have freed her from the stone walls of seclusion, from the captivity of religious superstition, and put her on the high road to bright and happy future. However, to amplify the legislation which granted equal citizenship rights to the Eastern woman by the Soviet Decree of December 18/19, 1917, a vast amount of political and educational activity had to be carried on among the masses. In 1920 the judicial authorities of Bashkiria, Kirghizia, Azerbaidjan, and other national republics issued special rulings against the criminal exploitation and selling of women that was sanctified by ancient tradition.

Clause 197 says: "The compulsion of a woman into marriage or co-habitation, as well as ravishing a woman for such purposes, is punishable by imprisonment for a term of up to two years."

Clause 198. "The marriage with a person under marrying age is punishable by imprisonment for a term of up to two years."

Polygamy is declared a crime. Clause 199 provides a penalty for bygamy or polygamy of a fine up to one thousand rubles as well as privation of liberty.

The woman has become an active builder of socialist society

Soviet rule, however, was not contented with mere legislation of equality for women. The dark, downtrodden, illiterate semi-slave was to be turned into an active fighter for socialism. And this could come only as the result of continued, persistent activity by the Party and the government in combatting the lingering superstitions among the toiling masses and among the masses of the women themselves. It was no easy matter to give up at short notice the ancient traditions handed down from generation to generation. An active fight had to be waged against the influence of the "bai" the priest, and the mullah, to whose interest it was to keep the woman in abject slavery using her as a channel for their hostile propaganda against the proletarian State.

Those forces resorted to intimidation and to the dastardly assassination of women who dared defy the Moslem faith and throw off the veil. They circulated all kinds of wild rumours on alledged socialisation of women, on taking away the children from their parents, sparing no colours to calumniate the work of the Soviet kindergartens and creches. All in order to discourage the women from aspiring to the free and happy life of conscious citizenship.

Now, in the 16th year of Soviet rule, the results of this persistent and stubborn activity may be summarised. It may be safely stated that the toiling woman has become an active participator in socialist construction. The woman has taken an honourable place in industry as well as in agriculture, in scientific work as well as in the government of the country.

In 1929, according to data of the People's Commissariat of Labour of the USSR, there were 827,600 women employed in industry; in the final year of the Five-Year Plan there were 1,700,000 (or 33% of the total) women engaged in industry.

Furthermore, the combined number of women engaged in industry and agriculture reached on January 1st, 1933, the total of over 6 million people (or 33.7% of all the workers), as against 3,697,000 on October 1st, 1930.

The wide mechanisation of industrial processes which has considerably eased the conditions of labour, and also the extensive organisation of

cultural and social services to the workers, have resulted in considerable extension of the field of activity where women's labour could be applied. Women are now engaged in a number of new occupations and new branches of national economy in which women's labour was almost unapplied in the past (metallurgy, mining, building operations, transport, etc.). Thus, the ratio of women in the coal-mining industry increased from 9.7% in 1926 to 14.5% in 1931, in metallurgy from 9.6 to 17.4%, and in machine-building from 9.3 to 18.9%.

On October 1st, 1931, there were 67,600 women employed in the electrical engineering, 45,500 in the automobile-transport industry, 182,600 in non-ferrous metals industry etc. There is no branch of industry in which women do not participate now. With the growing employment of women's labour there is also a growing number of women on skilled work, in industrial management, etc. Thus, in the production of agricultural machinery the ratio of women fitters has risen from 9% in 1926 to 20.2% in 1931, of electricians from 0 to 8.8%, of agronomists from 9.1 to 14%, of higher technical personnel from 3.1 to 7.4%. There is already a number of women occupying commanding positions in industry who are capably discharging their responsibilities.

Care of children, domestic drudgery are no more a burden to the woman

"You all know", Lenin once said, "that even under full equality there still remains the virtual subjection of the woman, because she is burdened with the whole of the domestic drudgery. This domestic drudgery, in the majority of cases, represents the most unproductive, the wildest and the hardest labour that is performed by women."

Our socialist construction is accompanied by the reduction of the working day to seven hours, by systematic increases in the wages, and by a whole series of measures which emancipate the women from the "wildest and hardest labour" which domestic drudgery constitutes. In 1927/28 the amount of 135 million rubles was spent on communal construction, 350 million rubles in 1929/30, and 485.5 million rubles in 1931. Special grants are made for the organisation of communal laundries, children's playgrounds, etc.

If in 1929 in the towns and industrial centres there were 55,600 children looked after by the creches, in 1932 there were already 385,000. In the leading branches of industry no less than 75% of the women workers have the services of the creches. In 1932, 2,500,000 children of

working women in the leading industries, or 58%, were served by the system of pre-school education, rising to 80% in the basic group of industries (according to data by the People's Commissariat of Labour of the USSR). There has also been a colossal growth in the network of public feeding establishments (from 2 million meals in 1929 to nearly 20 million meals in 1932). The grants for social insurance purposes were increased three and a half times.

There exists a growing network of sanatoria and homes of rest, and of special establishments for children. Special waiting rooms for mothers and children have been fitted out at railway stations, special cars on railway trains and on tramways. The old textile woman worker Meshtcheryakova of the "Prokhorov" mill no longer lives in a dingy room together with three other families, but lives alone with her family in a spacious, sunny and clean apartment in a new house. Her older son is graduating from the technical college and in a few months will become an engineer. The younger children are attending school. The whole family takes meals at the factory restaurant.

The working women are not only mastering the technique of production and constantly increasing their skill, but are also becoming conscious builders, setting up examples of the genuine socialist attitude towards labour. They take active part in fighting for the fulfilment of industrial plans, for shock tempo in production. On January 1st, 1932, the ratio of women shock workers was 65.3% as against 64% of the men. An investigation of women's labour in a number of factories has shown the productivity of skilled women's labour to be by no means inferior to that of the men.

The Eastern woman is keeping pace with the working women of the other republics of the Union.

The women of Turkmenistan, Caucasus, etc., having discarded the veil, are joining industrial production and diligently studying and mastering technique. In 1926 there were 400 Turkic women working in the enterprises of Baku, and in 1931 there were 2,500, an increase of 525%. There are at present 4,955 Turkic women employed in industrial production in Azerbaidjan.

(To be continued.)

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