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VOL. II. JULY, 1934. No. 1.

Regeneration of Hindu Society

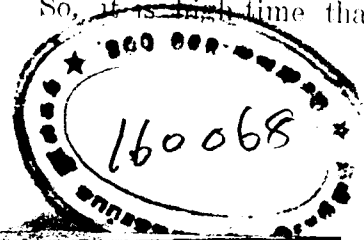
*B*haratavarsha is now passing through a crisis. Economical and political depression, suspension of activity in working quarters add to the sufferings of the people. Dispeace and discontentment reign supreme everywhere. How to keep the body and soul together, is the problem of problems. The Government of the country are being battered by the intelligentsia. The thinking man of the land is of the opinion that the advent of a *Swaraj* Government will usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. We doubt the soundness and reasonableness of this supposition.

In this universe everything is pre-ordained, for, the effect must be commensurate with the cause, neither more nor less; a ball set in motion can only run a distance proportionate to the momentum imparted to it and no more; and in such

a manner every object appears governed and controlled by a certain Law—a Law which is eternal and universal in its application, which will go on asserting itself whatever may be man's ignorance about it and whatever may be man's prejudices against it, and which compels man to realise now and then the truth that human society cannot progress onwards unless it is built on the firm rocky foundation of that Universal Law, unless man's duties and responsibilities are governed by the principles which underlie the splendid divisions of *Varnashrama Dharma*. The present chaotic condition of the Hindu society is the result of some unpardonable tendencies which have been working in it for some time past—the tendencies that have tended to sap the very life-blood of the nation. An utter dislike and hatred for everything old and ancient, a craze for everything new and modern, communal rancour, recklessness of social life, gratuitous interference with the liberty of conscience and above all disunion—these are mainly responsible for the existing state of disorganisation and decadence of the Hindu society. The present-day Hindu society is no longer a homogenous whole but consists of disintegrated groups—one group still having faith and obedience to the old order of *Varnashrama Dharma*; while another group trying to introduce changes and reforms, of western pattern, into the Hindu society; and a third group, which represents the majority of the people, caring neither for their present nor for their future. Thus we see a lamentable lack of unifying, integrating and wholesome forces in the Hindu society of to-day. Unity among Hindus is the supreme need of the hour when we consider the nature and the temper of the times through which we have been passing. We witness daily horrible communal atrocities perpetrated by non-Hindus upon Hindus; what have we done to check these dangerous forces? The much-maligned Communal Award has done the greatest injustice and iniquity to the Hindu community. So, it is high time that the Hindus welded all their split forces

into one single strong society and worked hard for the notable augmentation of the prestige of their Mother country.

But how to effect this much-needed union? It is really a happy sign of the times that H. H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Puri and other true Hindu leaders of the community have fully realised the gravity of the situation and have appealed to the Hindus to organise themselves at least for self-protection. The Social Reformers, who are also Hindus, proclaim that unless the caste system is abolished, there is no chance of the Hindu society getting unity and social cohesion. H. H. Sri Acharya of Puri and his followers take strong objection to this view and they assert that so long as their religious rights in general and their liberty of conscience in particular are meddled with there is absolutely no possibility of visualising a united Hindu community. We think, that in as much as the caste system forms a splendid bulwark of the Hindu Society, the caste is *not* responsible for the demoralisation and disintegration of the Hindu community; it is due mainly to a mentality of some of the Hindus, who are not well-versed in the principles of *Varnashrama Dharma* and who are admirers and followers of western civilisation and culture, to get power and privilege to tyrannise over the minority (in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity) thereby denying them justice and equity. According to *Varnashrama Dharma* (which is *Sanatana Dharma*) the system of *Varnas* was created by the Lord Himself; so, to a true Hindu the system of caste would not appear to be a disintegrating element but would appear to be a most potent and unifying and purifying force in Hindu Society. When the Hindu Society, based as it is on the bedrock of *Sanatana Dharma* requires its members to do their prescribed duty, it is incumbent upon them to obey, if they really have the welfare of their community at heart. When they forget their duty, they begin to blunder and every such blundering conduct of theirs leads to the path of their decline and fall. And that exactly has been the position of our society.



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But quite different is the case with the Moslem community. A Moslem, however ignorant and illiterate he may be, feels himself a part and parcel of the Kingdom of Mahomed and as such it is his paramount duty to safeguard the interest of his Prophet's kingdom, the interest of his Islamic Faith. He is even prepared to sacrifice his own life for the sake of protecting the interests of his community. What about our Hindu brethren? A Hindu thinks it safe to sit silent in a sultry corner of his house when his Hindu neighbour is attacked by a non-Hindu. This mental isolation of interest and an insufferable lack of burning religious fervour are wholly responsible for the repeated sufferings which our Hindus receive at the hands of the non-Hindus. So, we appeal to the Hindus with all the emphasis at our command, to sink all their differences for the sake of their nation and religion. To this end the masses must be trained to cultivate a spirit of sacrifice and love for the sake of the nation and religion. Here we want to strike a note of warning. A society can never be regenerated and reformed by the use of violent and coercive means. Violent and coercive methods of reorganisation have often engendered more harm than good. So, a lover and leader of Hindu society, if he wants to reconstruct it, should bear all attacks from outside patiently thinking that they are so many tests of his faith, and endeavour to bring the people to his side by his own precept and example.

Our educational institutions require remodelling. The culture and civilisation of a country always spring from, and invariably fostered by, the school. Since education has become the transferred subject under the existing constitution, the Hindus can, with advantage, direct the educational machinery on proper lines. Every Hindu youth's mind must be saturated with a love for his religion and a love for his country. The home is the place where the child's education commences. Therefore, it becomes the imperative duty of the parents to train their children in the right way and instil into their mind the high ideal of sacrifice and service for a greater life. Then, and not till then, will automatically come the hey-day of the land.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION

By M. S. Srinivasa Sarma, M. A.,

True Nationalism.

WE find ourselves today in the grip of cataclysmic changes. An unprecedented wave of unrest and discontent is sweeping over the land; and life which is cast in this eddy of flux is like a storm-tossed vessel, helpless and anchorless. Peace it is that we want; but that is exactly the one thing which we are not able to get by any method suggested by our social reformers and political leaders. There is no dearth of policies and programmes; but there is no one who has the grip and the power to effect the correct orientation, to carry out the chosen aim, and to take us to the promised land. Science, civilisation, machinery and the whole host of their paraphernalia are miserable things by themselves, as they do not guarantee the genuine joy of existence, the real happiness of life, and the abiding peace and bliss which is the inarticulate craving of every living being. The root cause of all this trouble is that our life is not saturated with and permeated by the one force which insures a rich, abundant, full and perfect life. Jesus Christ struck the correct note when he taught that "man does not live by bread alone". It is no wonder therefore that the most carefully planned social schemes and the most elaborately advertised political programmes collapse deplorably and terminate in hopeless chaos, for the simple reason that they lack the creative inspiration from religion, ignore the unsailable laws of God, and set at nought the immutable and omnipenetrative truths of religion.

The politicians and the leaders of social movements who claim to guide and direct the nation in matters relating to education, social institutions, and political affairs work upon our patriotic impulses, appeal to the majesty and dignity of our national heritage, and exhort us to be

national in outlook, national in taste, national in dress, and national in culture. But when it comes to the question of practical politics and actual execution of their policies and programmes, there is an utter lack of vision and a lamentable neglect of the fundamentals of nation-building, and sometimes a wanton contempt and antipathy for the things that really count in life. This unwholesome attitude is best illustrated in connection with religion. Nowhere is human effort and energy aroused and sustained as in and by religion. The greatest movements in the world have always been due to the religious impulse. And in our country is there anything more truly national than our religion? And if religion is to be given up for the sake of what is called political unity, what is it that is left which could be called *per se* national? Are not our greatest philosophy, loftiest morals, sublimest traditions and glorious literature inspired by, and imbedded and conserved in our religion? Is it not therefore wholly unpsychological and utterly futile to educate our children on lines which do not derive their value and meaning from our religion? You cannot inspire noble patriotism

and defensive nationalism in the growing minds of idealistic youths if you impart instruction which is utterly bereft of emotional appeal and intellectual insight. The culture and civilisation of a country always spring from and are invariably fostered by the system of purposes and the scale of values which are conserved in and guaranteed by religion.

Religion—a social necessity.

It is a rare privilege that the department of education even in the present form of Government is a free and autonomous affair in the hands of elected ministers, subject to the direction and control of the popular will. It is a thousand pities that neither the ministry nor the popular will which is said to be nationalistic at heart has done its primary duty in the matter of making religious education a distinct and prescribed subject for all students in all classes. The woeful lack of idealism, the unfortunate confusion of ideas, and the directionless system of education are all attributable to the want of joyous inspiration and cheerful optimism that spontaneously spring from proper religious instruction to our

growing children in our schools and colleges. The dryness, the dullness, and mechanical deadness of the machinery of the modern educational organisation obtaining in our country is directly traceable to the absolute lack of spiritual purpose and the want of the dynamic of enduring values which could be found nowhere else than in religion. Let it not be forgotten that the most potent, the most enduring, and the most effective influences are the most intangible, the least measurable, and the most obscure forces such as love of God, respect for truth, and reverence for goodness; and an education that does not open the door to these abiding values in life stands self-condemned. And all those arguments regarding financial economy, administrative difficulty, practical inutility are all utterly shortsighted, unworthy, and narrow-minded, and betray an unpardonable lack of vision as to the meaning and value of education. The test of education is not—Does this school pay? Is this system cheap and economical? On the other hand it ought to be—In the light of human nature, is this system or this institution achieving the aim of education to train youth how to live, and live well and honourably? And the usual

hackneyed argument that in order to avoid communal and denominational differences, instruction in religion should be compulsorily excluded from the curriculum of studies in our schools and colleges is a standing insult to human reason and dignity, and does the greatest disservice to religion.

Religion, if anything, is the unifying principle in social life. It is a social necessity, and is the cohesive force that integrates the varying and divergent individual into an organic social unity. Biologically, it is an imperious urge in man contributing to happy social life and tending to the all-round perfection of his personality. It is therefore a mockery to say that religion will be disruptive, and consequently should be rooted out lock, stock and barrel from our educational institutions. A little impartial and dispassionate reflective thinking will convince us that it is not religion that breeds fanaticism and intolerance but superstition, bigotry, and ignorance that pose as religion which generate those undesirable traits in human beings; and the way to eradicate these obnoxious features is not by keeping the study of religion away and out of the healthy

and formative atmosphere of the seats of learning, but by submitting it to the open and honest discussion, free and fearless criticism, and independent and creative thinking; and in order to carry out this purpose no better place could be found than our educational institutions where truth is sought to be gained for its own sake, where no standards other than reason are accepted, and where a perfectly free atmosphere prevails. No religion worth the name is afraid to see the light of day and stand the searchlight of scientific inquiry.

Spiritual training of students.

Further it is not fair that our young men should be deprived of their legitimate spiritual training on the ground of the unreasonable and unfounded fear that religion would perpetuate the existing divisions among us. What is required is the freeing of the mind from the fetters of ignorance and the shackles of superstition. The increased capacity for reflection that comes from increased knowledge produces a fresh activity of the spirit. Amiel realised the power of religion to check and counterbalance our natural tendency towards the passing,

the changeable, and the finite, and to restore to our souls nobleness, gravity and calm. Says he "Just as sleep is a bath of refreshing for our actual life, so religion is a bath of refreshing for our immortal being. What is sacred has a purifying virtue; religious emotion crowns the brow with an aureole and thrills the heart with an ineffable joy". Sir John Woodroffe proclaims most eloquently that "my own conviction is that an examination of Indian Vedantic doctrine shows that it is in most important respects in conformity with the most advanced scientific and philosophic thought of the West and that where this is not so it is science which will go to Vedanta and not the reverse". Education has to take note of these facts, and has to provide room and scope for the growth and proper direction of religious ideas in children. It should be borne in mind that the supreme formative force in life is religion; and as Horace Mann puts it in pregnant words, "where anything is growing, one former is worth a thousand *re-formers*".

In the West for ages past science and religion had been in dreadful conflict with each other; and at times the

antagonism had been so terrific that the brightest and the greatest intellects both in religion and science were forced to fall victims to popular bigotry, superstition, and fanaticism. Fortunately even the West has slowly got out of the oppressive intellectual darkness; and we find every day mighty and world-renowned scientists getting disgusted with the utter hollowness and the downright fragmentariness of their results which they are not able to explain on ultimate principles nor unify into an understandable coherent whole, and are therefore as a last resort obliged to turn to religion for intimations and suggestions for the construction of an all-satisfying theory to interpret and evaluate the facts of nature. The splendid experiences of Bergson, Edington, Whitehead and Oliver Lodge who seek to find in religion the crown and completion of their scientific quests are quite convincing arguments to prove that the modern scientific spirit is not at all detrimental to religious interests, and that no matter what our personal prejudices are, rational, rigorous and impartial criticism will always benefit us in our search after truth and reality.

Objections—not tenable.

The pompous array of arguments against the introduction of systematic religious instruction in our schools and colleges pale into insignificance and are put to ridicule by the noble example of Christian Missionary Institutions in which religion is taught on an organised basis to every pupil. There is no question of examination handicap, time-table difficulty, financial stringency, and administrative inconvenience; and they are no less efficient academically on account of their devoting a good part of their time to religion. Where there is a will there is a way. When the importance and necessity of religious instruction has been realised, and when the will to achieve the result is aroused, the method and manner of execution will easily suggest themselves. The only way for our social regeneration is the ideal of national unity worked on a religious basis. Ethical and spiritual considerations alone will triumph over all other considerations; and they alone will form the basis of our progress.

Our young men should grow in the full consciousness of the greatness of their past and

bright hope of a promising future. The Vedic religion and the Sanatana Dharma based on it have been proclaimed for all time by our Rishis, and provide us with a sure and safe standard of conduct. They should be helped to realise that Hinduism is not arbitrarily imposed by a tyrannical ruler but is the crystallised wisdom and a system of undoubted truths drawn from actual experience of our seers and sages. The growing young men should be shown the unique and sublime path of Swadharma which alone has the potency to rejuvenate the old spiritual life of our nation. Any attempt to cut the national life away from the sacred and ancient moorings stands self-condemned, and is foredoomed to failure. It is a special glory of our nation that Dharma which is the basic principle of individual and social existence is both a religious and an ethical concept. This proves how the evolution of Hindu culture from time immemorial has been on the lines of spiritual development, which has directly contributed to its survival in spite of the loss of political independence and aggressive antagonism of foreign invaders and alien governments. Let our young men, therefore learn to walk in the path of

Swadharma which guarantees *yoga* and *kshema*. Says Swami Vivekananda; "The national ideals of India are renunciation and service—the twin aspects of Dharma. Intensify her in this channel and the rest will take care of itself." The beauty of self-sacrifice and the glory of self-surrender are inspired and sustained mainly by religion.

Ancient Education—essentially religious.

Were not our ancient sages keenly alive to the aims of life and human values which have their origin and source in religion? Is it not a fact that in our country education in all ages and stages was pre-eminently religious? Was ever education divorced from religion and treated as a separate and distinct affair as it is done today? Is not the ancient ideal of the Hindu teacher, the Guru, the living embodiment of thorough secular knowledge, high moral character and serene divine wisdom who not only directed the growth of the character and intelligence of the pupils but was also the tried guide, friend and philosopher of kings? If we boil down all objections to the fundamental issue, we find that it is the encrustations of conventionalism. Now it is not a serious

obstacle; and the effective way to fight and overcome it is *not* to keep it away from the other influence of life and treat it as a set of esoteric dogmas. It is only insight born of knowledge that can break through them. As Lord Haldane puts it, "it is only when we have before our minds the idea of an entirety of knowledge from which no phase of it is excluded that we can find a basis on which the apparently different outlooks can be brought together". The truth here as elsewhere is the whole, and nothing short of the whole.

The main function of education is the formation of character which is possible only when it is based on high ideals of life and duty. But our ideas regarding moral obligations and personal responsibilities, equality of men, purity of life, and respect for justice—all these have their roots in religion. If religion is the source of these high moral ideas and of the standards of right and wrong, then we have the excellent and all-sufficient reason why it is imperative that religion should be included in our school curriculum. As Bacon points out "religion is the spice which is meant to keep life from corruption". But the mere recognition of the fact that religious

education is indispensable does not mean that the school is the only place for training in religion. Of course the personal life and character of the teacher plays a most important part in instilling religious ideas in the minds of the pupils. They readily absorb and assimilate the moral principles and religious practices by the powerful process of suggestion and imitation; and therefore it is that the gifted teacher by his personal life, God-fearing nature, upright conduct and cheerful disposition makes religious instruction a process of personal transmission rather than a laboured and formal communication. His freshness, dignity, ease, grace, and unerring insight into the needs and capacities of his pupils make life in the class-room a rare privilege and the task of learning a real delight. This foundational psychological truth has been clearly and unmistakeably realised by the Lindsay Commission which has recommended in distinct terms that the Christian Institutions should have an exclusive staff of devout Christians if the avowed object of the Mission is to be achieved.

Character—the goal of Education and Religion.

But more important than

the school in exercising a powerful and enduring influence in the development of religious consciousness is of course the home; and it must be carefully borne in mind that the school can only be a supplement to and can never be a substitute for the home in the matter of religious training. The enthusiasts of religious education should realise the extraordinary power for good which the home wields, and recognise frankly the limitation of the school. In so many ways are school and home complementary to one another that they can never be treated apart, not the one substituted for the other. Both of them should work together, because both of them have the same goal in view. The child is a candidate for character and personality; and the symmetrical development of all his powers is the aim of the school as well as of the home; and there is no use for an education which does not help the cause of religion, which does not make the things of God more intelligible and more real to the pupils. Religion is a thing *sui generis*, something distinctive in man, and belongs to his whole personality. It plays a unique part in the development as an individual and as a member of society; and its repression or misdirection is a potent cause of mischief and danger to man's physical as well as psychical nature. Religion is thus a necessary condition of his all-round development. Therefore without religious background and religious inspiration, education becomes a torso, and is only an incomplete and unfinished thing; and an unfinished thing, as Amiel says, is nothing. Man's need of religion is so elemental that the child's development from a helpless human being into a happy, moral and self-directing member of society is possible only through the inspiration and formative force of religion.



TRUE DEVOTION.

By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, M. A., B. L.

Another evening the conversation which was quite general at first gradually led on to the subject of Bhajana, singing of devotional songs to the accompaniment of music. A Bhakta who was of the party in attendance mentioned that such devotional exercises had a great exhilarating as well as a great soothing effect on our wayward minds and that it was pleasing to find that Bhajana parties were being formed in increasing numbers in every town and village.

H. H.: I am very glad to hear of it. But at the same time I have heard that the observance of our religious rites is steadily going down. How can that be?

B.: It is mainly because the ordinary people lack faith in the efficacy of religious rites that they resort to this Bhajana for pleasing God.

H. H.: I suppose then that if some of those persons are engaged in Bhajana they may

not care for and may even neglect their ordinary religious duties like the Sandhya worship.

B.: They even go to the length of saying that while engaged in Bhajana they can give up even the Sandhya worship, for the former being a higher kind of worship makes the latter unnecessary and redundant.

H. H.: As a general proposition, it is quite true that the greater includes the less. But how do we know that Bhajana is of greater efficacy than Karma in the matter of pleasing God?

B.: Bhajana is a direct appeal to God while Karma is but an indirect appeal through the performance of ritual.

H. H.: I suppose you concede that we have never met God personally.

B.: Certainly.

H. H.: You must equally concede that we can never of our own accord find out what will please God and what not,

for we cannot ask him directly nor does He tell us in person.

B.: It may be so, but we can easily ascertain it from the Scriptures which embody His teachings.

H. H.: You may add also the Smritis, especially the Bhagavad Gita which record in no unmistakable terms His mind as divulged to those who have had the fortune to hold direct communion with Him both in the spirit and in the flesh.

B.: Certainly.

H. H.: And what do they teach us?

B.: They certainly do not discount Bhakti.

H. H.: Certainly not. But the question is, what is Bhakti? Is it your Bhajana or is it Karma?

B.: How can Karma be Bhakti?

H. H.: In fact, you will find that Karma alone can be Bhakti and certainly not the Bhajana if it is inconsistent with or is divorced from Karma.

B.: How can that be?

H. H.: The Lord tells us quite unambiguously "Man

attains perfection by worshipping God by performing the Karma enjoined for him." He clearly enunciates here the proposition that the way to worship Him is to perform each one's appointed Karma.

B.: But such a performance of Karma is not the only way in which devotion can be shown to the Lord.

H. H.: It is the only way to those on whom Karma is enjoined.

B.: Surely a person who spends his time in prayer and contemplation of the Lord is as much a Bhakta as, if not more than, one who buries himself in outward rituals.

H. H.: Leave again comparing. He will *not* be a Bhakta at all if Karma is enjoined on him and if he chooses to neglect it in favour of mental prayers and contemplation.

B.: Why so?

H. H.: Take the ordinary case of a master and his servants. Suppose one of his servants is ever standing before him and ever singing his praises. The master may sometimes ask him to fetch something from a distant room. Suppose the servant replies,

"O, master, I cannot bear the thought of parting from you even for a moment. I cannot forego even for a moment the pleasure and the privilege of ever looking at your handsome and noble face. I like to be ever with you, to look upon your face and to praise you by recounting your inestimable qualities. Don't ask me to move from my place." Suppose again there is another servant who is ever away from the presence of the master but is carrying out with scrupulous exactitude all the commands of the master communicated to him by the master himself, or through his deputies. Wherever the master turns, he finds that he has been most willingly obeyed by this servant but nowhere sees him intruding before his presence. Which do you think is the more devoted of these two servants and which do you think will the master be pleased with more?

B.: Certainly the latter.

H. H.: Does a father find pleasure in a child who prefers always to sit on his lap and declines to do his slightest behest or in him who is ever going out on errands?

B.: I should think, the latter.

H. H.: Further, can you grant that the servant or the boy, who refuses to leave the presence of his master or father, is really devoted at all to the latter when he is not prepared to obey the slightest behest?

B.: Certainly disobedience cannot go hand in hand with devotion.

H. H.: Quite so. The primary test of devotion in any sphere of life is obedience, unquestioning and loving obedience, not inquisitive or grumbling obedience.

B.: Certainly.

H. H.: "The Sruti and the Smriti are the commands of Myself," says the Lord. Can you logically conceive of a devotion to that Lord which exists along with or is even based upon a disobedience of such commands?

B.: I now see that Bhajana can never be a substitute for Karma.

H. H.: It can never be.

B.: What then is the function of Bhajana? It cannot certainly be all waste.

H. H.: A servant when he finds leisure after discharging

all his duties may certainly stand in the presence of the master but not when he has got duties to perform. Similarly a person, who after performing all the Karma enjoined on him still finds leisure, can spend it in prayer or in singing the praises of the Lord so that he may utilise the leisure to the best advantage. Bhajana is thus intended only for those occasions in which he finds leisure in the midst of his Karmic duties.

B: I fear if a Brahmana should be asked to perform aright all the duties enjoined on him by the Vedas and the Smritis and then have Bhajana at leisure, he may not have Bhajana at all.

H. H: It is not quite so. It is only the lazy people that ever want time. The busy ones are always able to find leisure.

B: It seems to me that if Bhajana is to be had at times not occupied by religious duties, the castes other than the Brahmanas will have more leisure as they have only a very few religious observances and would seem to be therefore, more competent to take up Bhajana.

H. H: Quite so. It is more intended for them than for the Brahmanas.

B: Is it not an anomaly that the Brahmanas should be denied equal privilege in this matter?

H. H: As I told you, they are not denied this privilege as you call it, for they can have it in their leisure moments. Further, you forget that the carrying out of the commands of the Lord is a greater act of devotion than singing His praises. Now you may look at the matter from another point of view also.

B: What is that?

H. H: A servant who prefers to be looking at the kind face of the master to going about on his errands does so because he derives pleasure from the former and fears a cessation of that pleasure if he does the latter.

B: It is so.

H. H: The only consideration therefore which weighs with him in determining his own conduct is his own pleasure and *not* the pleasure of his master.

B: Strictly analysed, it is so.

H. H: Can you call such a servant, who places his own selfish pleasure far above his master's pleasure to the extent of ignoring or disregarding the latter, a "devoted" servant in any sense?

B: Certainly not.

H. H: Similarly if a so-called Bhakta prefers to sing to the accompaniment of enchanting music the praises of the Lord, at the same time ignoring, neglecting and disregarding His divine commands, can you call him a "devotee" at all?

B: I fear, not.

H. H: Again recognise for a moment that that so-called Bhakta has a conception of the Lord only as a very attractive *object* intended for his own enjoyment. What can be more profane than dragging down the All-conscious Omnipotent Lord to the level of a toy intended for his amusement and pleasure? To seek to enjoy the Lord as an *object* of pleasure is sheer profanation and can never pass off under the name of devotion. It is the carrying out of His dictates implicitly that is real devotion. To disobey Him in action and to profess allegiance in words

is real blasphemy. It is like pleading not guilty to a charge of bribery with the very currency note so illicitly obtained staring in the pocket. By Bhakti is meant single pointed devotion uniformly expressed in mind, speech and body.

B: I understand. May I ask one other question which suggests itself to me in relation to Bhakti?

H. H: Certainly. What is it?

B: I have seen a number of Bhaktas who lead earnest pious lives but at the same time indulge in recrimination and invective if any Devata other than their own happens to be praised within their hearing. Is such an attitude of intolerance consistent with true Bhakti?

H. H: No. It is not. Such an attitude is to be found not in true Bhaktas but only in those who have no proper understanding of the meaning of Bhakti or of the nature of the Lord to whom they profess to be devoted. The Highest Being, the Supreme Lord, the Ruler of the universe, transcends all particular names and forms. Name and form are the attributes of mute Prakriti. God

has no name or form of His own until you clothe Him ever so slightly in Prakriti. The entire universe of name and form are, as it were, only His feet, to adopt the words of the *Purusha Sukta*. We cannot have any direct relationship with the higher and larger portion of His Divine Personality. Only his feet is visible to us and we are asked to worship Him only through service to His feet. It is the conducting ourselves properly as laid down in the Shastras with reference to the other portions of the universe (Devas, Pitris, men, animals etc.) and the regulating of ourselves in regard to the same as per the directions of the Shastras that go by the name of Karma. This is the service of the Feet. When, after steady and continued service at the Feet, the Lord satisfied with our devotion chooses to raise us up to a height wherefrom we can look directly upon the face of the Lord, it will be time enough then to learn whether His forehead bears the mark of the Gopichandana or is adorned with Bhasma. Situated as we are at present at the lowest rung of the ladder and

even without a gleam of the glory of His feet, we choose to waste our time and energy in speculating and in wrangling about the nature of His face. The true Bhakta never does that. He is content to know the simple definition of the Lord that He is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Dissolver of the universe. The name or form that you assign to Him is of no moment to him, for he knows that that name or form is not of the essence of the Lord but is accepted or assumed for the moment only for the sake of a particular Bhakta. He is also content to know that the Vedas are his divine commands to himself and that the strict performance of the duties enjoined by them on him is the only way of securing the grace of the Lord and that *that* is the only way of serving Him which is within his competence.

B: But is it not a fact that a Siva Bhakta claims that Siva is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Dissolver of the universe, that a Vishnu Bhakta claims the same thing for Vishnu and so on?

H. H: No doubt at first sight it may seem so. But

taking the view of the Siva Bhakta, his Lord, Siva is the only Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the universe; he does *not* grant that any other entity, Vishnu or other, has the characteristic of being the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the universe. He does *not* say that there are more than one Entity which can claim that characteristic or that *his* Lord Siva is supreme over all others. What he does mean and what he does believe is that the Lord Siva is the only Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the universe. He does not postulate any plurality of Gods but emphatically says that there is but One God who is the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the universe and that His name is Siva.

B. Certainly it is so. But the Vishnu Bhakta says the same thing of Vishnu. The devotee of Ganesa, Subrahmanya or Devi also says the same thing of his Devata. Which of these has to be taken as correct? All of them cannot be correct.

H. H: You agree with me that none of these Bhaktas postulate any plurality of Gods?

B: I do.

H. H: You agree with me that they all postulate the existence of only one God?

B: Certainly.

H. H: You also note that they all agree in the definition of that God as the Creator, the Sustainer and the Dissolver of the Universe?

B: Yes.

H. H: But they happen to differ as regards the name or the form to be attributed to that God?

B: Quite so.

H. H: That is, their conception of God is not at all faulty but is quite sound and uniform?

B: Yes.

H. H: Suppose you have a grain of rice before you and you satisfy yourself that it has got all the characteristics which are peculiar to rice and that therefore it *is* rice; does it matter the least to you if a Tamilian gives it the name of *Arisi*, a Canarese gentleman the name of *Akki* or a Pandit the name of *Tandula*?

B: Certainly it does not.

H. H. Don't you see then that the names are quite external to and are not of the

essence of the things, though such names have great practical utility in the world of names and forms? Similarly if the characteristic of being the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the universe is there, what does it matter if He is called Siva, Vishnu or Devi? The Entity denoted is the same though the names may differ. A Tamilian who does not know Canarese or Sanskrit will be vehement in saying that rice is called only as *Arisi* and never as *Akki* or *Tandula*. He is quite correct so far as he goes, for no such names are to be found in the Tamil language with which alone he is familiar. Till he can by analytical thought learn to dissociate the name from the thing, the name is the thing for him; and if you deny that name, he will take it you deny the thing itself. Only that Bhakta will be quarrelsome who cannot dissociate a particular name or a particular form from his conception of God. He is correct so far as his mentality goes. But his Bhakti is far below that real Bhakti which realises that God is above all names and above all forms, that particular

names are but convenient handles for expressing the essentially inexpressible God and that particular forms are but limited aspects of the essentially limitless God.

B. It seems to me that Sri Vyasa is himself responsible for these unseemly squabbles. He has written a large number of Puranas devoted to particular Devatas; and in every one of them he calls the Devata dealt with then as the Highest Being so that the sincere reader is unable to really understand which is the Highest Being in Sri Vyasa's view.

H. H: I suppose we can start with the presumption that Sri Vyasa is neither an ignorant person nor is he out to deliberately mislead people?

B: Certainly.

H. H: He must know the elementary proposition that there cannot possibly be more than one Highest Being.

B: Quite so. That is just my difficulty. I cannot understand how he chooses to call every one of the Devatas as the Highest Being.

H. H: Your difficulty is very easily solved if you understand Sri Vyasa to say *not* that every Devata is a Highest Being but that *the* Highest Being is every one of the Devatas.

B: How is that?

H. H: The Highest Being having no name or form of its own has to take on some name or form when it is conceived of as an object of worship. Being in its essential nature absolutely formless, in one sense, the absolute view, it has no form at all; in the other sense, the relative view *all* forms are equally its.

B: I can understand this. But Sri Vyasa when he deals with a particular Form, say Siva, chooses to endow it not only with the attributes of the Highest Being but also with the attributes peculiar to other Devatas. He does not deal with Siva as the Dissolver aspect of the Highest Being but says that He is even Vishnu or Brahma and sometimes says that Vishnu and Brahma are but *His* aspects or offspring.

H. H: Take a familiar incident in family life. Suppose a gentleman has four children

and the birthday of one of them happens to be celebrated. That child is the "idol", the Upasya for the day, he is seated in a raised seat in the central hall of the house; he is dressed in costly clothes and is decked with jewels. Is it not usual for the mother and the other children to part temporarily with the jewels that they themselves usually wear, so that the child of the day may be adorned the more?

B: It is so.

H. H: Do the mother and the other children feel any the slightest regret at parting with them or the slightest envy at that child wearing them for the occasion?

B: Certainly not.

H. H: Do not the other children themselves know that when their turn of birthday celebrations comes, they will be equally decked out in finery and jewels including those which that child ordinarily wears?

B: Certainly they do.

H. H: Dare any body accuse that child of depriving its mother and the other children of their jewels this day? Again, will anybody dare to accuse

the father of partiality towards that child in that he gives it prominence for the day and even deprives the others of their jewels to enable that child to shine the more as the "idol" of the day?

B: Certainly not.

H. H: Now will you tell me in whom the right of ownership and possession of all this finery and all the jewels really vest?

B: Certainly in the father.

H. H: Quite so. Does he ever wear the jewels or the dress himself?

B: Certainly not.

H. H: That means, that though all the things really belong to him, he never shows himself of in them but finds pleasure in decking out his children in them as and when occasion may arise?

B: Quite so.

H. H: We may therefore say of him that he never wears any jewels though all the jewels are really his?

B: Yes.

H. H: The jewels are his not only when they are kept in the iron safe in his custody but even when the child is actually wearing them.

B: Certainly.

H. H: Now then to the matter on hand. The Highest Being, the Impersonal Brahman, is like the father. It never wears any attributes but all the attributes which every one of the Devatas has belong to Him. When a particular Devata is conceived of as the Upasya in a particular Purana for the uplifting of a particular Bhakta, that Devata is given the seat of honour, next to none (not even the father who has to stand aside in the background looking happily on at the child), and has to be decked with all the attributes which ordinarily go with the other Devatas also. There is absolutely no room for founding any charge of partiality if in any particular Purana that Devata is given prominence in relation to others, for when their turn comes in the other Puranas they are treated with equal prominence. Such is the attitude of Sri Vyasa in every one of his Puranas. He knows that the Highest Being is devoid of any attributes, any name or any form; but, as a practical teacher, he knows equally well that such an absolute conception is not

within the reach of any except a very few and therefore offers for the contemplation of devotees particular Devatas which are, though but aspects of the Absolute Brahman, nevertheless treated for the moment and for all practical purposes as identical with the Supreme Being. He has so written the Puranas that the Bhakta of any particular Devata can by intensity of devotional exercise obtain the fruits of devotion to other Devatas also without the need to resort to them separately, and finally can by further effort attain even a

knowledge of the Absolute Brahman even through devotion to that particular Devata. For practical wisdom which combines economy of effort and maximum benefit and adopts the doctrine of the Absolute Brahman to the needs of the devotee without impairing in any way the truth of the doctrine, Sri Vyasa is inimitable. If we fight among ourselves without understanding him properly, the fault is ours, certainly not his. On the other hand, all our gratitude must go forth to him.



THE LAST DELUSION.

By V. Loga of Poland. *

DO you want, dear readers, to make a phantastic travel through the infinite space where your soul will find rest and calmness, in these regions of the lonely stars, suns, planets and their strange inhabitants? For you do believe yourselves: the life does not end here, on this earth of ours. You will meet on your trip a perpetual movement but all vibrations will harmonise there in an incomparable symphony directed by an unseen Master. Do you want, my dear friends, to get a sure guide full of intuition so that you should not lose your unique way in this

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labyrinth of Cosmos? If you do, take a part in the astronomical excursion by reading the sideral poems of the French astronomer of venerable memory, Camille Flammarion, the *guru* of many western souls striving to comprehend the marvels of starry heaven and searching his Creator beyond. After long researches in the infinite space, after many studies of stars, planets and satellites he exclaims finally in a supreme vision: "There are in the Universe but appearances and delusions".

Thus the conscious labour of an occidental savant led him to the same conclusion as the Indian sages reached long ago, without the telescopes, observatories, having only the open eyes for the inner visions. The true sense of Universe is hidden by a jealous goddess. Personified Her name is known as *Maya*. She is the Queen of space and time linked together in the hard chains of causality. She does hide before us the real sense of things by her obsessive veil. She is

showing us perpetually the multitude in purpose to disturb our attention in the vision of One. For to see Him or That—this Tao of Chinese sages, the *Brahman* of Hindus, Father of Christians, this Universal Law of Buddhists, we must throw off our anthropocentric measurement by our little "egos" as standard of the great life without beginning and end. And that is the dramatic point for all our western knowledge, the Shakespeare's expression "to be or not to be" in the grandest form of discussion. Were it possible for a western scholar to give up the foot, pound, second, the three units for the measurement of all phenomena of nature, as stated in the empirical science? What is "to know" in the occidental sense? It is to express mathematically, in a formula, the observed phenomenon—the change in the nature which is generally the result of movement. For the western scholar any process in the Universe is movement. He does not admit the quiescence as its antithesis. The mechanical laws expressed quantitatively by the three mentioned units were only "exact" in the west. Nothing more. The rest was superstitious. Movement of stars, suns, planets, satellites give the impression of astronomical phenomena. Movement of molecules, atoms, electrons and all kinds of vibrations of ether produce physical, chemical and biological processus of life. Thus European mind knows only what is measured by weight, time, space in the conventional units of pounds, seconds, feet. The movement is all and forms all. The XVII, XVIII and XIX centuries passed under this chief theme of the western science. The matter and energy were supposed to be entities existing separately, undestroyed, eternal. The mind, the soul was regarded as being beyond the exact knowledge, generally as a product of the material brain. The Law of Eternity of Matter founded by a French chemist Lavoisier and the Law of the Eternity of Energy founded by a German savant R. Meyer were the bases of all exact sciences. Newton's mechanics were the crown of science.

Only after the discovery of the radioactive elements by the French-Polish couple Curie. Sklodowska and the electrons, the West came to the conclusion that there is no barrier between matter and energy and only then they remembered the old Indian thought of *Akasa-Prana* conceived as deriving from one

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and supreme element—*Chitta*—the mindstuff. What is movement without the observer? If all phenomena of nature are but movement, where then is going, moving, all the Universe? Thus, independently one of another they reached the highest steps of Relativity. The German savants W. Ostwald, R. Mach, then the French philosopher H. Poincare and later on an Hebrew A. Einstein formulated mathematically the discoveries of the above mentioned savants and put forward the Relativity Theory. The Hindu *Maya* was veiled in the West by time, and space having accordingly to the Newton's mechanical laws the only absolute existence. The relativity bringing up the interdependence of time and space with the matter opened the door to the new comprehension of the Universe. The time is not eternal because it does not exist separately from space and matter. The weight is the result of the gravitation and varies accordingly to the position of the attracted particles and so on. The movement cannot explain all and especially the spiritual life. The external world is not all what exists. We came finally to the same

conclusion as did our brothers in India that the man, his little "ego" cannot be the centre of the Universe, the unique and unchangeable "standard" of all. The movement is real for our body which moves itself. The movement can be unreal for the spirit which is beyond all changes, all relativity, all dependence.

Little by little too we begin to appreciate what you have done for Humanity, dear Eastern brothers. We are approaching the limits of our speculative reasoning and came to read consciously your secular sentence. "*Ekam sat vipra bahu-dha vadanti*—what exists is One, the sages call That by various names". Nowadays we tell the same oriental truth: to know is not only to develop the faculties of intellect but it is necessary to open the eyes of supervision and then we will be able to discriminate the absolute calmness in the midst of intense activity and movement.

Thus, we hope to throw off the husk closing our soul which will reach then its freedom, the independence and the eternal bliss.



SADASIVA BRAHMENDRA.

THE *yoga* and its claims to be the source of mysterious powers have met with scant courtesy at the hands of western scholars.

Indian scholars also, brought up in western methods of thought, have followed in the wake of western Sanskritists and condemned *yoga* belief and practices. Mr. R. C. Dutt, for instance thus writes of *yoga*—“The occult powers or *Siddhis* described in the third chapter (of Patanjale's *Yogasutra*) are indeed wonderful! One may know the past and the future, make himself invisible to men, observe the details of what is passing in distant regions or in the stars and planets, converse with spirits, travel in the air or through water and acquire various supernatural powers. The noble philosophy of Kapila was trailed through dirt and mire as soon as it was blended with superstitions!”.

It must be admitted that many indecent rites and mystic practices have been and are indulged in the name of *yoga*, that many so-called yogins who

go about seeking whom they may, deceive and fleece trade on the name *yoga*! Unscrupulous men have, ere now, made a tool of man a name equally sacred and revered, and brought it into disrepute. But we must judge of a belief by its aims, its ethics, and its philosophy, and its genuine devotees,—and not by the wicked men who have masqueraded in its garb and profaned its teaching.

The *yoga* insists on purity of mind and purity of body as essential preliminaries to all *yoga* practice. Says Apastamba, a great teacher who lived several centuries before the christian era:

“But the eradication of the faults is brought about in this life by the means (called *yoga*). A wise man who has eradicated the faults which destroy the creatures obtains salvation.

(2) Now we will enumerate the faults which tend to destroy the creatures.

(3) (These are) anger, exultation, grumbling, covetousness, perplexity, doing injury (to anybody), hypocrisy, lying,

gluttony, calumny, envy, lust, sacret-hatred, neglect to keep the senses in subjection, neglect to concentrate the mind. The eradication of these (faults) takes place through the means (of salvation called) *yoga*'.

No one will find fault with all this; but then the Siddhis, the supernatural powers acquired by a yogin, are they not a huge hoax? Well, we can't say; but the results of recent psychical investigations seem to discountenance the dogmatic stiff-neckedness of the agnostic, and many things that scientists once regarded as absurd and impossible are now coming to be regarded by fair-minded and competent judges as not only probable but almost proven. It is of course too early to say how all the mystic claims of *yoga* will fare eventually at the hands of these investigators; but judging from the direction that psychical researches are now taking, it is not unreasonable to hope that a believer in yogic powers may not now be set down as hopelessly idiotic.

But whatever may be said of these powers, one thing must be distinctly understood. The *raison detre* of *yoga* is not the acquirement of these powers. *Yoga* aims not at these; he who practices *yoga* for these is not

a yogin. A true yogin's object is to control the restless mind, to conquer the passions and concentrate the mind on the Supreme Being and if in the course of this attempt he secures certain superhuman powers, which are the inevitable outcome of his practice, he regards them rather as hindrances to his spiritual progress than things to be gloried in. He shuns the society of man lest he should be tempted to exercise these powers and if he finds himself in the midst of men now and then and pressed to draw on his spiritual merit, he does so very reluctantly and only when he is assured that thereby he is conferring a real blessing.

Sadasiva Brahmendra appears to have been the last genuine representative of the school of Rajayogins. He lived more than a hundred and fifty years ago. For the details of his life we have to draw mainly upon tradition, but there is reason to believe that much of it is reliable.

Sadasiva is represented to have been exceptionally smart and brilliant in his student days. It was at Tiruvasanallur that his student days were passed. This is a village in the Tanjore District on the banks of the sacred stream Kaveri, embowered among groves of mangoes and

cocoanuts. The Rajahs of Tanjore had made a free grant of the fertile fields adjoining the village to a colony of eminent sanskrit scholars. Many were the villages that had been thus given away to learned Brahmans. The villages are there now, the verdent groves resounding with the notes of the gay-plumed songsters, and the fair and sunny fields waving with golden corn; but the traditions are gone,—the revered and grey-haired Acharyas from whose lips flowed wisdom and knowledge that flooded the land, the modest and untiring youths that thronged the neat *verandahs* *cudjan* books in hand, learning at the feet of the teachers, or discussing among themselves, the lessons already learnt.

Tiruvasanallur was, at the time, peculiarly blessed in her teachers and pupils. There was Ramabhadra Dikshita, a scholar of no mean repute and the famous author of the drama Janaki Parinayam; there was also Sri Venkatesa, yet in his teens and a student, with all those potentialities in him; which were afterwards to ripen in the fulness of time and make of him a heart-stirring preacher and writer, whose noble life and fervid words have earned for him the undying glory of a saint

divine, whose Akhya Sataka, Dayasataka and other centuries have an earnestness and a pathos rarely found elsewhere, whose name, under the more familiar and respectful title of Aiyaval, is invoked today by hundreds of devotees in Southern India with grateful strains and uplifted hands. There was Gopalakrishna, also a student, who came to be known as Mahabhashyam Gopalakrishna Sastri, so styled through his learned commentary on Patanjali's Mahabhashya on Panini; and who was, afterwards, to become the spiritual preceptor of the Tondamans.

And there was Sadasiva, the subject of our sketch, a student yet, the most gifted of a gifted set, the most brilliant of a glorious band of students each of whom was afterwards to leave his mark on, earth, 'foot prints on the sands of time' that have been a guide and an inspiration to many a forlorn heart. He is said to have been much given to arguing, to raise topics of discussion with his teacher, who often came out only second best on these occasions.

Towards the close of his student life, news came that his young wife, in a distant village, had come of age and accordingly his happy mother was preparing a few extra dishes in honour of

the occasion. Sadasiva returned from his teacher's quarters, and found his dinner delayed an hour in consequence. While waiting for his dinner, the young man sat down and reflected "Married life has just shown the first symptoms of dawning and I have already to pay for it with an hour's fasting. This is but a prelude to the tragedy of family life to come". So he thought and made up his mind against the married state. He accordingly went in search of a spiritual guide.

He soon found a preceptor and began, under him, his apprenticeship in *yoga*. He made great progress alike in his studies and practice. It must have been during this period that he wrote the few works and *Kirtanas*, that are now left to remind us of his mighty personality. Of his *Kirtanas* only two seem to be now alive, one that begins *Chinta nasthe kila thesham, chintanasthe kila*, 'no care to those who lead a holy life', and the other that begins *Tadvajjiva tvam Brahma tad-vajjiva tvam*, 'live in, Brahman and like him!'. These songs are sweetly lyrical and breathe a lofty idea. They show the trend his thoughts were now taking; they also show his ear for music and his sympathy with

sankirtana parties, who approach God not with fasts and dreary austerities but with pious songs and heart-felt hellulajahs.

It must be noticed that this pleasant and attractive mode of worship, now known as *Bhagavatasampradaya* had just been inaugurated in Southern India by his fellow pupil and chum Sri Venkatesa to whom we have already referred in these pages; and Sadasiva perhaps now and then joined the *sankirtana* parties of his friend and added a few songs of his own to the lyrics composed by Desikendra prince of religious teachers—as Venkatesa is also called *Siva-manasikupa* a string of 30 *aryas*, which is generally attributed to him must have been composed about this time. Even here, though he openly shows his leaning to Siva worship, his thoughts display a catholic spirit and a yearning for knowledge of Self. Puja, as it now obtains among us, is dedication, to the Divine Symbol before us of the sixteen *upacharas*, *dhyana* (meditation), *avahana* (invocation), *asana* (seat), *arghya* (offering of water) &c. But Sadasiva's cry is *Kiyadasanam prakalpyam kithasanasyeha sarvathopi bhava*. 'What seat can I here offer thee, Lord, who hast made the entire universe thy seat'. *Dcepan*

katham sikhavan d'epyetha purah swayam prakasasya.

'How can the light (that I wave before thee) shine bright flamed before thee who art self luminous'. And so on and on, till he closes with these words.

"Oh thou, moon crested, I ask something of thee, but nothing new. Grant me, Oh Lord, knowledge of mine own self, which is bliss eternal.

Oh Lord, what folly I may have spoken in childishness, or faith, in distress or ignorance, forgive me, thou that; Supreme Lord, if thou art above all that is, if the Scriptures are true, if thou art gracious unto those that believe in thee may my wishes be fulfilled on Earth".

(The Sanskrit Journal. 1896.)

(To be continued.)



HINDU-POLISH FRIENDSHIP

"I have travelled through many countries of the west, and have been in close touch with many races. And each race and each nation appears to me to have a particular ideal—a prominent ideal running through and guiding its whole life, and in this lies the backbone of its national life. "Neither politics, nor military power, neither commercial supremacy nor mechanical genius furnishes India with that backbone...for spirituality has always been ours in India." These are the words of one of the greatest of India's patriots and of one of the greatest souls of Humanity, the words of Swami Vivekananda.

Brothers My pilgrimage through India, this land of our ancestors—Aryans, was very short, but the long voyages of about 25 years in the infinite space of Indian philosophy and spiritual life were needed to this realisation—to be in the direct touch with you. And coming back, to my country, I had no other desire than to make this touch general to many of my countrymen with their Indian brothers, to afford the possibility of knowing our national ideals, our life, our struggle, our true spiritual face. India is predestined to be a spiritual guide of Humanity. India's sons and daughters must know all other nations.

Poland lying in the midst of the European whirlpool, between the two distinct races, two distinct civilizations, must be the pivot of these two potentialities. Studying our country, our very complexes, inner life, the Hindus will have to open the eyes on much problems in the West. Studying your philosophy, your religions, your arts, we Poles will have the infinite treasure for reinforcement and support of our national life. That is the programme of the Hindu-Polish Friendship where to collaborate in any form you are cordially invited.

No politics, no religious competitions, no economical revolutions, no hatred against any nation or classes will be prepared. No member's fees, no taxes will expect you. Other circles of Hindus and other nations exist or shall be organised. What we need is the exchange of our thoughts, books, magazines, papers, letters, articles and the legal meetings with those of yours. We aim to facilitate the travel in our country for the Hindu friends, students: our home must be open to

them and reciprocally the Poles introduced to you and well known as India's friends will find there, by occasion, the cordial hospitality and moral assistance as I had. We are many in Poland interested in India's affairs. But only students of Indian spiritual inner life shall be admitted to our circles. The same concerns Hindus. We have no Hindus in Poland. There are many in England. Our central point must be then temporarily in London. We will observe the extreme loyalty to this country and we will never act, write, speak, or suggest anything what could be interpreted as the interference in the direct political or economical relations between Britishers and Hindus. Nothing more than the studies of our two peoples and the loyalty to the other shall be on our banner. May the Lord bless us, may the genius of both our Nations guide us.

Correspondence shall kindly be directed to.

Mr. V. Loga, C/o, Mr. Kozlowski,
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