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[The Sabha is, however, not responsible for opinions or statements published in this magazine unless they are contained in an official document]

Honorary Editors : { C. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar
K. V. Sesa Ayyangar.

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MARCH, 1936



चितं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिक्षया गुरुर्गुवा । गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

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[No. 12

RAMA AND SITA. The Eternal in History.

By

SADHU VASWANI.

The *Dussehra* is our annual festival in honor of Sri Rama. In that festival I hear a voice of love and gratitude. Love for the Aryan Ideal. Gratitude to Sri Rama for the great victory over Ravana. It was a victory of the Aryan Ideal over a sense-dominated civilisation represented by Ravana. The Aryan Ideal represented sense-control, purity in personal and social life. The cult of the naked sweeping swiftly over the West is the very opposite of the Aryan Ideal. *Dussehra* is a reminder to us of the victory of the Aryan Ideal. I confess I feel in me a raritation for the Aryan Ideal. I feel its beauty. I find it difficult to describe it as I would if, were asked to describe the beauty of the flower or the butterfly.

Out of the strong comes forth sweetness. And Sri Rama the warrior had such sweet tender love for the poor. He made friendship with Hanuman. Hanuman and his comrades were not monkeys. They worshipped the monkey-god as their *Ishta* and so were known as the "monkey tribe". Poor they were, but faithful and true. Sri Rama was a friend of the poor. He gave them love; he lighted up the manhood of the poor. He would not be a guest of Rajahs and the Rishis. He blessed the cottage of poor Shabari.

Both Rama and Sita were pictures of *tapasya*. "I will go to the forest with thee", she says to Rama. And she gives to Arundhati her jewels and necklaces. She goes with Rama, leaving the palace, to be with him in exile and spend the years in *tapasya*. She has renounced her all to be in the company of Rama, her Lord. She eats the coarse forest food which Rama takes. She suffers separation from Rama when forcibly taken away by Ravan to far-off Lanka. She passes through the fire; after being re-united with Rama, She spends her last days in *tapasya* in the

Rishi's hermitage. "From my birth" she says, "sorrow marked me, child of the earth. I seek in *tapasya* the breast of my mother." Not without reason is Sita revered as the Loka-Mata, the World-Mother.

Sita is a woman unparalleled in all history. Helen of ancient Greece had singular beauty. But in Sita beauty was blended with purity and spirituality. Helen was the woman natural. Sita the woman Divine; and divinity shows in *tapasya*. Sita is, in the books, called "*ayoni-ja*" i.e. "not womb born". She was born not of the womb but of the very heart of *tapasya*. Is not the very name of "Sita" significant? It means 'furrow of the plough'. The furrow does hard work in the earth; Sita, a child of the palace, Sita, full of grace and beauty, was destined to be trained in a school of hardness, *tapasya*. Soon after she married Rama, Dasaratha asked his son to go into exile for 14 years. Rama says that he must not take Sita with him to the forest, for the forest is a world of fear, full of bears and tigers, and wolves and lions, and wild elephants, demons and serpents; and Sita would get no food in the forest except sour fruits and roots; and she must in the forest sleep on stony ground. Then to Rama Sita says with tears in her eyes that to be with him was to be in a palace, that a long journey with him would be a joy, that sour fruits would be sweet as the food of the Gods and that if he left her, her heart would break. Much she suffered in the forest, and later in Lanka when forcibly removed by Ravan! And after Rama's victory over Ravan, she was called upon to go through fire. Sita's was not a path of roses but the path of flames. Sita was the very picture of *tapasya*. Therefore history remembers her and salutes her as an immortal. Money and power pass away; what lives and is cherished as sacred in the memory of history is *Sacrifice*. It is the eternal in time. Sita stands for all time a symbol of sacrifice.

The supreme lesson of the Ramayana is '*tapasya*'. It is the lesson of Hindu literature and of the Hindu faith. How often are we not told in the ancient books that the world's creation and evolution are through *tapasya*? The Brahman, we read, did *tapasya*, saying:—"I am One: I shall be many." and the world was built. The Universe, we read, is sustained every day by the Sacrifice of God; To enrich their lives with the wealth of *tapasya*, India's kings and princess left their palaces and went upon the quest. They practice *tapasya*, Sakya left his father's palace and renounced his wealth and put on the garment of the dweller in the forest. And they did *tapasya* not as pessimists sick of the world, but in immense faith of the optimist believing that life is a festival, a sacrament, a communion with the Beautiful.

(Continued in page 323.)

MANTRA DIKSHA FOR HARIJANS

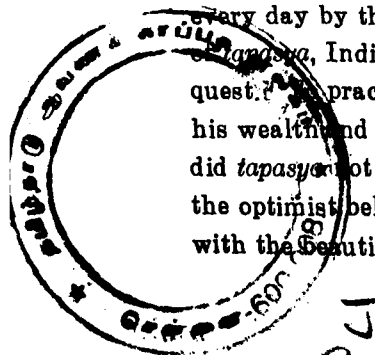
BY

K. V. SETHA AIYANGR.

As if in answer to our request for the institution of a common prayer for all Hindus published in last month's Baratha Dharma, the revered Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya called upon the Hindu community to observe the sacred Maha Sivaratri day as a day of national prayer and to signalise it by initiating our Harijan brothers into the Diksha of the Saivite Panchakshara Mantra. That a movement like this should have opponents was to be expected. But what was an agreeable surprise was the insignificance of the opposition. Though the published response to the appeal was not as large as was hoped for by the supporters of the movement, the country as a whole must be deemed to have stood by the Pandit in his right resolve to share the vital secrets of Hindu religion with all Hindus. Quietly but surely a forward step has been taken towards the promotion of Hindu unity.

The full significance of the step may not be realised by many. Those who are not Hindus, may not know the extreme jealousy with which the Panchakshara Mantra is treasured and guarded. In the scale of spiritual potency the Mantra takes precedence over everything else. Its administration makes the recipient an elect. Those who have had the privilege of receiving it are considered to be specially qualified for salvation. Admission to it is a mark of high spiritual eligibility.

The Vaishnavites have their own Mantra. It was their pride once upon a time, that their Acharyas went on missionary tours to initiate into the Mantra and into Vaishnavism all who were sincerely willing to receive them, and that they established congregational worship without distinction of caste. Vaishnavism built a brotherhood transcending the barriers of caste and inspired by zeal for propaganda and conversion. Few episodes in Hindu religious history are more interesting than the rise and spread of Vaishnavism with its prominent creed of salvation for all, and its doctrine of human equality in the religious sphere. Spiritual merit ceased to depend upon birth and was judged by worth. Vernacular scriptures rose to a sanctity as high as those in Sanskrit. Social practices, such as interdining before God, came to be recognised not merely as unobjectionable but also as desirable. Revised scale of spiritual values was established. A new path of approach of God, the Path of Service, or Dasya Yoga was constructed. It is to be sincerely hoped that



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the present day Vaishnavite Acharyas will revive the practice of their worthy predecessors.

Of course we are in the very initial stages of the effort to evolve a common prayer and worship for all Hindus. Many such attempts will have to be made and many schemes tried before we succeed in knitting the whole Hindu community into a brotherhood of common worship. The task is bound to be difficult, and it will take its toll of failures like all great achievements. But early steps have to be taken to satisfy the growing desire of the Hindu public to do something that will be an expression of the longing for Hindu unity, and to tell those Hindus who feel they are not given a place in the Hindu religious scheme that there will be no cause for such feeling in the future. It will be a demonstration to the world at large that despite its many cleavages Hinduism has a living cohesive power.

"THE WRITING ON THE WALL."

Many members of the Thiyya community in Kerala are in pursuance of a resolution passed by the Board of Directors of the S. N. D. P., Yogam at Quilon recently are taking steps to embrace other religions to remove the social and political disabilities under which they are labouring at present by remaining in the Hindu fold.

Some leaders of the Thiyya community met at Cochin under the presidency of Dr. K. P. Thail, Honorary Magistrate, on Monday, when it was agreed by a majority that they should adopt Islam which would ensure their equality of rights and treatment. Prominent leaders including Messrs. A. K. Bhasker, K. C. Kuttan, General Secretary, All-Kerala Thiyya Youth League and P. K. Padmanabhan Asan, Editor, "Samkatana", were present. Dr. K. P. Thail is understood to have expressed that conversion to Christianity was no solution for their problems as caste and untouchability was observed by them.

From The Hindu.

OUR MANTRAS AND SAMSKARAS.

BY

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Retired Advocate, Malleswaram, Bangalore.

(Continued from page 271.)

उपनयनम् Upanayanam—initiation for studentship.

The whole of Patala 4 and 5 of Apastamba grihya sutras deal with this subject. The root meaning of the compound is leading the pupil to the teacher, who may be either the father or any other guru. The teacher here teaches the Gayatri first and nothing else. The first sutra of Apastamba dealing with this samskara is upanayanam vyakhyasyamah—

उपनयनं व्याख्यास्यामः - कुमारस्याचार्यसमोपनयनमस्मिन्कर्मणोति

The leading of the pupil to the teacher in this samskara or function. The learned commentator Sudārsnacharya explains why the sutrakara has used the word vyakhyasyamah—as he wishes to emphasize the importance of this function and as it deserves to be explained fully. *Note.* Here the note of the newly published work of Mysore says that the acharya or the teacher, whoever he may be, should purify himself, the previous day, by the performance of twelve thousand gayatries. None of the ancient authors seem to mention this. The next sutra of Apastamba is

गर्भाष्टमेषु ब्राह्मणमुपनयीत -

garbha—astameshu—brahmanam—upanayita—The brahmin shall be initiated in his eighth year.

वसन्तेब्राह्मणमुपनयीत - गर्भाद्वाजन्मतोवाष्टमेवर्षे

vasante—brahmanam—upaniyata—garbhadvā—janmato—va—ashtame—varshe—In summer season in the eighth year whether from birth or conception, a brahmin shall be initiated. The author of Kantabushana mentions the particular days which should be avoided for fixing this samskara. He calls it

अगलग्रहेदिनेपूर्वाहणेपुण्याहे

agala—graha—dine—purvahne—punnyahe—In the first half of an auspicious day which is not galagraha—seizing by the throat or throttling. It means not on the 4th, 7th, 9th, 8th, 13th and the three following days. Here the reference is to the days on which a course of study is commenced, but immediately preceding a day on which it is prohibited. Hence it means that day on which if the initiation is made, it should not be interrupted the next day. On the day having invited good brahmins and having given them seats and having made himself pure he the tutor should sit facing the east with pavitra पवित्र in his hand and over darbhas with the

pupil, clean and well clad, after a single achamana (already described) on his right, and having obtained the permission of the assembled brahmins and having performed three pranayamahs, resolve that as preparatory ceremonies for the boy's upanayana, he will perform Ankurapratishara, Abyudhaya, Punyaha and Udakasanti. The sutra referring to this in Apastamba grihya is 5 in patala 4

ब्राह्मणान्भोजयित्वाऽऽशिषोवाचयित्वा कुमारं भोजयित्वानुवाकस्य प्रथमेन यजुषाः संसृज्योष्णां शशीता स्वानीयोत्तरयाशिरुनन्ति

brahmanan—bhojayitwa—asisho—vachayitva—kumaram—bhojayitva—anuvakhasya—prathamena—yajusha—apah—samsriya—ushnasita svaniya—uttaraya—sira—unatti—In the dharmasastras there is a permanent injunction like the following—

शुचीन् मन्त्रवतस्सर्वकृत्येषु भोजयेत्

Suchin—mantra—vatah—sarvakrityeshu—bhojayet—In every act (religious) give food to pure brahmins. Accordingly Apastamba in the above sutra starts with the function of feeding good brahmins and obtaining their blessings for the ensuing samskara and the boy. The boy also is fed along with a few other unmarried boys. The author lays down that the boy should be fed with such food as would contain no salt or astringents but the practice is entirely different. Then with the first anuvaka of yajurveda the boy's head is cleaned with lukewarm water commencing from the east. The yajur mantras referred to are उष्णेनवायो - etc., and आप उन्दन्तु - etc. These are already explained in the Chaula Mantras. Before the above sutra, there are two other sutras which enjoin that the kshatriya shall initiate in the eleventh and the vaisya in the twelfth year and further the seasons prescribed for the kshatriya and the vaisya are grishma (jyeshtha and ashada) and sarath i. e. (asvayuja and kartika) corresponding to June and July and October and November respectively. In the case of boys whose previous samskaras are not properly performed, or omitted, for some reason or other, a prayachitta homa or fire-sacrifice and a prayachitta krichra are performed and then the usual samskaras are performed. After this the acharya resolves that he will perform the upanayana of this boy with the permission of the assembled brahmins. Then as in chaula, the boy is shaved and after both the acharya and the boy have their baths, the boy puts on new clothing, ties up his hair in a knot, has an inner cloth covering his private parts and puts on यज्ञोपवीतम् yagnopavitam or the sacred thread with the following mantras.

यज्ञोपवीतं परमंपवित्रं प्रजापतेर्यत्सहजं पुरस्तादायुष्यमग्रं परमंच शुद्धं यज्ञोपवीतं बलं मस्तुतेजः

yagnopavitam—paramampavitram—prajapate—yet sahajam—purastat—ayushyam—agryam—paramam—cha—suddham (or subbram) yagnopavitamblalam—astu—tejah—I wear that yagnopavita which the great creator had always worn and which is pure clean and sanctifying and everlasting life—May it give me strength and brilliance. This mantra which is usually uttered by all classes at present is referred to in the commentaries on the above sutra by the commentator of Apastamba grihya—but the learned author of the Mysore edition of a new book called Yajusha Purva Prayoga Ratnakara cites another mantra which is more often used as a blessing than for this purpose. It is as follows—

नवो नवो भवति जायमानोऽहं केतुर्वषसामेत्यग्रे भागं देवेभ्यो विदधात्यायन्प्रचन्द्रमास्तिरतिदीर्घमायुः
navo—navo—bhavati jayamanoh—aham ketuh—ushasam. etc. agrei bhagam—devabhyo—vidhati—ayan—prachandra—mah—tirati—deergham ayuh. (I had not heard of this as a mantra for putting on the sacred thread) Even this Mysore compiler seems to mention this as only a preliminary rik and mentions the usual one quoted above later on. The next function is kumarabhajanam i.e. the feeding of the brahmachari (along with a few more who are already initiated) with food which contains no salt or astringents as

कुमारभोजनं च विनाक्षार लवणादिः

I have already referred to this as common to chaula and upanayana and the practice also, as quite different from this. The acharya does the prokshshana and parishechana for the boy's food himself and makes the boy do the प्राणाहुति pranahute eating the seven grains of food with the corresponding mantras being repeated by himself. Further the acharya—teacher utters the uttrapojana or the mantra for sipping water at the end and all the boys get up. Here also the practice as previously mentioned of the mother eating with the boy is in vogue with some. After washing himself the boy passes through the shaving process as in chaula with the same mantras and with the same corresponding actions, till the hair is buried in the ground. The next three sutras 6-8 of the same patala refer to this. Then commence the fire-sacrifice. The boy seated on the right side of the teacher with dharbha and pavitra in his right hand as usual. Then the Grihya sutra which refers to the fire-sacrifice and the subsequent acts of the boy and the acharya are 9-12 of the same patala.

स्नातमग्रेरुपसमाधानादयाज्यभागान्ते पालाशीं समिधमुत्तरयाधायोत्तरेणाग्निं दक्षिणे पदाश्मानमास्थापयत्यातिष्ठेति
 Sanatam—agneh—upa—samadha—nat—ajyabagante—palasim—samidham—uttaraya—adhapya—uttarena—agnim—dakshinena pada—asmanam astapyati—atishta—iti—The boy after his bath is seated by the right side of the tutor with palasa staff, its point turned to the north and ordered to keep it erect in his hand. On a small stone slab the boy is ordered to keep his right foot. Further this sutra indicates and implies by the words palasim, samidham & etc, all the other materials that are necessary to be brought and kept ready for use at the required time. The necessary materials are—

शम्याः समित्कुशांबुर्चवस्त्राभ्रमदंदाजिनमेखलाभिक्षापात्रांश्च
 Sammyah—Samith—kusa—ambu—koorcha—vastra—asma—thanda—ajina—mekhala—bhiksha patram—cha—The small twigs of palasa or aswaththa—holy grass—water, knotted dharbha—newcloth—stone slab—stave (of fig tree Indian)—the spotted deer skin piece. A belt made of dharbha grass and the beggar's bowl. As already mentioned for all sacred acts especially for a fire sacrifice two household old ladies are asked to bring fire from the sacred fire of the house or from the kitchen hearth generally. (I say kitchen hearth as no other sacred fire now-a-days is found in a house and he who keeps a sacred fire even now is certainly a saint and does not deserve to stay in a home of the present day. Then, the boy's right hand is given one of the twigs dipped in ghee and then holding the boy with his right hand, the following mantra is uttered and the boy throws the twig into the fire. The mantra is as follows—

आयुर्दा देवजरसंघृणानो घृतप्रतीकोघृत पृष्ठो अग्ने-घृतं पिबन्मृतं चारुगव्यं पितेव पुत्रं जरेन येमम्
 ayurdha—deva—jarasam—grinanah—ghrita—Prteekah—ghrita—prishtah agne—ghritam piban—amritam—charu—gavyam piteva—puttram—jarase naya yimam—O Agni God of fire sacrificial god—immortal god—not only himself immortal but bestowing immortality on his devotees—brilliant by devouring ghee offerings one following another, being so may thou by this offering lead this boy to old age i. e. immortality, just as a father leads and protects his boy in all ways to live and flourish to that old age. (If the mantras are uttered by the acharya then he says 'this boy'. If the mantras are uttered by the boy himself then he addresses Agni and says 'lead me, this sacrificer.') The next act contemplated by this sutra is couched in this mantra

अ तिष्ठिममश्मानमग्नेवत्वं स्थिरोभव

athista—yimam—asmanam—asmeva—tvam,—sthira-bhava-put your right foot on this stone and be as firm as this stone. This is done by the boy after going round the acharya in the right direction to his left and sitting on the northern side of the sacrificial fire—

अभितिष्ठपुतन्यत्सहस्वपुतनायतः

abhitishta—pritanayath—sahasva—prita—nayatah—Sit so ready and firm as to fight those who are bent upon attacking you—Here the mantra drashta or the seer of the mantras contemplates and hints to the future student that there are many obstacles for real student-ship and that he should be firm to overcome them. The next grihya sutra of Apastamba of the same patala is No. 10 and is as follows—

वासः सद्यः कृतोतमुत्तराभ्यामभिन्योत्तराभिस्तिसृभिः परिधाप्यपरिहितमुत्तरयानुमन्त्रयते.
 vasah—sathyah—krittutam—uttrabhyam—abhimantraya uttrabhisribhih paridhappya—parihitam—uttaraya—anumantrayate—The boy is or should be clad with that cloth (made either of silk, fibre or cotton) which is separated from the loom that very day just before using. Before using the cloth and the boy are blessed with the following mantras before and after using it. The cloth goes round the boy's loins thrice towards his right. The following mantras which are blessings for the new-born (sastrially) boy are then uttered

रेवतीस्त्वाव्यक्ष्णन्कृत्तिकाश्चान्तःस्तुत्वा-धियोऽवयन्ववन्ना अवृजन्सहस्रमन्तोऽ अभितो
 अयच्छन्

Revate—tvavyakshnam—krittikascha—akrintastva dhiyo—avayan avag na—avirinjan—sahasram—antam—abhitah—ayachchan—The cotton from which the cloth is woven is first addressed—O cloth! The cotton from which you were produced was first mercilessly beaten to remove the seed by the goddess Revate. Then the Krittikas wove it into thread. Then the god named Dhiya wove it into cloth. In the interim the gods named Gnah, covered the intestinal spaces. Then several other unnamed goddesses kept the sides and edges tight and stiff. The next mantra for the same is

देवीर्देवायपरिधीसवित्रेमहत्तदासामभवन्महित्वनम्

devi—devaya—paridhih—savitre—mahat—tadasam—abhavan—mahitvanam—Those goddesses who proclaimed or achieved greatness while they clothed the sun with his paridhi, so also may be the same goddesses make you great by clothing you with this cloth. Here the reference to paridhi is this. Just as the photosphere is an enclosure or covering to the blazing sun, so this cloth is to you. It gives you brilliance. The next four

mantras are also addressed to the same cloth and the goddesses and gods presiding over it.

या अकृन्तन्नवयन् या अतन्वतयाश्चदेवीरन्तानभितोऽददन्त-तास्त्वादेवीजरसेसंव्यय
न्त्वायुष्मानिपरिधत्स्ववासः
ya—akrintam—avayan—ya—atanvata—yascha—devih—antan—abhito—
adhanta—tah—tva—devih—jarase—samvyayantu—ayushman—yitham
paridhatsva—vasah—May those goddesses who first ginned the cotton by
mercilessly beating it—May those who wove it into thread and may those
who wove it into cloth and fixed the edges and borders firm and strong,
may they clothe you so firmly and well so that you may attain full
ripe old age and may you live long by being so clothed.

परिधत्तवत्वाससौनःशतायुषकृणुतदीर्घमायुः-बृहस्पतिः प्रायच्छद्वास एतत्सो-
मायराज्ञेपरिधातवा उ-
paridhatta—dhatta—vasasa—enam—satayusham—krinuta dheergham ayuh
brihaspate—prayachohat—vasah—etat—somaya—ragne—paridhatava—
vu—O goddesses Revate etc.) clothe him—clothe him make him live a
hundred summers—long lived—Did not Brahaspate give it to king Soma
(the king) for the same purpose with the same benediction.

जरागच्छसिपरिधत्स्ववासो भवाकृष्टीनामभिः शस्तिपावाशतं च जीवशरदस्सु-
वर्चारायश्चपोषमुपसंव्ययस्व
jaram—gachchase—paridhatsva—vaso—bhava—kristeenam—abhisaste
pava—satam—cha—jeeva—saratha—suvarcha—rayascha—posham upa-
samvya sva. Having worn this cloth, may you become old (aged mean-
ing thereby long lived). May you protect your kith and kin. May you
live a hundred years wealthy prosperous and happy being so clad

परीदवासो अधिधास्वस्तयेभूरापीनामभिः शस्तिपावा-शतं च जीवशरदः पुरुर्वीरसूनिचार्यो वि-
भजासिजीवन

pareetham—vaso—adhidhah—svastaye—abhooch—apeenam—abhisaste
pava—satam—cha—jeeva—saratha—puroochih—vasuni—cha—aryah
vibhajasi—jeevan—Now you are clad with this (valuable) cloth for what
purpose, for protecting your kith and kin and your dependants. Now
being the possessor of immense wealth which is all pervading and which
is intended to be distributed among the deserved, does not he who does this
deserve the appellation of 'he lives'. Then the mantra for binding round
the mounjee—mekhala—belt made of darbha or sacred grass begins. The
apastamba Grihiya sutra covering this is 11 of the same patala and runs
as follows—

मौर्जमेखलां त्रिवृतां त्रिः प्रदक्षिणमुत्तराभ्यापरिवीयाजिनमुत्तरमुत्तरया

mounjeem—mekhalam—trivritam—tripradakshinam—uttarabhyam pari-
viya—ajinam—uttaram—uttaraya—This darbha belt goes round the loins
thrice in the right hand direction and the small piece of spotted deer skin
tied to the sacred thread—Both are intended to give the lad strength.
The kshatriya and vaisiya have different materials for the same purpose.
The mantras used for this purpose are as follows—

इयं दुस्तुतात्परिबाधमानाशर्मवरूधं पुनतीन आगात् प्राणापानाभ्यां बलमाभरन्ती-
प्रियादेवानां सुभगामेखलेयम्

viyam—dhuruktat—paribhadamana—sarma—varudham—punati—na—
agat—pranapanabhyam—balam—abharanti priya—devanam—subhaga—
mekhala—lyam—This dharba belt is a preventor as well as a protector
against all abusive language. She having come to our house as a well
wisher and cleaner of all unhealthy associations fills me with unlimited
strength and is the favourite of Gods

अतस्य गोप्त्रीतपसः परस्पीनतीरक्षस्सहमाना अरातीः सानस्समन्तमनुपरिहिभद्रया-
भर्तारस्तेमेखलेमारिषाम
ritasya—goptri—tapasah—paraspi—ghnati—raksha—sahamana—aratih—
sa—nah—samantam—anuparihi—bhadraya—bhartarah—te—mekhale
marishama—O Mekhale or sacred belt—You are the preserver and protec-
tor of truth or the sacrifice. You are the protector of tapah or auste-
rities, the killer of rakshasas or enemies. You are strong enough to oppose
our enemies. Such as you are, protect us all round. Protected by such a
well wisher as you may we not become poor backed by you. This sacred
belt should be so tied as to bring both the ends together at the navel,

मित्रस्य चक्षुर्धरुणं बलीयस्तेजोयशस्विस्थविरसमिदम् अनाहन्स्यं वसनं जरिष्णुपरी-
दंवाज्यजिनंदधेऽहम्

mitrasya—chakshu—dharunam—baliyahtejo—yasaavi—sthaviram—
samidhdham—anahanasyam—vasanam—jarishnu—pareedham—vaji—
ajinam—dhadhe—aham. This mantra is addressed to the fragment of the
deer skin—You are the solar eye, that is the eye for looking at the Sun.
You are the light giver—hence the long life yielder—you are the strength
giver. You are the giver of renown as well as of old age. You are the
giver of radiance i.e. brightness. You are unfit for the impertinent scound-
rel. Existing from time immemorial as you are you lead me to immorta-
lity. You are the giver of plenty of food etc. Such a skin have I worn.
(This skin is worn as a substitute for an upper garment as an unmarried
boy is prohibited from wearing an upper garment. Having furnished

himself with the necessary wearing apparel staff skin etc., the lad now says he has reached his acharya—tutor. The grihya sutra that refers to this is No. 12 of the same patala and runs as follows—

उत्तरेणग्निर्दधानं संस्तीर्यतेऽन्वेनमुत्तरयाऽवस्थाप्योदकाञ्जलिमस्मा अञ्जलावानी-
योत्तरयात्रिः प्रोक्ष्योत्तरैर्दक्षिणेहस्तेगृहीत्वोत्तरैर्देवताभ्यः परिदायोत्तरेणयाजुषोपनीयमुप्रजा इति ।
दक्षिणेकर्णेजपति.

Uttarena—agnim—dharban—samstirya—teshu—anam—uttaraya—avasth-
apya—uthakamjalim—asmai—anjalavo—aniya—uttaraya—trih—prokshya
uttraih—dakshine—haste—grihitva—uttaraih—devatabhyah — paridhaya
—uttarena—yajusha—upaniya — suprajayiti—dakshine—karne—japati—
Having spread the dharbas—the sacred grass on all sides with blades
pointing north of the sacrificial fire of the northern side, thrice
water is sprinkled slightly taken from the hand of the boy with
certain mantras uttered only once. The acharya holds the hand
of the boy (only once at the end) and then offerings are made by the
boy first ten and then eleven, in all twenty one times, intended as protec-
tive. At the end of all these offerings, each time the boy's name should
be uttered as this boy at last the acharya says—I have taken this boy as
my pupil. At first the boy is seated facing west and the acharya faces
east and the boy says I have joined my acharya. The twenty one mantras
above referred to are as follow : and are uttered by the boy.

आगन्त्रसमगन्महिप्रसुमृत्युयोतनभरिष्ठास्संचरेमहिस्वस्तिचरेतादिहस्वस्त्यागृहेभ्यः

agantra—samaganmahī—pra—su—mrityum — yuyotana—arishta — san-
charemahi — svasti—cha — ratat — yiha — svastya—grihebyah—Having
travelled I have joined my acharya. I can successfully fight mrityu—the
god of death, and keep him aloof from me. I can cross or subdue ill-luck.
May my acharya also steer unobstructed and flourish well. Let me pros-
per well here till I am fit for the married life.

समुद्रादूर्मिर्मधुमाऽउदारदुपाऽशुनासममृतत्वमश्याम-इमेनुतेरश्मयस्सूर्यस्ययेभिस्सपि त्वंपि-
तरोन आयन्

samudrat—durmiḥ—madhumam—udarat—upa—amsuna—samam—amri-
tatvamasyam—yime—nu—te—rasmaya—yebhiḥ—sapitvam—pitaronah—
ayan—These drops that fall on me are drops of the waves of mana—
Amritam coming from the ocean and have thus emboldened me. These
bright waves have made me immortal. These immortal rays of the sun
carried by the holy waters have satisfied my manes i. e. ancestors i. e.
Angiras, Vamadeva etc. (these are the seers of this mantra). Hence these
drops that satisfied my ancestors have dropped on my head, I shall also

attain immortality undoubtedly. (This mantra is used for prokshna—
dropping the drops of water on the head of the boy). This water is poured
into the hand of the boy first by another acharya and then the acharya
takes it and drops it thrice on the head of the boy but repeating the
mantra only once. Then the acharya holds the boy's hand and makes
him repeat the following mantras—

अग्निहस्तमग्रभीधसोमस्तेहस्तमग्रभीधसवितातेहस्तमग्रभीधसरस्वतीतेहस्तमग्रभीधवृषातेहस्त
मग्रभीधर्यमातेहस्तमग्रभीधः शुस्तेहस्तमग्रभीधगस्तेहस्तमग्रभीधमित्रस्तेहस्तमग्रभीधमित्रस्त्वमसिधर्म-
णाऽग्निराचार्यस्तव

agne—te—hastam—agrabheet—soma—te—hastam—agrabheet—savita —
te—hastam—agrabheet—Sarasvate—te—hastam—agrabheet—pushate—has-
tam—agrabheet—aryama—te—hastam — agrabheet — Amsuste hastam
Agrbeeth — bhagha — te — hastam agrabheet — mitrah te — hastam —
agrabheet — mitrah tvam — asi — dharmanah — agnih—acharya—tava
— My holding of your hand is symbolical of agni holding it —
Soma—Savita— Sarasvati — Pusharyama — Amsuh — Bhagah mitrah—
You have become Dharma by observance. You have become mitra just as
he is among the Gods. Hence Agni is your acharya. (Here all the
twelve names of the sun are not pronouns for the same sun but they
represent his different aspects. So says a learned commentator The
next eleven mantras are what are called Paridana mantras or covering
or protecting mantras and are as follow :

अग्नयेत्वापरिदाम्यसौसोमायत्वापरिदाम्यसौसवित्रेत्वापरिदाम्यसौसरस्वत्यैत्वापरिदाम्य-
सौमृत्यवेत्वापरिदाम्यसौ यमायत्वापरिदाम्यसौ गदायत्वापरिदाम्यसौ अन्तकायत्वापरि-
दाम्यसौ अद्वयस्त्वापरिदाम्यसौ ओषधीभ्यस्त्वापरिदाम्यसौपृथिव्यैत्वासवैश्चनरायैपरि-
दाम्यसौ.

Agnaye—tva—parithathami—asau—Somaya—tva—parithathami — ausa
savitre—tva—parithathami asau—Sarasvatyaitva—parithathami—asau—
Mrityavatvam—parithathami—asau — Yamayatva—parithathami asau—
Gadayatva—parithathami asau Antakayatva, parithathami asau—Athby-
ahstva parithathami asau — Oshadibhyah — tva — parithathami — asau
Prithivyaḥ — tva — savaisvanarayai — parithathami—asau — May this
agni who held your hand protect you from the destructive action of
all these i. e. Fire, Moon, Sun, Goddess of learning, God of death. Yama
the deadly mace, antaka, waters, drugs, earth and vaisvanara at the end of
each mantra i. e. when the boy's name as asau is mentioned the acharya
stretches his hand towards the sacrificial fire and requests Agni saying
protect him. Then follow the regular upanayana mantras. The teacher

holds the right hand of the boy and takes him near him and seats him opposite to him.

देवस्यत्वासवितुः प्रसव उपनयेऽसौ-सुप्रजाः प्रजयाभूयास्सुवीरोवीरैस्सुवर्चावर्चसासुपोषः पोषै-ब्रह्मचर्यमाग्नीमुपमानयस्वदेवेनसवित्प्रसूतःकोनामास्यसौनमास्मिकस्यब्रह्मचार्यसौप्राणस्यब्रह्म-चार्यसावेषतेदेवसूर्यब्रह्मचारीतगोपायसमामृतैषतेसूर्यपुत्रस्सुदीर्घायुस्समामृत—याःस्वस्तिमग्निवायु-स्सूर्यश्चन्द्रमा आपोऽनुसंचरन्तिताःस्वस्तिमनु संचरासावध्वनामध्वपतेऽश्रेष्ठस्यध्वनः पारमशेय Devasya—tva—savituh—prasava—upanaye—asau—suprajah—prajaya—bhuyah—suviro—viraih—suvarcha—varchasa—suposha—poshih—brah- macharayam—agni—upama—nayava—devena—savitra—prasutah—ko- namasy—asau namasi—kasya—brahmachari—asau pranasya—brah- macharyasaha—as—te—devah—surya—brahmacharitam—gopaya—sa- ma—mrta—asha—te—surya—putra—sudirghayuh—sa—ma—mrta—yam svastim—agnih—vayuh—suryah—chanthramah—apah—anusamcharan. tam—svastim—anusanchara—adhvanam—adhvapate—sreshtasya—advanah—param—asēya—Having obtained the order of the blessings of Surya—Savita or the Sun I take this boy under my roof or under me. (The next portion is uttered in the ear of the boy so as to be inaudible to others) O, unmarried boy you become the parent of many children and many grandchildren. The strong of the strong (the commentator says the word virah is used for grandchildren) radiant, with radiance meaning have a good facial appearance, well protected with god protection. Then the following is uttered is answer by the pupil) I have attained brahma- charyam—pupil hood or studentship. Having been born, as it were, by the Sun-god lead me (for what purpose have I attained brahmacharyam), for learning the Vedas

Question—What is your name?

Answer—I am of this name.

Question—Whose pupil are you?

Answer—I am the pupil of prana—supreme being. (Then the acharya says) O, God—Suryah—This is your pupil. Protect him. Dont kill him. May he be long lived. May you attain that perfection and unobstructed movement—swastim which the greatest elements like Fire, Air, Water and the great light givers as Sun and Moon have attained. O, Suryah—Sun, the great god of all great paths or roads (as the heavens are so called) I have come to the sorrowless great beneficial path. Lead me to the end. The Apastamba sutras that speak of the above function are 1-4 of Patala 4 Khanda 11. They are

ब्रह्मचर्यमागमितिकुमार आह (2) प्रष्टपरस्यप्रतिवचनं कुमारस्य. (3) शेषंपरोजपति. (4) प्रत्यगाशिर्षचैनंवाचयति

brahmacharyam—agamiti—kumara—aha—(2) prashtam—parasya—prati- vachnam—kumarasya—(3) sesham paro—japati (4) pratyagasisham— chainam—vachayati (The meanings of all these have been expressed with the mantras contemplated by them). With the next sutra commen- ces the homa or the sacrifice. The boys goes round the sacrificial fire and sits by the right side of the teacher. Then the teacher makes the boy repeat the following nine mantras holding his hand and repeats the tenth and eleventh himself at the end of each the word svaha is added and the boy delivers the ghee through the dharvi—leaf into the fire. Mantra (1)

(1) योगेयोगेतवस्तरंवाजेवाजेहवामहेसस्वायमिन्द्रमूतये

yoge yoge—tavah—taram vaje vaje havamahe—sakhaya—indram ootaye Whenever we have to saddle or harness our horses to the chariot for pur- poses of war, we call upon you O, Indra by praises and sacrifices as a friend, to protect us. (2)

(2) इममग्ने आयुषेवर्चसेकृधिप्रियःरेतोवरुणसोमराजन्-मातेवास्मा अदितेशर्मयच्छविश्वे-

देवाजरदष्टिर्यथाऽसत्

yimam—agne—ayushe—varchase—kridhi—priyam—reto—varuna—soma- rajan—mateva—asmai—adite—sarma yacha—visvadevah—jarathashti —yatha asat—O agni—sacrificial fire, make or bless this boy with long life and brilliance. O, Varuna bless this boy with plenty of children. O, Soma O, aditi, bless this boy with health and happiness. O, Visvadevah you also bless this boy so as to attain old age

(3) शतमिहृशरदो आन्तिदेवायत्रानश्चक्राजरसंतनूनाम्-पुत्रासोयत्रपितरोभवन्तिमानोमध्या- रीरिषतायुर्गन्तोः

sataminnu—saratha—ante—devah—yatra—na—chakra—jarasam—thanu- nam—purtra—asah—yatra—pitro—bhavanti—ma—nah—madhyaa— reerisht—ayuh—ganthoh—May this boy attain a hundred years of life— Is it not, should he not without any diminution. O, devah, till all the limbs of the body get old—till he himself becomes the parent of children and grand children and becomes old having borne the brunt of family burdens. Do not cut short his life in the middle by troubles. Let him quietly pass on to the end.

(4) अग्निष्ठ आयुः प्रतरादधात्वग्निष्ठेपुष्टिप्रतराकृणोतु-इन्द्रोमरुद्भिर् ऋतुधाकृणोत्वादित्यैस्ते वसुभिरादधातु

agnishte—ayuh—prataram—thadhatu—twagnishte—pushtim—prataram —krinotu—Indro—marutbhi—ritudha—krinotu—adityaiste—vasubhi— athadhatu—May agni—the sacrificial fire give you long life. May he

give you full prosperity. May Indra and the Maruti give you fulness of strength and body corresponding to the seasons and age. May the same Indra with the adityas and vasus give you the same fullness of body and strength and a vigorous mind.

(5) मेधामह्यमङ्गिरसोमेधांसत् ऋषयोददुःमेधामहंप्रजपतिर्मधांभिर्ददातुमे
medham—mahyam—angirasc—medham—saptarishayahthathuh— medam
—mahyam prajapati medham—agnih—thathatu—me—May the Angirasa
—Saptarishis Prajapati and Agni bestow me with high intelligence.

(6) अप्सरासुचयामेधागन्धर्वेषुचयध्यशः दैवीयामानुषीमेधासामामविशतादिह
apsarasu—cha ya—medha—gandarveshu—cha—yat—yasah—daivi — ya
ma nushi—medha sa mam—avisatat—yiha—Whatever intelligence or
renown exists in the apsaras, ghandarvas, devas or men let all that fully
enter me.

(7) इममेवरुणश्रुधीहवमध्याचमृडय—त्वामवस्युराचके
yimam—me—varuna—srudhi—havam—athyacha—mridaya—tvam—
avsyuh—achakc—O Varuna, listen to my call or prayer—having heard it
protect me. I have come to you for protection.

(8) तत्त्वायामिब्रह्मणावन्दमानस्तदास्तेयजमानोहविभिः-अहेडमानोवरुणेहबोध्यरुशःसमान
आयुः प्रमोषीः
tatva yami—brahmana—vanthamanah—tat assaste—yajamanah—havir-
bhiih—ahedamanah—varuna yihe—bodhe—urusamsa—ma nah—ayuh—
pramosheeh—O mighty praiseworthy Varuna, do not lessen our lives i.e.
life period without any anger. Listen to my call or request. I am calling
you to help for discharging my life functions i. e. religious duties. So also
all sacrifices call you with Vedic mantras.

(9) त्वंनो अग्नेवरुणस्यविद्वान्देवस्यहेडोऽवयासिसीष्टाः-यजिष्ठोवहितमश्शेशुचानोविश्वा-
द्वेषाःसिप्रमुमुग्ध्यस्मत्
tvam noh agne varunasya—vidvan—devesya—hedah avayasiseeshtah
yajishto—vihantanah sosuchanah—visva—dveshamsi—pramumugdhi
asmat—O god of fire, you are omniscient. Call back Varuna's anger so
that it may not affect us. You who are so much venerated by sacrifices
and you who shine with such brilliance, retard all ill will and hatred that
our enemies evince towards us.

(10) सत्त्वंनो अग्नेऽवमोभवोतीनेदिष्टो अस्या उषसोप्युष्टौ-अवयक्ष्वनीवरुणः रराणोविहि-
मृडीकःसुहवोन राधि
sa—tvam—nah—agne—avamc—bhava—ooti—nedishta—asya—ushasah-
pyushtau avayakshva—nah—varunam—rarano—vihi—mridikam—suh-
vonaradhi. O God of fire, you are the first or prime deity among the De-
vas. You are their very cause or origin. You are or become our nearest

protector. When at the very early dawn meaning thereby always. Make Varuna's shackles retreat. Make us live in abundance and eat or accept all our sacrifices, given in the form of cakes, ghee etc. Look at us agreeably.

(11) त्वमग्ने अयाऽस्ययासन्मनसाहितः-अयासन् हव्यमूहिषेऽयानोधेहिमेषजम्
tvam agne—aya—asi—aya—san—mana—sa hitah—aya—san havyam—
oohishe, ayahnah—dhehi—bheshajam—O God of fire You deserve to be
approached by your devotees. In fact you are in them. They always
contemplate you. Carry the offerings given by us to the Gods. Bestow on
us divine remedies. (These last two mantras are uttered by the teacher
as already said).

(Continued from page 308).

The world has worshipped wealth and power. But the richest wealth is self-offering; the greatest power is *tapasya*. To survive is to breed, says Europe. To survive is to sacrifice, says India. To be great is scramble for goods, says Europe: to be great is to commune with the Eternal Good, says India. Europe is filled today with vibrations of hate and strife and violence. Europe needs to be brought into contact with the genius, the soul of India. Race-contacts produce renaissance, renewals among nations. To initiate, to develop, a new movement of renewal, Europe must meet India as a comrade renouncing race-pride. Much there is which modern India has to learn of Europe. And Europe, too, has much to learn of India. Her philosophy and literature bear witness to the dignity of disciplined civilization evolved by her, long before Europe looked upon her with passion-filled eyes.

Rama and Sita are time-symbols of the Eternal in History—The Spirit of Sacrifice.

THE BHARATA DHARMA

THE ASWATHA TREE

K. V. SESA AIYANGAR.

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुर्ल्यम्
 छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥
 अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवाला
 अधश्चमूलान्यनुसंततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥
 न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।

Bhagavad Gita Ch. XV.

Men call the Aswatha, the Banyan tree,—
 Which hath its boughs beneath, its roots above,
 The ever-holy tree. Yea! for its leaves
 Are green and waving hymns which whisper Truth!
 Who knows the Aswatha, knows Veda and all,
 Its branches shoot to heaven and sink to earth,
 Even as the deeds of men, which take their birth
 From qualities: its silver sprays and blooms,
 And all the eager verdure of its girth,
 Leap to quick life at kiss of sun and air
 As men's lives quicken to the temptings fair
 Of wooing sense: its hanging rootlets seek
 The soil beneath, helping to hold it there,
 As actions wrought amid this world of men
 Bind them by ever tightening bonds again. (*Song Celestial.*)

To search for the roots of human evolution we must turn to the realms of the mind. Thought power is the restless urge that leads a human being from phase to phase of experience in the endless quest for happiness. Actions are thoughts materialised. From mind creation proceeds*. As the Srimad Bhagavata† says "even the Devas are subject to the control of the mind. The mind does not come under the control of any other. It is stronger than the strongest. He who is able to subjugate it becomes a God of Gods." The action of thought on the emotional and physical bodies has been recognised in the scriptures of all religions. Spiritual progress is in some respects measured by the growth of the power of the mind, and in terms of the degree of control of the emotional and

*Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhriguvali.

† मनोवशेऽन्येह्यभवंस्मदेवाः मनश्च नान्यस्य वशं समेति ।

भीष्मोहिदेवः सहसः सहीया न्युज्याद्वशे तं सहिदेवदेवः ॥

physical bodies by the mind. "Tapas" which fills such a large part in Hindu religious literature is only a name for exploiting the in exhaustible resources of the mind for a purpose good or evil. By Tapas a man rises rapidly in the evolutionary scale. A Kshatriya becomes a Brahmin. An ordinary person becomes a Rishi. By Tapas the great Asura heroes of the Hindu legends attained to their overlordship of the earth. Hiranya, Ravana and Kumbhakarna rose to their exalted position by Tapas. The roots of human life may therefore be said to be above.

Above and below spread the branches of the Tree of Life, in words and deeds in the world of physical matter, in feelings and thoughts in the astral and mental worlds. Above and below they spread through the three worlds, nourished by the *gunas*, and putting forth sprouts in the regions of sense contacts. Above and below flows the sap of life forging the links of Karma. We see it at work in the acquisition and organisation of knowledge and in the striving for better self-expression in body and in mind. We see its flowers and fruits in the life of the individual, in the thought forms he generates in the superphysical spheres, and in the more tangible relations of the physical world.

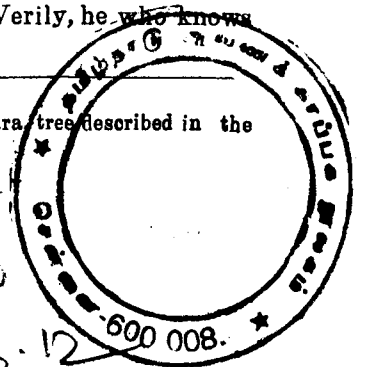
Few similies are more suggestive of the intimate relationship between mind and body and of the close reaction between the two. The subtler body pervades the coarser and takes its shape. The coarser is moulded by the subtler. To take only the mental, etheric and physical bodies there is complete reciprocity of action among the three. As a man thinks so he becomes. Good thought help to build a good body for their residence. A good body in its turn helps to attract healthy ideas and repel unhealthy ones.

Birth by birth grows this tree of life with deeper and more extensive roots, with larger branches and fresh foliage and blossom. The personality grows in mental strength and in its capacity for manifestation on the physical plane in the complex relations of human life.

Who can understand the mystery of the structure of the Tree of Life,† where it begins, where it ends, and how it is maintained? Who can understand the secret of the perfect man, the *Sidha* endowed with all the powers and transcending all known limitations? Verily, he who knows it knows all knowledge.

*Taittiriya Upanishad, Anandavalli.

†Compare the description of the Aswatha tree with Samsara tree described in the Srimad Bhagavata Skanda XI Ch. 12.



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THE ESSENCE OF HINDUISM ?

BY SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Hinduism is an organic growth spread over, even according to the most accepted chronologists, 40 or 50 centuries. If you want to know what exactly the idea of an historic institution is, you will never be able to understand it by either looking to its origin or taking a cross section at any one stage. History is never a mere sequence of events. It is the expression of an idea or spirit struggling to be born and endeavouring to embody itself in the historic institutions. At no stage is the idea perfectly expressed, but at every stage the struggle for expression, the attempt at expression will be there though the perfect embodiment is a distant dream. Goethe says, 'No organism ever corresponds completely to the idea which it conceives.' If you want to know that idea, you can only vaguely feel it; you can never see it or expose it to observation. You must study the whole history if you want to perceive the idea which is there running throughout. It is present in its lowest stages; it is manifest even in its highest stages. Just as you look upon a tree when the first push of the blade is there you have some elements of life: and in the developed tree you have the same life expressing itself. Therefore, if you want to learn, to understand what exactly the spirit of a particular historic institution is, it is necessary for you to understand that idea, you must feel it, you may never be able to see it embodied at any one stage. If you are trying to appreciate the general principle or the vital element underlying this historic growth of Hinduism from the time of the Indus Valley civilization down to our own times, it is no use taking a cross section and saying Shastras have expressed it or Upanishads have expressed it, or we ourselves have expressed it. You will never be able to pitch at any one stage and say 'There is Hinduism.' What is necessary is to appreciate the spirit, to go behind the chronology, to go behind the sequence of events and perceive that vital spirit which is struggling to express itself though it has never found the perfect embodiment.

REAL SPIRIT OF HINDUISM

If this is your conception and if you ask, are there such governing ideas, such inspiring motives such controlling principles or dynamic links which make up the whole history of Hinduism—unity, the continuity of it? What are those things? If you want to answer the question as to what in essence Hinduism is, you must be able to understand those connected teachings, those general principles, general synthesis of philo-

sophy which govern the whole career of Hinduism and its growth. If you ask that question, ask yourself what is it that must be regarded as those controlling ideas, what is it that constitutes the real spirit of Hinduism, the answer I would like to give is—it has been given times without number by any Hindu who knows anything about Hinduism—Hinduism does not believe that religion is either acceptance of a creed or the practice of a particular ritual, but it believes that it is a kind of experience. It is raising your whole life to a different kind of temper, it is bringing about something of integration in your own nature, it is speeding your reverence, making your body give voice to speech, making your spirit the controlling principle of every act, thought, word and deed.

REALITY OF RELIGION

If you are able to introduce that kind of balance of harmony, if it is possible for you to make your life express some one conception, then it is that which constitutes the reality of religion; then it is experience not obedience to a dogma, not a celebration of ceremonies but raising your life to a higher universal plane. That is where religion really consists in. When people tell you that it is the discovery of truth, you may come forward and say 'no'. Religion is rebirth. It is not an addition to your intellectual furnitures; it is a total transformation of your whole being. It is not a question of your awakening from a swoon; it is giving so to say, a new switch on, a changing-over, a perfect over-hauling of your whole life. That constitutes the reality of what you call religion.

DEFINITION OF RELIGION

How then, if it is so, has there been this governing conception equating religion with a kind of experience and not making it an equivalent to the acceptance of this particular doctrine or observance of that particular ritual? How are we to bring about that kind of religious change is the next question you ask.

Religious education can be broadly distinguished into instruction and training. Instruction points to new ideas, training enables you to develop habits. Instruction gives you what the truth of the thing is, training enables you to embody that truth in your own life. Therefore religion may best be defined as the practical realization of the highest truth. If it is so, the highest truth must be known and it must be realized. Our own thinkers from the beginning down to-day have told us that religious growth is not to be regarded as a kind of mechanical

evolution. It is not a kind of passing from one thing to another. You will be able to lay down an ascent at three different levels. At the first two levels where you acquire the truth you make it an intellectual possession. The third is where you are able to incorporate that truth in your life, assimilate it, make it a substance of your life, a part of your very being. So *Shravana* and *Manana* are the two great elements by which you know what the truth is. Later by ethical discipline, by purity of heart, mental dispassion, you incorporate that truth and make it a part of your being. There are many who remain at the very lowest traditional religion, who learn things at second hand, as a matter of routine. But it is enjoined upon us to find out whether the truths we learn are capable of being sustained by reason, whether it is possible for us to maintain them by reason for reason alone justifies the validity of the truth we have learned from outside, from the Vedas or the holy scriptures of any particular country. And then you have to find out whether these things can be realized, can be made to sustain the type of life where you are able to express some kind of superiority to your own emotions, to your own appetites, your own passions.

TEST OF A RELIGION

The test of a religion is both theoretical and practical. It must satisfy logic and at the same time it must satisfy life. These three tests are therefore mentioned, included, so to say in that kind of gradual ascent described as *Shravana*, *Manana* and *Nidhidhyasana* so far as the Vedas are concerned. Nobody ever asks us to accept them on sheer authority. We are not called upon to accept them on blind faith. Everywhere from the beginning to the end we are called upon to test them by reason, logic and reflection. Scripture and logic are the two wings on which the human soul may rise to the perfection of truth. Nowhere is it said that we must accept everything put down in the scriptures. Our scriptures, our Vedas contain not only the product of the ripest wisdom but also wayward fancies. There are ever so many things which will not be able to stand the test of reason. It is therefore essential for us to apply our discrimination, our sense of logic and try and find out which of those things could be regarded as tenable and which should be dismissed as untenable. These are things which it is so essential for us to understand.

FAITH AND MORALS.

But *Nidhidhyasana* is the more important aspect. It is always easy to know the truth but where we have to assimilate it, to make it a part of

our life, the greatest difficulty arises. An Irishman said 'Faith is easy but it is morals that beat me'. That is quite true: Faith is easy in a small sense of the term. You go about attending church or repeat certain words by way of habit. That is the easiest thing to do. But when it comes to morals it beats me. It is therefore great discipline will have to be enforced on the individual himself. It is there that all the *Margas*, pathways, are set down for our purpose.

SIGNIFICANCE OF 'GAYATRI'.

If you take up that universal prayer *Gayatri* you will find that it is something which gives you real education. *Gayatri* is a prayer for passionate renewal of your own life. It is a search, it is a quest, it is an adventure. It tells you nowhere should you become complacent or be satisfied with what you have attained. There must be a perpetual renewal, a perpetual seeking after, a perpetual reaching beyond the stage at which you happen to be. Never should there come a stage when you can say 'This is finished'. There is no finality so far as the religious life, religious adventure, religious quest are concerned. The man who first coined the term 'philosopher' meant not a wise man but a lover of wisdom; not a teacher of truth but a seeker after truth. Religion or philosophy is a perpetual quest. It is a thing where you cannot stop and say 'I have finished'. It might happen to one in thousands of millions. But so far as ordinary human beings are concerned you have to keep up that perpetual search, that perpetual reaching forward. That constitutes the reality of any kind of religious life. A striving sinner is a much greater being than a satisfied saint who thinks that there is no challenge for him though he may be sunk in immorality and iniquity, who thinks 'my soul is safe and that is all that I want.' But it is not so. So far as the *Gayatri* is concerned it is a prayer to the Universal Truth, to the Universal Light, asking it to illumine your understanding, to make you better, to lift you higher and ever higher. In another sense it has a supreme value. It marks out that each individual will have to face the truth in and for himself. There is no such thing as vicarious salvation. God addressing individuals used the singular 'Thou', never the plural 'You'. Each individual has to make a path for himself and has to reach his ultimate destiny. Therefore it is essential for us to have some silent hours, some hours for refreshment of spirit, of communion with ourselves. While we explore our own possibilities to discover the defects that we have, all those defects for which we excuse ourselves in

some form or other, we must develop that spirit of complete honesty and make our lives an integral whole pointing out one essential idea, one essential spirit. It is not to be done in congregations; it is not to be developed in crowds; it is to be done for each individual in and by himself. There is a saying in the Book of Revelations, when all the angels went to the throne of God, there was silence for half an hour. It was not a dead silence; it was pulsating with life. It was the moment when there was absolute silence on account of the revelations of the inner depths of the human soul. It was a silence, it was the voice of the spirit constantly heard and that half hour of silence is the hour even the angels have to practise. It is much more essential in the case of ordinary individuals to practise silence. The point then is complete honesty, utter sincerity. There are people in this world who do not want to be alone with themselves. They may appear in smiles but their hearts are aching. There is a lack of balance unless you are able to stand before yourself, ask yourself, strip yourself of your externals, and stand face to face with the lowest depths of your heart.

MEDITATION

That is what you mean by meditation. It is communion with the spirit; it is there in the inner sanctuary of your heart that you are able to shake off all pretences, to throw off all masks and reach that depth which connects with the depths of the universe itself. That is what meditation is really required for. That is one illustration of *Gayatri* which points to you how you should keep up a perpetual search so far as the truth is concerned and at the same time you are anxious to bring about a renewal of your own being. If you are going to have three levels of religious evolution *Gayatri* caters to all the three levels.

SUPREME REALITY IMPOSSIBLE OF DEFINITION

It is very easy to talk about renewal, experience, etc. But what is it that we actually experience? Is there anything real or is it merely a will o' the wisp? What is it that we experience or we are trying to experience? Whenever such a question is put to us our Hindu religion gives you various accounts and people dismiss it as polytheism, animism, monotheism, monism and pantheism. Every conceivable characterisation has been given so far as Hinduism is concerned. But I wish to point out that there is a method in all this madness. In all these miscellaneous characterisations of the supreme reality there is a fundamental bindin

fact. If you ask me 'what is it that you experience, what you say about another human being,' I will never be able to give you a perfect definition of another human being so long as that human being is an individuality. It is not transparent to logic, it is not inexhaustible by analysis. This intrinsic reality is not superficial or shallow. It has a mark of its own; it has some kind of destiny which comes by itself. If you ask a perfect definition of an individual it will be difficult for me to do so; it will not be possible for us to give an exhaustible definition of a common ordinary individual in terms of adjectives or universals. It will not be possible to make a compound of mere adjectives. An individual is a substant. Any series of adjectives will never be co-equivalent to a substant. By summing up universals you can never get an individual. If it is hard with regard to an individual how much harder is it for us to give a definition of that supreme reality? If the men who have had experience are conscious that they are not producing, creating; that what they experience is a spiritual discovery and not a spiritual construction or production, how much difficult it is for you to give a complete analysis of that supreme individual with whom you are in communion. Therefore the highest of our thinkers observe a sort of reticence in the Upanishads, the Christ, the Buddha himself. The great Chinese philosopher Lao Tse said that 'he who talks about the Tao does not know what it is'. Plato, the great thinker said, 'There will be no account by me of the idea of God. It is something which a man has to discover for himself by constant meditation and a life spent on that pursuit: It will not be possible to give a philosophic account of the idea of God.' That is the way in which the greatest thinkers have regarded it. Austerity of silence is the only way in which you can worship that great reality. There are theologians who construct elaborate mansions and take us round them like God's own estate agents. If you want to be true, if you want to observe some kind of sincerity, you will simply say 'there is that awful reality, it is not possible for me to characterise it by means of categories'. It is complete silence alone that is adequately aware of that complete reality. But man is never satisfied with that. He must go down, he must bring it to the level of his own consciousness. There you find negative characteristics given. Some say there is no good. You cannot go about saying this, that or the third thing. It is transcendent. Whatever is empirical can only be denied. Therefore you can indulge in negative characteristics of that supreme reality. There are people logically inclined that say 'why should you think something is non-this, non-that and non-the other? If it

is to be negatively described it means a cypher. None of them has got any kind of reality at all.' Hegel, the great European thinker characterised Spinoza's 'indeterminate absolute' as nothing. A pure being is equivalent to pure nothing. It is nothing. The great Sankara in his commentary on *Chhandogya Upanishad* says that which is devoid of all predicates, that fundamental reality, non-dual thing, to the feeble-minded appears as non-existent. Pure *sat* becomes pure *asat*. So that which Hegel says about Spinoza's has been anticipated by Sankara many centuries ago and is not very original. These negative descriptions cannot be regarded as completely adequate. We still want to bring it down to the level of our own consciousness. What is the highest category of our consciousness? If a human person must be regarded as Purusha the supreme person must be regarded as Purushottama. Vaishnavite and Saivite saints go about telling us that all the imperfections are removed and perfections are asserted by that supreme reality. If we are weak He is strong; if we are ignorant He is wise; if we are guilty, He is forgiveness. You go about asserting His statements of the imperfect qualities in the very absolute itself. And there again you find that so many other characteristics are given of the Supreme Reality.

Your question is 'is there or is there not some kind of method in all this medley?' When you find Hindus indulging in such contradictory and conflicting descriptions of the Absolute, is it not our duty to dismiss the thing as a mass of incoherencies? Are we to point out that there is some fundamental way in which all these things may be reconciled, that there is some large philosophical point of view which synthesises all these different ways of expressing the Absolute itself. That is a question you ask yourself. If you study them with patience, with some penetration, you will be able to understand that there is one common synthetic point of view which co-ordinates all these varied descriptions and which points to you the different stages in which the different characteristics can be established. If you go a little lower down in negative descriptions you have to use the highest categories of personality itself. You look upon the supreme as the Absolute. That is the way in which the different characteristics can be explained by the philosophic point of view and that has been so from the beginning down to the present day. You need not feel that there is in these things anything peculiar, conflicting or contradictory. It follows that if you are adopting a comprehensive point of view like this you cannot support an inflexible dogmatism. You assert that the soul of man is infinite in its nature and the environment to which it

responds is equally infinite. The response of an infinite soul to an individual environment cannot be confined to this or that particular formula. You cannot go about saying that God has entrusted as exclusive revelation to one prophet, Buddha or Mahomed, and expected to borrow from him some spiritual dissertation. You find that the soul of man has its own infinite complexity and the divine environment is equally complex. It is not right for you to record the reactions of the infinite soul to the divine environment even in a small or even in a mechanical way saying that 'I had an audience with the Almighty and this is what I was told. Unless this is accepted by all people they will be condemned to an eternal hell'. Whether we know of hell or not we will start the punishment on this side of our earth. The point is that in each man's heart is written in his own blood his pathway to God. The work of a teacher is merely to assist this natural growth, this unconscious growth, I might put it, because the forces for the universe are cooperating with you and innermost depths of man are calling of expression. All that a teacher has to do is to provide an environment which is capable of furthering its growth or life.

CONVERSION

Religious conversion does not consist in substituting one doctrine for another. It consists in the deepening of your own life in enabling you to pursue the truth according to your own light when you are bound to attain the highest truth. A Danish philosopher said 'Suppose I have a very right conception of God and I had prayed to him and uttered some prayer. Suppose I have an idol and I prayed to that idol with sincerity.' In the former case you are praying for an idol and in the latter you are praying for a reality. God knows our deficiencies, our defects. We may not know God but it is wrong on our part to think that He does not know us. He is judging us by the sincerity of our pursuit, of our earnestness and the honesty of our endeavour and in time He will try to correct the deficiencies which we have and bring about a better conception of God. As life itself is transformed, it is bound to renew itself also. To a Hindu every thought of his religion and his particular, individual ideal are like a limb which grows on and grows with him. If you are going to cut away that particular limb you mutilate the whole being itself. That is what you actually attempt and achieve. Is that mutilation of humanity to be something attempted by people who have got religious insight? That is the question which you ask. Even the great Muslim and Christian thinkers who believe that God is not to be exhausted by any definition but must be

possessed and experienced are averse to their people making any change in their creed. They point out that it is the deepening of one's own nature is essential. Conversion is spiritual re-birth. It is not a mental substitution; it is not a kind of intellectual change; it is a kind of passionate renewal of your whole being and it is possible for you to get that kind of conversion. Our religion says that re-birth is brought about by *Gayatri*. These are the beliefs which more or less assist us and enable us to bring about a re-birth. It is a prayer co-eval with human history, a prayer extended to every being—boy or girl. I think it is the most universal prayer that you can ever possibly think of. That is what our Hinduism is.

So far as conversion is concerned we have been catholic, universal in outlook and as a result of it all we have suffered. Is it better to go about like horses with blinkers looking neither to right or to left or have greater efficiency and driving power, or this catholic or universal outlook and make people imagine that though it may be a less exciting task, it is a more fruitful one and that we all join hands in that quest for one universal spirit. Are we going to define our religion by an unchanging creed or are we going to determine its nature by emphasising on this universal quest in which all people can unite. That is a question which we have to ask ourselves. Personally, speaking for myself, I believe the forces of the world are with us, the time spirit is with us and I have no doubt that the true conception of religion which insists on this quest more than on creed which enables us to join together in the pursuit of a common ideal, is a thing which has a future still. Because it is a truth it is bound to win and bound to live. (From "The Leader")

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"Those who take fish do not want the useless head and tail of the fish, but only the soft middle portion of it: so the ancient rules and commands of our scriptures must be pruned and purged of all their accretions to make them suit the wants of our modern times."

Sayings of Bagwan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

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