

The
Bharata Dharma
vol-15 NO-1
Jan-1987

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R24m2, N2380
N37.15.1
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THE Bharata Dharma

A Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

—The Official Organ of the Arya Mata Sabha—

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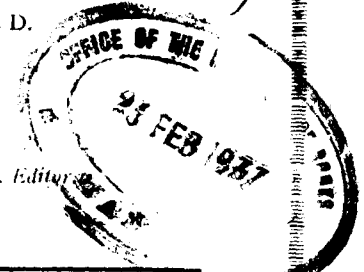
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चित्रं वटतरोर्मूलं वृद्धा शिष्या गुरुयुवा । गुणस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

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

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

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

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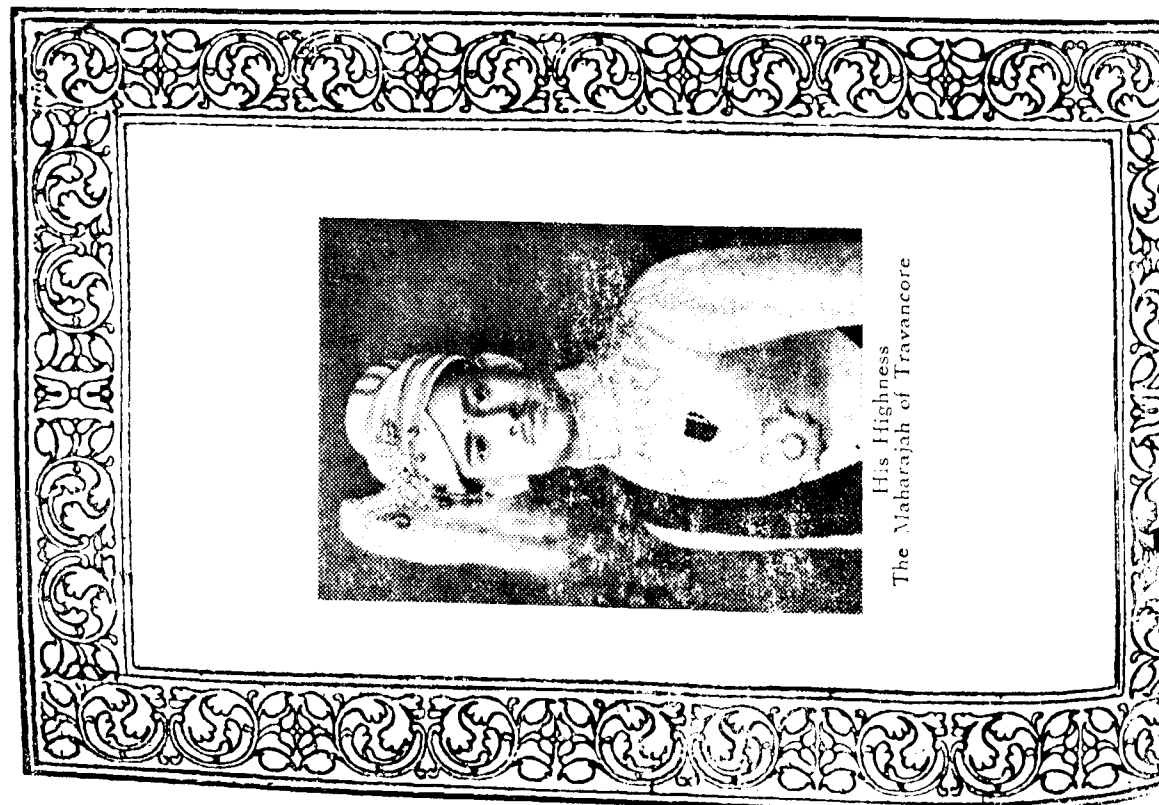
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ANNOUNCEMENT

From and after the 1st January 1937
The Bharata Dharma will be published
on the 1st of every month and the volume
will correspond to the calendar year.

All Communications regarding Editorial matter, books
for review, etc , should be addressed to the Editor,
THE BHARATA DHARMA,
23, NADU STREET, MYLAPORE.

*Advertise in The Bharata Dharma. It circulates widely in
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THE Bharata Dharma

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VOL. XV]

JANUARY, 1937

[No. 1

THE TRAVANCORE PROCLAMATION

BY

DEWAN BAHADUR V. BHASHYAM AIYANGAR

The great proclamation of His Highness, the Maharajah of Travancore, issued on the occasion of his recent birth-day, which ordains that "there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering and worshipping at temples controlled by us or our government" will mark a distinct epoch in the history of Hinduism. It removes root and branch the cruel socio-religious stigma of unapproachability by birth which unjustly stood stamped on a large section of the Hindu community for centuries and unifies that community into a single organic whole, for which Mahatma Gandhi undertook his famous fast of 1933. We are now not merely so near it in point of time but our socio-religious vision has, speaking generally and with reference to the conforming mass, been growing so dim and narrow in recent times, that it is really not easy to realise and appreciate the meaning and significance of the momentous reformation courageously decided upon and promptly put into full operation by the Ruler of Travancore. A passionate love of Hinduism, a grip of its essential and eternal truths, a burning desire to rid it of its later day excrescences and restore it to its pristine grandeur and glory, a vivid historical imagination and a clear and far-sighted future outlook are necessary to appraise its true value.

The first and most important point to be noted in considering this proclamation is that it is a purely religious edict issued by the Maharajah in

his capacity as the foremost Hindu of his state and head and trustee of the Hindu religious institutions in his control. It has been one of the chief recognised duties of a Hindu king to protect and maintain Hindu Dharma and give a proper lead to his subjects in matters religious. There have no doubt been special teachers and heads of religion to whom people look up for help and guidance in their religious and spiritual yearnings, but they too are under the superintendence of the king, each exercising a healthy influence over the other, but the king being supreme. The proclamation before us has been avowedly issued by the Maharajah in the interests and as the protector of the faith of his Hindu subjects and it ought to be taken and understood as such. It will be a grievous wrong to interpret it in any other way or give it any political or other form or significance.

It is a matter for deep gratification that the proclamation has been almost universally acclaimed by all sections and leaders of the Hindus, including the orthodox, both in and out of Travancore. That it has commanded the warm approval of such conservative scholars as the venerable Professor Sundararamier of Kumbakonam, shows that this bare act of justice does not in any way offend our true Sanatana Dharma. The hearty welcome that has been extended to it by all Hindus establishes that the God-inspired and ancient religion of this sacred land, which contains in its vast bosom, matchless conceptions and ideals of life for the uplift and perfection of man, has not, as some feared, been wholly choked up by bigotry, sham and superstition, but it is still not merely alive but capable of growth. It can still resist the onslaught of ignorance and prejudice and preserve and ennoble itself by purifying and adjusting its practices from time to time, in consonance with advancing ideas and changing circumstances.

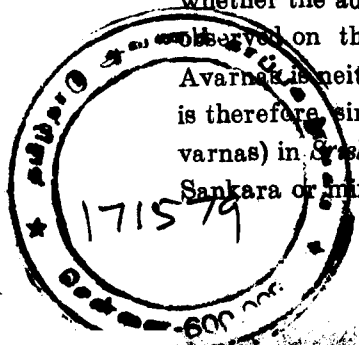
A few discordant voices have been heard but the grounds of objection raised by them cannot bear scrutiny. It has been said, for instance, that the admission of Avarnas into temples amounts to an expropriation of the rights of Savarnas. As regards this objection, it is difficult to see where expropriation comes in at all, as the rights of entry and worship of the so called Savarnas stand absolutely unaffected. The only question is whether the admission of the so called Avarnas is *ultra vires*. It may be observed on this point that the division of Hindus into Savarnas and Avarnas is neither supported by authority nor capable of being defined. It is therefore simply misleading. We have heard of *chatur varnyam* (four varnas) in *Brahmi* (Creation) but not of Avarnas. If by Avarnas are meant Sankara or mixed varnas, there is no general prohibition against the entry

into temples of *all* mixed varnas and nobody can establish that those who have now been allowed entry fall under the specifically prohibited classes. It cannot be and is not denied that the so called Avarnas, who have been worshipping the same gods, observing the same festivals and otherwise also conducting themselves as members of the same faith as the so called Savarnas, are also Hindus, in the accepted sense. The right to worship in Hindu temples is, therefore, inherent in them and the mere fact that they have been kept out of such right for some reason, is no ground to continue the injustice any longer.

Another argument which has been advanced is that Hindu temples are not mere prayer-halls or places of congregational worship but centres where Divine Power has been and is induced and localised by the recitation of mantras and the performance of ceremonies laid down in the Agamas and the entry of jatis prohibited by the Agamas will drain the temples of that Divine Power. Now, it is a well known fact that the practice has not been uniform in the matter of the entry of the several jatis of Hindus, in all temples, even when they are governed by the same Agama. A jati whose entry is not customary in one temple has free admission in another not very far from it. It is also a fact that some of the jatis which specifically come under the texts of prohibition have been freely entering and worshipping in temples for a very long time. Nobody has taken exception to these variations or complained about or felt any loss of Divine Power. Why then should the question be so mercilessly raised as regards the present removal of the bar? And the strangest part of it is that it is raised with reference to classes, who, as already observed could not be proved to come under the prohibition of the texts.

It is worthwhile to probe a little into the theory of the concentration of Divine Power by Mantras and Tantras. It may be considered whether mere mantras, which are sounds, or mere tantras, which are physical manipulations, can induce or bring about any Divine or Spiritual Power. Far from me to say that mantras and tantras are nothing; but benefit of an Agent with Intelligence, Will and Power to respond to them, they cannot produce any effect. This was clearly pointed out by such a high authority as Kulasekhara, the famous saint, from whom the Maharajah of Travancore has the honour to trace his descent, as follows:

आज्ञायाभ्यसनान्यरण्यरुदितं वेदब्रतान्यन्वहम्
मेदच्छेद फलानि पूर्तिविधयस्सर्वे हुतं भस्मनि ।



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तीर्थानामवगाहनानि च गजस्नानं विना प्रतपद

द्वन्द्वामोरुह संस्मृती विजयते देवस्स नारायणः ॥

"All glory to Him, the Effulgent Narayana, in the absence of the loving thought of whose Delightful Feet, recitations of the most sacred scriptures were no more than cries in the wilderness, the observances of Vedic penances would no more than reduce bodily fat, all good deeds would be as useless as oblation of ghee on ash, and dips in sacred waters would be no better than the bath of the elephant".

The essential requisite of Divine condescension and manifestation, as well in temples, as in the *hridaya guha* (inmost heart) of man, is therefore, loving and unselfish devotion. The processes of mantras and tantras prescribed in the Agamas are though important, only aids in bringing about that emotion in the worshippers and they could not be absolute or unalterable. This is made out by the existence of Swayam Vyakta Sthalams (places where god exhibited Himself without reference to any invocation) which are recognised as the most sacred and by the greater importance attached to Padalsthalams (temples sanctified by the devotional outpouring of great saints) over temples merely consecrated in the manner provided in an Agama. It is difficult to believe that any Agama or *shastra* could have intended to prohibit the entry into a temple of any member of the faith, who longs to have a *darshan* of the Deity and worship Him in all reverence. Further, it is well-known that it is well nigh impossible to conform strictly to all the elaborate provisions laid down by the Agama shastras for the consecration of and worship in temples and many of those provisions are not being complied with in various degrees in actual practice. These deficiencies and defects are made up and remedied by a general submission to the forgiveness of the deity at the end of each ritual. Will He, who forgives so much, withdraw His manifestation or radiance, simply because some members of the faith who were hitherto arbitrarily kept out of his immediate presence, for no reason except their birth, are admitted to it. Will he not, on the contrary, rejoice to receive and bless these new entrants, especially because they are depressed and consequently humble, and shine with even greater lustre on that very account?

Our scriptures speak of God in five aspects. As pervading, sustaining and ruling the Universe, He is referred to as *Antaryami*. Regarded as immersed in Bliss and centred in Himself, He is termed *Para*. It is *Vyulu*, when He takes on the fourfold forms of Vasudeva, Samkarshana,

Pradhyumna and Anirudha, to project, sustain, and draw back the Universe. His numerous incarnations into this world in diverse forms, for our benefit, are called *Vibhavas*. And the different forms assumed by Him for being installed in temples and houses and easily worshipped by His devotees are *Archas*. These *Archas* are held in the highest esteem as they are demonstrative of the highest grace of God even to the unenlightened and, at the same time, most easily accessible. Numberless saints and sages of all jatis, including what are regarded as the lowest of the low, have bathed them in the copious and delightful springs of their overflowing love. Parasara Bhatta, the well known Vaishnava genius and Acharya, who was installed by the famous Ramanuja himself as his successor to the headship of all Vaishnavas, said about the chief Archa in Srirangam, the temple of temples:

श्रीमद्वयोम नसीम वाङ्मनसयो स्सर्ववताराः कचित् काले ।

सार्वजनी नमेतदिति नशरीरं गवामन्यथा ॥

आर्तस्वागतिकैः कृपाकलुषितै रालोकिनै रार्द्रयन् ।

विभूत्राण विमर्शनं स्वलितया निद्रासि जागर्यया ॥

"Thy sacred abode in Heaven is beyond the reach of speech and thought. All Avatars are of limited duration. But this (Archa) is good for all (for all persons and for all times). Therefore, with cooling looks tinged with kindly passion, which welcome the distressed, Thou sleepest awake in Srirangam, pondering over how best to redeem and save all souls".

It seems most unfortunate that there should be any objection to any member of the faith having legitimate access to the *Archa* form which God is stated to assume to be seen and worshipped by all. An honest and unprejudiced investigation will clearly reveal that the objection takes its rise not from *Shastra* or *Agama* but from an unwarranted and wrong idea of superiority and inferiority by mere birth, which has grown in our society like a persistent weed and has become ingrained in most of us. Ramanuja fought against it in his time. It was then chiefly *Dwijas* versus *Shudras*. He established on the strength of the *Shastras* that *Dwijatvam* (Dwijahood) was an onerous responsibility which should be discharged and not a privilege to feel arrogant about or to play the lord over others and that everybody was equal before god and entitled to serve him and attain perfection in this very life. According to him, godliness, and not birth decided the worth of a person and he and his successors did not hesitate to act up to such conviction, in practice. The same

principle was applied by them even in the case of the lowest classes, comprehensively though loosely, known as panchamas, whom Ramanuja, in the broadness of his heart, called Tirukulattais (just as Mahatma Gandhi now calls them Harijans) but those classes were then too backward in education and civilisation to take advantage of the reform started by him, in large numbers. The times have now changed and there has, in recent times, been so much general and material advancement among the so called panchamas, that they are at present not only fit to take an equal place in our society, along with other communities, but have insisted on it and even threatened to break away, if it be denied to them any longer. It is high time that the aloofness which has been practised against them for mere birth is done away with at once and they are received into our society on equal terms. The Proclamation of the Maharajah of Travancore is therefore, not only just and in accordance with the spirit of Shastras, but it really follows up the great socio-religious reform adumbrated by Ramanuja centuries ago and it has not come a day too soon.

Let us all offer our heartfelt thanks to the Maharajah and cherish him as one of the greatest reformers of Hinduism. Our thanks should also go to the Mother of his Highness, who is said have inspired him and to his illustrious and courageous Dewan, who has given his unstinted and wholehearted support to the reform. Let us lastly hope that the reform will spread into other Native States and into British India without any more delay.

Note.—Since the above article was written, we have received the December part of the Sri Vedanta Deepika, the religious monthly Journal in Tamil conducted by the Sri Vaishnava Prachara Sabha, Ltd., Madras, and edited by the esteemed orthodox leaders Messrs. S. Vasudeva chariar and V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar. We note that it makes no reference to the Travancore Proclamation. It cannot be doubted that if the learned editors of the Deepika considered that the Proclamation contravened the shastra, they would have lodged a protest against it. It may legitimately be inferred from their silence, that they are not opposed to the change directed by the Proclamation.

THE SHIFTING OF THE CENTRE.

By

D. RAMASWAMY AYYANGAR, *Advocate, Madras.*

When the world was scientifically less learned than it is now the theory that accounted for the movement of the Stars and the Sun was the geo-centric theory propounded by Ptolemy. The Prussian astronomer Copernicus dispelled that theory in the sixteenth century by his discovery that it was the Sun that was the centre and the Earth it was that was moving round and round. This created a revolution in astronomy and from thence the earth lost the high pedestal of being the invincible centre round which the heavenly bodies circled and was reduced to the position of a satellite—one of several round the Sun. The inhabitants of the world gained wisdom but the world itself lost its importance.

The same revolution must take place in the spiritual life of every soul. By age long contact with the body and the pleasures of the senses inhabiting it the soul has become self centred. Each individual soul thinks and feels that the whole world consisting of the rest of mankind and the animal and material kingdom has been specially created for its delectation and pleasure. This soul is the centre round which the entire creation moves in concentric circles, every such movement being intended to diminish the pain of this soul's existence and enhance its joy. Good and bad are measured by the degree of pleasure or pain that comes in the wake. Even God must be assigned to one of these concentric circles round this individual soul and has a place there only as providence, as the provider of joy and comfort. Social service is good only if it pleases not otherwise. In charity the pleasure is the giver's. The relief of misery in others is nowhere as this soul can never enter into the misery of another. The centre would cease to be the centre if it approaches the circumference.

Thought and reflection in the form of a searching insight and a wide outlook make it plain that this could not be the real state of affairs and that it is up to every intelligent man to solve this riddle of the universe with its conflicts and its confusions. Man therefore begins to philosophise and arrives at various solutions to explain or explain away the ills of life. Naturally the most important point has been recognised by every one to find out the correct place and position of the individual soul in relation to matter on the one hand and God on the other.

Different schools of thought have sprung out of different view points and different emphases. Buddhism which perhaps takes the existence of

pain in the world more seriously to heart than any other religion postulates change and impermanence as the order of things and emphasises ahimsa as the only panacea for the evils arising out of conflict in a fleeting and ephemeral world. This view of Buddhism, to adopt the figure used by us at the beginning, denies the centre and declares that the world is a series of conflicting circles. Sankara sets this right by going to the other extreme. He affirms the centre while denying the circumference. The centre is called the Brahman the Absolute, and the individual soul and the material world have no truth or validity. According to Sankara therefore the whole is centred in the centre and centre alone, and in the perception of this truth and the negation of the world lies the solution of the external problem of life. This, the individual soul, is Brahmanised though its position at the centre is not disturbed. The circle is wiped out.

But the Copernicus in the spiritual astronomy was Sri Ramanuja who finds an answer to the eternal question by shifting the centre. He would not negate the world and make it all centre nor deny the centre and leave circle without centres. The first theory denies the world and the second one denies God. His method based on the scriptures is to assign God to the centre and the individual soul each to a circumference of its own but all having a common centre in God. The concentric nature even as in the geometric sense at once produces an absence of conflict as concentric circles can never touch each other. The several circles have no connection with each other except as having a common centre. The individual soul is taught that it is not the centre but only one of myriads of circumstances and that it has got to be centred in God. God thus becomes the soul of each individual soul and of all the individual souls. This is what is known as the *Sarira Sariri Bhava*, or the Body-Soul theory which is the peculiar tenet or pratitantra of the Vishishtadvaitic school of thought. Its merit lies in giving equal validity to matter and to spirit, to the world and to God. Ahimsa and all virtues follow as it is inconceivable that one part of the body can hurt or injure another part of the same body. Spiritual life is the process of each individual soul being infinitised by connection with the super soul. What the individual soul loses in importance by being assigned to one of several circumferences it more than makes up by the relationship with God who is at the very centre of things. Just as every point on a circle is drawn towards the centre by the several radii so too the auspicious qualities of God attract the individual soul towards God. In the mutual attraction of soul and God, the surrender of the soul and the mercy of the Lord coalesce, and the result is Bliss and Beatitude.

HINDUSTAN FOR THE HINDUS.

K. V. S.

One of the attractive thoughts in Dr. Kurtkoti's interesting address to the Lahore Hindu Sabha Conference is the conception of Hindustan as the land of the Hindus. Though it may strike some as strange, that is the literal significance of the word Hindustan. Stana means abode. There cannot be therefore any reasonable objection to the claim on the ground of incorrectness of interpretation.

But the idea has a deeper significance. To Hindus India is a sacred land. It is a land where gods lived with men and men rose to be gods. Its hills and valleys, its streams, rivers and lakes are all links in the chain of contact between Heaven and Earth. Its forests sheltered and are still believed to shelter ascetics and seers who gave Hindu culture its distinctive greatness. Its soil is sanctified by the feet of avatars of gods whose very look, it is said, made nature and men prosper⁽¹⁾. It is the land nearly the whole length of which was walked by Rama the most popular of the avatars and by his queen Sita worshipped as the incarnation of Lakshmi. Lastly it was in Hindustan that the great Buddha rose to Buddhahood and promulgated the message of the law by which a third of humanity guide their lives today. Subsequent to Buddha there have lived and toiled in Hindustan numerous saints and seers, expounders of righteousness, heroes and heroines who will be an ornament to any nation in the world. All of them have looked upon India and its people as peculiarly favoured in the scheme of God and entitled to their reverence, affection and unstinting service.

The Hindu looks upon India with a different eye from the Muslim and the Christian. His love is not merely physical. He adores India as a sanctified and a sanctifying country, He believes in being purified and elevated by visiting the shrines of legendary holiness. North and south and east and west there lie scattered through the length and breadth of this country, pools and rivers, and temples and hills, at which pilgrims foregather in the faith that they will be purged of their sins and strengthened in their effort to live a righteous life. Verily is Hindustan the land of the Hindus, the place in the whole earth round which their spiritual dreams and ambitions revolve.

1 इमे जनपदाः स्वर्द्धाः सुपक्वौषधिवीरुवः ।

वनाद्रिनद्युदन्वन्तो ह्येधन्ते तव वीक्षितैः ॥

Kunti's praise of Sri Krishna :—Bhagavata Sk. I Ch. 8.

But it will be incorrect to conclude that the Hindu sentiment towards India is a species of nature worship. It is not. It is an affirmation of faith in the ancient channels through which divine grace descended upon the country in times past and a desire to establish touch with it once again. That which hallows is the living presence of the spirit. To mistake the place for the influence is to confound the symbol with the life, an error which is common to all religions and is on that ground a dangerous temptation to be avoided. Speaking of what sanctifies a pilgrimage place, Sri Vedanta Desika says:

"Benares does not shine, Ayodhya is not livable, Avanti does not purify, Muttra has no claim to leadership, Kanchi has no lustre, nor does any other ancient city owe its recognition merely because it is old and bears a legendary name if it cannot continue to command the approval of those whose chief delight is the company of the Lord."⁽¹⁾ He carries this idea further and proclaims that "wherever the Lord is worshipped with devotion and faith, wherever you can find one or two who have one-pointed devotion to the Lord, that place is as Vaikunta to the faithful. The places of legendary fame are only intended to indicate that they possessed these attributes once upon a time."⁽²⁾ "We may quote one more sentiment from the Srimad Bhagavata. "Neither holy waters nor idols of stone and clay can be compared to the presence of great men. The former take a long time to cleanse. The great ones purify by sight."⁽³⁾

- 1 साकाशीतिनचाकिशीति भुविसाऽयोध्येतिनाऽव्यासते ।
सावन्तीति न कल्मषादवति साकाशीति नोदञ्जति ॥
धत्ते सामथुरेतिनोत्तमधुरां नान्यापि मान्यापुरी ।
यवैकुण्ठकथासुधारसमुजां रोचेतनोचेतसे ॥
- 2 यन्नैकाग्र्यं भवतिभगवत्पादसेवार्चनादे ।
यन्नैकान्तव्यवसितधियां यस्यकस्यपिलाभः ॥
वासस्थानं तदिहकृतिनां भातिवैकुण्ठकल्पं ।
प्रायो देशाः मनुभिरुदितः पायिकौचित्यवन्तः ॥
- 3 नह्यम्मयानितीर्थानिदेवाः मृच्छिलामयाः ।
तेपुनन्त्युल्कालेन दर्शनादेव साधवः ॥

BISHOP OF BRADFORD ON THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VIII.

"The benefit of the King's Coronation depends on the faith, prayer and self-dedication of the King himself and one that it would be improper for me to say anything except commend him and ask you to commend him to God's grace.

"We hope that he is aware of his need. Some of us wish that he gave more positive signs of his awareness.

"It has for long centuries been, and I hope still is, an essential part of that idea that the King needs the grace of God for his office. In the Coronation ceremony the nation definitely acknowledges that need."

"The ceremony," said the Bishop, "is of high antiquity, and has been in use for centuries. It is a specifically sacramental function. Acting in the name of the people the Church, through its Archbishop, consecrates the King to the service of God and the oversight of the Realm. There at the altar, as the power ordained of God, we ask that he may be given strength for his task, and as officially the chief layman of the Church of England we invite him to partake in that sacrament of Holy Communion which is the chief means of grace of which that Church is the steward.

"The Bishop of Birmingham has, indeed, suggested that this connection might be severed. Such an action might well suit those who regard all sacramental ordinances as effete superstition. It would certainly minister to a derogatory view of the Holy Communion service. To agree to it would be tantamount to a confession that the grace of the sacrament is not so important as to be needed by the King at this great moment of his inauguration. It would be a public humiliation of the Church's chief act of worship and chief means of sacramental grace.

"I pass from this topic, to consider a very much more material point as to the share which we can all take in surrounding the consecration of the King with that spiritual atmosphere which is suitable to it. In this, as in any other sacrament, the benefit which God's grace may effect is dependent upon the presence of certain human conditions. The benefit of the King's Coronation depends, under God, upon two elements: First, on the faith, prayer, and self-dedication of the King himself, and on that it would be improper for me to say anything except to commend him and ask you to commend him to God's grace, which he will so abundantly need, as we all need it—for the King is a man like ourself—if he is to do

his duty faithfully. We hope that he is aware of his need. Some of us wish that he gave more positive signs of his awareness.

"But let me emphasise one point which I think is material for a proper understanding of the function of the service. It is that—that on this occasion the King holds an avowedly representative position. His personal views and opinions are his own, and as an individual he has the right of us all to be keeper of his own private conscience. But in his public capacity at his Coronation he stands for the English people's idea of kingship. It has for long centuries been, and I hope still is, an essential part of that idea that the King needs the grace of God for his office. In the Coronation ceremony the nation definitely acknowledges that need. Whatever it may mean, much or little to the individual who is crowned, to the people as a whole it means their dedication of the English monarchy to the care of God in whose rule and governance are the hearts of Kings.

"Thus in the second place, not only as important as, but far more important than, the King's personal feelings to his Coronation is the feeling with which we, the people of England view it. Our part in the ceremony is to fill it with reality by the sincerity of our belief in the power of God to overrule for good our national history, and by the sincerity with which we commend the King and nation to His providence.

"The choice may be put simply. Are we going to be merely spectators or listeners-in at the Coronation as at any other historic or interesting function, hearing the service reading the account, and inspecting the pictures, with the sort of passive or superficial curiosity with which we should treat any other scene of merely national pageantry? Or are we, in some sense, going to consecrate ourselves, too, to the service of God and the welfare of mankind in order that our self-consciousness and our sense of religious responsibility as citizens may help to quicken and encourage the whole nation's sense of dependence on God?

"There never was a clearer need than there is at present for a great rally to religion. The world is torn by conflicting tendencies, some of which are overtly, while others are covertly, anti-religious. No Christian man can really be comfortable as to the attitude towards religion which is being displayed by the rulers of various European States. And the threat of national or international disturbance never seems to grow less pressing. Our civilisation is in a tottering and unstable condition which forces us to wonder whether it may not even yet perish of internal combustion."

(C. E. Newspaper)

From the Guardian, Madras.

RAMA'S RENUNCIATION

K. V. S.

It is one thing to over look the gulf between the ideal and the practical and quite another to bring down the ideal and establish it on the basis of aberrations of human weakness. It is exactly the latter that has been done by some persons about the regrettable abdication of the popular ex-king. To talk of it as the Great Renunciation in the circumstances in which it happened is to ignore some of its main aspects and to extol standards of royal conduct which it is impossible to elevate to the height of an ideal. The course of royal conduct in India has not been free from blemish and Indian history contains many dark and revolting deeds in the recruitment and final disposal of the harems of kings. But the standards of conduct were not relaxed on this account. Though the people did look helplessly upon violations of the moral code and poets were found willing to praise the greatness of unworthy kings, the ideal of kingship continued to be that of Sri Ramachandra. In Rama's life there were two renunciations. He first resigned the kingship in favour of his younger brother against the wishes of the people and in the discharge of what he considered to be his duty. He again renounced his queen in order that his people might be guided rightly. On both points it is possible to take a different view. Especially on the second occasion it would have been renunciation both ways. He could have forsaken the kingdom for Sita, or Sita for the kingdom. Indeed the popular mind is still divided on the issue. While admiring Rama it has not completely lost its resentment against the apparent want of affection in his conduct. But there has been no doubt as to the relative rights and wrongs of the two courses and as to what constituted true renunciation viz., the preference of what is right over what is pleasant or in the beautiful phraseology of sanskrit, of Dharma over Kama.

Rama is the hero of innumerable epics and minor poems and Sita is likewise the heroine. As the great poet of Tamil Ramayana has said will any one who has the urge, sing of any one except Sri Rama. But when it comes to the banishment of Sita all the poets have felt difficulty. How can Rama be exonerated? How can the abandonment of Sita whose character gives Ramayana its grandeur be justified? But they clearly promulgate the standard of royal conduct and the duty of preferring the right over the pleasant. We make no apology for quoting below the inimitable sentiments and expressions of Kalidasa in dealing with this episode.

Thinking of renunciations one is reminded of the less legendary and more historic renunciation of Sidhartha the prince of Kapilavastu who in quest

of the solution of human sorrow renounced his kingdom and his queen and wandered in the forests of India till what he sought was found. Buddha through his renunciation was able to proclaim the great immutable laws of human happiness, laws which modern thought considers more in accordance with science than those postulating a personal head for the universe.

Not much difficulty should exist for the ordinary man in seeing what is right in such a case. And even though the public may have to condone violations of the rule it is necessary that the rule itself should not be understood otherwise than it actually is.

"It has happened to many a man before now to find himself beginning to fall in love with another man's wife. That is a moment of critical decision, and they should cease to meet before passion is so developed as to create an agonising conflict between love and duty. That decision has often been taken by men of honour."—The Arch Bishop of York.

किमात्मनिर्वादकथामुपेक्षे जयामदोषामुत संत्यजामि ।
इत्येकपक्षाश्रय विरुद्धत्वाद्वादासीत्सदोलाचलचित्तवृत्तिः ॥
निश्चित्य चानन्यनिवृत्तिं वाच्यं त्यागेन पत्न्याः परिमाष्टुमैच्छत् ।
अपि स्वदेहात्किमुतेन्द्रियार्थावशोधनानां हि यशो गरीयः ॥
पौरेषु सोऽहं बहुलीभवन्तमपां तरंगेष्विव तैलबिन्दुम् ।
सोऽहं न तत्पूर्वमवर्णमीशो अलानिक स्थाणुमिव द्विपेन्द्रः ॥
तस्यापनोदाय फलप्रवृत्तावुपस्थितायामपि निर्व्यपेक्षः ।
त्यक्ष्यामि वेदेहसुतां पुरस्तात्समुद्रनेमि पितुराज्ञयेव ॥

Raghuvamsa Ch. XIV versus 34, 35, 38, 39.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA IN MODERN INDIA.

K. V. S.

One of the achievements of the modern age is the broadcasting of the message of the Gita. The Gita was till recently supposed to be too sacred and too profound to be read and understood by lay men. But in spite of that ban Hindu India has acclaimed it as the Gospel of the new Hinduism and is drinking from its teachings with thirst. The Gita has been dragged from its inaccessibility and seclusion and placed in the book-shelf of the ordinary reader. Many read it just like any other book, without preparation, without invocation and without guidance. A large number read it with the faith that in it they have a Hindu scripture that will throw light on their difficulties, strengthen them for their daily task and fix their minds in devotion to the Lord. Beyond this crude faith they have no special equipment for the understanding of the Gita. It is doubtful if all of them understand the significance according to pandit tradition of every one of the 700 verses that the Gita contains. But there can be no gain saying the fact that they earnestly seek to apply their understanding of its message to the conditions of contemporary life.

Thus the Gita has become to many Hindus a modern book of daily devotions. Those verses in it which emphasise Bhakti make a special appeal to them. Through these verses they seek to establish contact with the Lord of Yoga. Others again are inspired by the incessant urge to action which forms the refrain of the Gita, and clasp this message to their heart. In an India which makes little appeal and presents no urge to energetic action, the value of this cannot be overestimated. They are inspired and consoled by the exhortation that extols the performance of (right) action, without attachment to its fruits and defines the province of human endeavour as confined to action only.

Devotion and Duty, these may be said to be two of the priceless gifts of the Gita to the modern world. They may be looked upon as corresponding to Pranipata and Seva, surrender and service which are two of the main gateways of spiritual illumination.* Pariprasna in the sense of insatiable hunger for spiritual knowledge through analysis is indeed another requisite but that will come in time. As the Lord himself has said, even if the most sinful person worships Him with undivided heart he must

* तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदे क्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्व दर्शिनः ॥

Gita Ch. IV

be accounted righteous because he has formed the right resolution. The sinner speedily becomes filled with the desire for righteousness.

One need not just now specially emphasise the dangers of an uninstructed study of the Gita. They cannot be said to be non-existent however. But the spirit of the present age provides safeguards against the propagation of vital errors and against perverse applications. It is an age to which Mithyachara or hypocrisy in the sense in which the Lord uses the word in the Gita viz, asking for the pleasures of sense contacts without putting forward the slightest effort to get them is abhorrent, though it may be too much to claim that it is an age of Karma Yoga i.e, striving for striving's sake without attachment to reward. Indian public opinion to-day places in the forefront of its standards of judgment of personal merit the great virtues of sacrifice, renunciation and simplicity. These correspond to the threefold qualities of Yajna, Dana and Tapas which are esteemed by the Lord as the primary sacraments that sanctify human life. So long as these ideals rule human conduct the dangers of an indiscriminate reading of the Gita need not make us doubt the advantage of the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns:
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Where He displays His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more ;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA

[Speeches at the Gita Day Celebration at the Ranade Hall Mylapore]

MR. C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR.

The Gita, had a living message to the world of to-day. The Hindus, he feared, had allowed themselves to be hypnotised into the belief that their ancient scriptures had ceased to be vital living forces. But he firmly believed in the elasticity and life giving potency of the fundamentals of Hinduism: Truth was 'sanatana', but its form and complexion might change from age to age. Truth as contained in Hinduism was valid for all time. Indeed, elasticity and capacity for adjustment to changing needs was one of the greatest characteristics of Hinduism and a sure sign of its vitality. Its conservatism was protective and was not opposed to the element of growth and adjustment.

A careful study would disclose how revolutionary changes had been effected in the religious thought and outlook of Hinduism. From what might be called the worship of the elements and many gods in the Rig Veda to the severe Monism of the Upanishads, what a far reaching change. But, yet how little of a change it seemed? It was something like legislating from the bench—introducing new law without its appearing to be anything more than a mere process of interpretation of existing law. Such changes, he believed, must take place if religion was to fulfil itself. A big revolution was quietly effected and recorded in the Gita, by which ceremonies became action in general, sacrifices became the sacrifice of desire, and Sanyasa became detachment in the co-operative activities of social life; and Bhakti and Grace were given an integral place in Vedanta alongside of Knowledge and Action.

The Gita ideal of society, was one in which every member did his part in a spirit of dedication to the Lord, desireless of fruit, and for the common good. Such 'desireless action' was the easiest path to salvation according to the Gita. Nothing could be more elastic and adjustable to modern life than this ideal. The system it pictured out was indeed a perfect scheme of social co-operation and equal respect and reward for all work, which was the essence of what was known as Socialism. Some people criticised the Gita as preaching the caste system and seeking to perpetuate the dominance of Brahmins. A dispassionate study would convince one that it advocated merely a social arrangement, wherein all work was considered equally noble and each would carry out certain definite duties for the common good without the evils of competition. It took the caste system, which was the then unquestioned social structure, for

granted and laid stress on equality and selflessness of outlook. Interpreted aright, it would be the best scripture for Socialism. They should extricate principles from the necessary background of the times, instead of merely trying to find sanctions for some of the present evils in the fact that these appeared to have existed even during the time of the Gita.

The time would soon come when every lawyer, doctor, teacher and every graduate would be learned in the scriptures. This was the only way to find life-giving nutrition in the scriptures. The isolation between orthodox learning and modern education was peculiar to modern India and was the cause of degeneration of Hinduism.

SIR ALLADI KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR

The Hindu religion was not intended for "museum purposes" for other nations. It had elements of vitality and growth and was capable of adjusting itself to modern needs. Religion, if it was to be a vivifying force, must needs address itself to conditions of the present day. He would make a sincere appeal to his 'so-called Varnashramite friends' to ask themselves how far they did or were able to lead the life led by their forefathers. Were they able at least to perform the daily 'Karmanushtanas, prescribed for them? One would be untrue to oneself if one should pay mere lip-homage to those great ideals enshrined in the Shastras and the Gita. He believed in Hinduism, in its being a sustaining and active force in every day life and furnishing in answer to many questions agitating them and a solution for problems confronting them. "If we are true to Hinduism, if we are true to the spirit underlying it, then we would realise that the duty cast on all of us, including the Pandits, Scholars and Sanatanists, is to reinterpret Hinduism in such a way that it will become a sustaining element in the life of the individual and of Society."

[From the Hindu.]

"THE STRIDE OF GOD"

K. V. S.

This was the title of the address delivered in Madras by the Head of the Salvation Army, General Evangaline Booth. In words charged with passion the General explained what in Christian terminology may be called the descent of the spirit of God among men and how that spirit has for over fifty years manifested itself in bringing light and life to human beings whom the pressure of want has driven to crime, despair and misery. The history of the Salvation Army is the romance of successful social effort inspired by religion. It is a refutation of the common assumption that some groups of men are chronically and irredeemably degraded. The Salvation Army had its struggles like other movements and it had to face and outlive derision, opposition and neglect. In General Booth the ideals of the Army found an exponent worthy of their greatness and as in the case of other righteous causes which find worthy champions and propitious times the Salvation Army survived the dangers of infantile existence and grew and spread drawing adherents and rendering service throughout the world. Into its doctrinal foundations it is unnecessary for us to enter. What is important to know is that in this country and elsewhere the organisation has taken up some of the most difficult pieces of social work, like reclamation of criminals, relief of lepers, and rescue of so called fallen women and has demonstrated not merely the possibilities of successful work in the sense of social relief and amelioration, but also the social value of the human material that is to be found in groups that are neglected and shunned.

We claim and with justification that in Hindu social theory the structure of society is so arranged as to make a considerable percentage of voluntary effort needless. At the same time on account of the lack of co-ordination of theory and practice and on account of the vicissitudes through which Hindu society had to pass in course of time the operation of these social laws has left great gaps which can now be filled only by voluntary effort on western lines. The social theory of Hinduism justifies the assumption of collective responsibility for social happiness. The Hindu conception of human society is that it is an organic structure and part of the personality of God. It would therefore naturally follow that a Hindu state should assume responsibility for social welfare and should itself embark upon the execution of social programmes. But unfortunately owing to historic and political causes the government and the country are still largely dominated by the *Laissez*

faire policy which was the guiding principle of governments in the middle of the 19th century. Until local and provincial governments in this country take up this responsibility, society in India will have to depend upon voluntary effort only. In the organisation of such service the Salvation Army has done valuable pioneering work and its experience and methods are well worth serious study.

[The following are extracts from the address by general Evangeline Booth, International Head of the Salvation Army on the Army's work delivered at Victoria Public Hall, Madras on 21st December 1936.]

Victor Hugo had said that progress was the stride of God. Their organisation had made great strides through the kindness of Almighty God. A little over half a century ago, the Salvation Army was in its infancy. Her father General William Booth, had been ridiculed for his idea for doing something for the lowest strata of humanity and converting the poorest and most miserable into good citizens. But her father turned his back on all that and began his work. Despite persecution and abuse by the populace in whose interest the Salvation Army came into existence, despite misunderstanding and misjudgment of its motives by Governments, the movement was led on. The flag of the Salvation Army waving in 93 different countries had done more to bring the hearts of people of different nationalities and colours and creeds together than any other flag had done. She had often been asked what was the reason for the growth of the organisation. Her father was a man of great faith. Originally the Salvation Army consisted of about 27 stations and all of them were inside England. Several of her father's officers were imprisoned and the whole world was against them. No man started with a greater number of enemies than her father and no man went to the grave with a greater number of friends and, they might almost say, no enemies, for the Governments of the world were represented at his graveside. The reason for this was that her father carried on the work with deep conviction and that work was carried on by his followers. They had always felt that religion which did not apply to everyday difficulties, troubles and distress, not only of the common people but of all classes of people, was of very little use to the Salvation Army.

The Army had brought down with all humility Jesus Christ from his celestial altar. They had brought him down to the mud walls of life, down to the murderer's cell, down to poverty in all its despair, to people sitting in humble misery, blank, bleak and desolate, brought him down to where

the morning rays never dispelled the darkness, brought him down to the banks of beautiful rivers to relieve misery.

At the settlement she saw thousands of men, women and children eager to hear her preach and she never talked to a more intent audience. When the Sunday School was opened there the attendance was about five or ten and now it was about 400. Little girls with the Bible in their hands and little boys playing on the flute were seen at the settlement there. The little boys would grow up as the Army's officers. 650 inmates of the settlement would shortly be released from the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act. She asked them not to let down the organisation or the General. She would depend on every one of them doing his or her very best. In another centre she found women members of the criminal tribes vying with each other to produce good lace. Because the Army cared for them, had confidence in them and found the best in them the women were now competing with one another to give their best in return. When she looked on the great crowd at Bapatla and saw them singing a song of her own composition, with tears in their eyes and wished them good-bye she thought she could depend on them. She saw in all that work her father's hand and Christ's hand. It was thought at one time they were all lost to hope, lost to virtue and lost to self-respect. The police officials told her, that now bullock carts could with safety pass through that area at night. The police officers said that they were no longer wanted in that area. "I told the inmates of the settlement 'Look at my face, you are men of strong muscles, of strong hearts. I want you to help me to make a better India.' I am nearly dying myself in the struggle and I do not want to do it without them. We have brought Christ down and that is the secret of our success."

Continuing General Booth described the work done by the Salvation Army in the City of London and on the Thames embankment in saving children from being thrown into the river and also in making several homes bright and happy. The Army's work was not an undertaking. It was not merely a religious thought, it was a work of love. This work was the heart beat of life. She had been born into the Salvation Army. She grew into it, she was educated in it. The Army to her was always a miracle.

General Booth concluded by saying: "You have loved us in India, you have helped us. Speak a word for the Army when you can."

[From *The Madras Mail*.]

NOTES.

1937:—With January 1937 the Bharata Dharma completes fifteen years of service. These years have demonstrated the growing sphere of usefulness which the Journal has acquired for itself in the public life of the country. It will be the aim of the Bharata Dharma to maintain and improve that usefulness in all ways and to make Hinduism a dynamic influence in the life of every Hindu.

The appreciations that are being received encourage us to go forward with faith in the future of the great religion of India. Hinduism caters with exceptional fullness to the complex needs of human life always maintaining that basic urge towards righteousness which is the purpose of every religion to foster. We convey to our numerous readers our best wishes for a rich life in 1937.

Hindu Rulers and Social Reform:—In the last part we drew attention to the anomaly of Orthodox Hindu States being in a position to lead in social reform on subjects which never emerge from the sphere of discussion in British India. Writing on the Travancore Proclamation Gandhiji explains the curious position as follows:

"The glory of the miracle of Travancore belongs undoubtedly to the Maharaja, his good mother, and his able Diwan. And herein is a lesson for us all who are interested in the root and branch removal of untouchability. Rightly or wrongly the tradition in Hinduism is that a Hindu Prince has the authority, as it is his duty, to propound Smritis known to the moderns as laws or rules consistent with the fundamentals of religion for the due fulfilment by the people of their moral obligations.

"When years ago I had discussions with the Pandits of Vykam they had assured me that in spite of the Smriti they had produced in support of their contention, they would obey regulations to the contrary if they were promulgated by their ruler. This belief probably accounts for the happy phenomenon we are witnessing in Travancore where its population is whole-heartedly giving full effect to the Proclamation. If the other Hindu States will follow the example of Travancore they will also perhaps discover that their people will carry out the rules that may be issued. Anyway the people of the respective States might well prepare public opinion in the direction. But they must not relax their effort for having temples opened by their respective trustees without waiting for Princely lead. For the reformer's argument is that no new Smriti is required for opening temples to Harijans or for removing untouchability. Only we may

not leave out any honourable avenue open to us for fulfilling our purpose. And appealing to the Princes to take the lead is an honourable avenue and most likely to hasten success."

Is Temple Entry Confiscatory?—A curious mixture of theological and secular arguments is to be found in the opposition to the granting of the elementary religious right of common worship to our untouchable brethren. It is said that the living presence of God is dependent upon certain worshippers keeping themselves away from that presence even though they may not be inferior in character and devotion to those that are privileged to approach. Another is that God's presence in these temples belongs to and has been acquired by certain communities in whose favour it has descended by hereditary succession and that to admit Harijans will be to take away the property of Caste Hindus and to distribute it to Harijans. Comment is needless. Property and spirituality are the antithesis of each other. Private property cannot exist in the Grace of God though it may in the gifts of Mammon. To identify them is not religion but the opposite. If communism in the sense of the formula 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need' is justified in any sphere of human activity it is in religion. The compassion and the grace of the living God wander more in search of the sinner and the prodigal than the self righteous. There can be no forfeiture of the right to that grace by the admission of Harijans to a share. On the other hand there may be very possibly an enrichment.

Caste in Christianity:—The movement in Hinduism for removal of untouchability is having its repercussions in the Christian church. In some churches it has been the practice for the congregation to take its seat on a caste basis. This is now sought to be altered, not however without opposition on the part of Caste Christians who resent such attempts, as in Trichinopoly and Kumbakonam. The depressed classes Christians in Tinnevely have protested against the caste atmosphere in Christianity and have asked for preferential treatment like their brethren in the Hindu fold.

It will not be correct however to call this untouchability. There is no ceremonial pollution involved in it. It is simply the persistence of cultural distinction and the survival of group consciousness after conversion. It shows how deeply rooted the caste spirit is in this country.

Indian Christians and Conversion of Harijans:—At the All India Christian Conference which assembled at New-Delhi on the 23rd December it was resolved that the attitude of the Conference towards the unrest among the Harijans should be as follows.

The conference appreciated the desire of the Depressed Classes to secure for themselves a freer and more just and human life, and thought that while the Depressed Classes' decision to change their religion could not and should not be made a matter of barrier or exploitation, it was the unalterable duty of the Church to open the door wide to all who voluntarily sought its fellowship.

The conference further held that this new surge among the outcastes of India was a challenge to the disciples of Christ, first, to redouble their services to the needy, the unprivileged and the down-trodden and secondly, to re-examine their own attitude, customs and practices in their individual capacity as well as in their capacity as members of organised bodies and churches. The acceptance of any custom, tradition or any method associated with or traceable to caste—or class distinction was entirely repugnant to Christ and should not be tolerated or compromised in any form or shape.

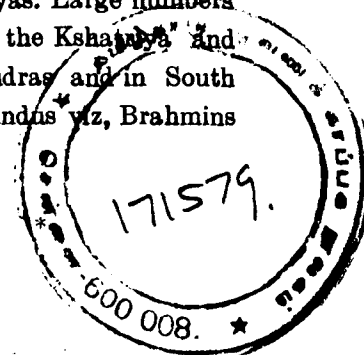
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An Inhuman Practice:—While presenting 6 cows and one she-buffalo to the Delhi Pinjrapole, the Viceroy referred to the practice called *phuka*, which he described as "a disgrace to all that is best in India." As few people have anything but a vague idea of the cruelty involved in this practice, it may be worth while to mention what it actually is. *Phuka* is the practice of blowing air or injecting salt water through a bamboo pipe into the vagina of a cow. In the case of the she-buffaloes, either the tail of the animal, or a bundle of straw, sufficiently thick in diameter and nearly a cubit long, or even the hand of a man is thrust in. It is stated that the process is so painful, that the animal groans most pitifully, the back becomes arched, the eyes bulge out as if in extreme pain, the animal starts shivering and generally fights shy of anyone who approaches its tail. The object is to prolong the lactation period, even when the animal is without any calf, and also to get the milk which the animal instinctively keeps back for her offspring. But the extra quantity of milk obtained by this inhuman method is believed to be small.

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The Lesson of Vijayanagar:—The celebration of the 6th centenary of the founding of the Vijayanagar empire has drawn interest and attention over the whole of India. It is difficult to over assess the obligation of Hindu culture and civilisation to the kingdom of Vijayanagar which for several centuries stemmed tide of Islam and its devastating influence on Hinduism, and formed a rallying point for the Hindus. Though the influence of that empire is still traceable throughout South Indian tradition and life and though Hindu India is entitled to be proud of all its great achievements, the fall of Vijayanagar has its lessons which Hindus cannot afford to ignore. The destruction of the city which drew such lavish praise from foreign visitors is one of the saddest chapters in Indian history. It recalls the carnage and vandalism wrought by barbarian hordes and the devastations of Timur and Chengiz khan. It has not many parallels in the history of the East or the West.

How did it come about? We know the facts. The Bahmani kings joined together and defeated Vijayanagar at the battle of Talikota in 1565. But how was it possible to put to death 1,00,000 Hindus and fill the Tungabhadra with their blood and destroy the great city with ruthlessness and deliberation during a period of several months? We cannot but admit the presence of other causes which conspired to produce such a disaster. Some of them are to be found in the intrinsic weakness of Hinduism and in the diminution of the Kshatriya spirit in the later day social organisation of Hindus. The maintenance of Hindu Dharma is dependent upon the power and organisation of Kshatriyas who constitute its fighting section. With the gradual neglect of that section by Hindu Society the martial spirit steadily deteriorated. The time came when Hinduism was not able to resuscitate the conception and organise its defence and recognise warriors as Kshatriyas with all the *samskaras* and privileges accorded to the Kshatriyas in the Dharma shastras. Such fighting spirit as survived was merely prompted by personal ambitions and was not organically related to the social structure of the Hindus. The same thing has happened to the Vaisyas. Large numbers who by their vocation and by their character belong to the Kshatriyas and Vaisya castes have been permitted to lapse into Shudras and in South India at least we get only two main divisions among Hindus viz, Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, a most regrettable state of affairs.



The Sin of Cow Slaughter:—It has been ascertained that annually the following number of milch cattle are imported into our chief cities and sent to the slaughter house after their milking period is over.

Bombay 26,000 She-buffaloes (71 per day)

Calcutta 36,000 Milch-cows (100 per day)

Madras 7,000 Milch-Cows (19 per day)

These cities are predominantly Hindu. The milkman are also generally Hindus. To all Hindus the cow is sacred. On whom does the sin fall?

Purusharthas:—In view of the admission of the depressed classes into the inner court of Hinduism it is important to state for our and their benefit some of the basic truths of Sanatana Dharma. With this object the Arya Mata Sabha has organised a series of lectures the first of which was delivered by Vidwan Kodavasal Narasimbachar on Purusharthas i.e. the objectives of human life. He explained the significance of the traditional fourfold classification into Kama or pleasure of sense contracts, Artha or wealth, Dharma or righteousness and Moksha or release from rebirth.

It may be expected that in future lectures he will explain the interdependence and the relative value of these purposes and the grouping of human beings according as the dominant ambition in their lives falls under one or other of those purposes. Such grouping need not be confined to the Hindu Society nor need it be on a hereditary basis.

An interesting part of the exposition should be the distribution of emphasis in propaganda. Till now all religious revivals in Hinduism have concentrated on release. They have proceeded on the assumption that it is the duty of every one to strive for Moksha. It is open to question whether in the light of later social experience this emphasis has not been overdone and whether it has not brought about artificial conventions and rituals designed to prepare for release men and women who are not more eligible for Moksha than others who have not adopted those conventions. It is also open to question whether it has not resulted in an unhealthy orientation of social effort and a harmful neglect of activities necessary for the production of the minimum of worldly wealth for the journey of life.

There can be no escape from the fact that in the final analysis Moksha is the only desirable goal. It is equally undeniable that only a microscopic minority is evolved enough to pursue that goal and make the necessary sacrifices for it. The vast majority of men desire and pursue

wealth and pleasure. The observance of Dharma is their farthest limit. To saddle them with the immediate objective of Moksha and to regulate their lives on that basis is to produce discord and unhappiness. A clearer perception of these and other difficulties may enable us to conserve our energy and divide it usefully among the purusharthas.

Some Principles of Hinduism:—Like all religions, Hinduism affirms the right to a healthy and well ordered physical life. Such a life is a normal by-product of the observance of Dharma. It is also one of the minor fruits of dedicated service to the Lord. (1) Apart from these guarantees Hinduism deliberately provides for the warding of ill health, pain and sorrow by prescribing definite austerities, propitiations and expiations, the idea being that suffering of any kind is due to deviation from righteousness and can be prevented by extra effort and change of heart. There is also a further and more profound implication viz, the existence of active higher laws which though not fully understood are capable of being used for human happiness under proper conditions. (2) Thus we have two primary conceptions (1) personal responsibility for one's physical condition and the ability to insure a good life and (2) a law of righteousness which can be used under suitable conditions to produce worldly happiness.

As in other spheres of life we have in religion also possibilities of misuse of these powers. The commonest form is asking for a pleasant life without working for it adequately. Another equally familiar violation is to desire more affluence than is normally needed for an efficient and even a full life. This is an illegitimate diversion of the fruits of a righteous life. A third form of abuse is violating them while asking for the fruits of obedience. Safeguards have been placed against these and other ways of abusing Dharma by grading individuals under recognised groups and permitting different degrees of freedom in the pursuit of purely physical pleasures. Emphasis is placed upon the merit of deliberately foregoing needless physical affluence. The capacity to function in the world with efficiency upon reduced amenities is extolled. A detailed consideration of this however takes us to the value of asceticism in human life which is a different subject. At present it is enough to say that in Hinduism

1 अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ Gita Ch. IX

2 परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ । Gita Ch. III

we get all the help that is necessary for the living of a rich life in the manifold sense of the term.

In view of the admission of the depressed classes to the principal ministration of Hinduism, it may be helpful to remind ourselves of the value of our spiritual possessions. In so doing we may ourselves grow in faith and power. This indeed is of the nature of spiritual gifts. They grow with giving.

Making the League of Nations Real :—China, Abyssinia and Spain have exposed the impotence of the League of Nations when a real crisis in international affairs arises between parties one or other of whom is, or is backed by, a powerful party prepared to defy the League's decision. The President of the Congress suggests that the Congress should work for a real League of Nations. This may be understood to mean a League in which either one nation will not aggrandise over another or will not be permitted to do so owing the enforcement of sanctions which the League is able to wield. The present world conditions do not encourage us to hope for the former within a reasonable period. So long as the spirit of Nationalism exists, the idea of domination over a weaker nation or what is called imperialism will continue to inspire national foreign policy. For weaker nations to expect this spirit to disappear is like the lamb hoping that the wolf will cease to look upon him as his prey. The latter result appears to be equally difficult of achievement though it is simply an application of the principles of Municipal Law to international relations. A League Police and Army and Navy and Aerial war craft is a remote contingency. There is of course the possibility of some or all of the members being entrusted with the execution of the decision of the League. Two sanctions have been conceived of, economic and military. The former has been tried against Italy and has failed. The latter means war, possibly a world war, a calamity that the League exists to prevent and not to foster. Any way it is not for a disarmed nation to propose that some of the armed nations should take upon themselves the duty of enforcing the League's decisions with their armed strength.

One can only hope that by continuous educative propaganda of an intensive type the people of the world will realise more and more the unity of their interests and the futility of war for the promotion of economic or imperialistic ambitions. A modern war may mean an end to modern civilization. The League of Nations is what the Nations can make out of it. If it has failed on critical occasions

the failure is a reason for strengthening it further and for not weakening it. Weak countries have to depend upon the League as the only bulwark of safety.

CUTTINGS

The Tragedy of Vijayanagar.

[From the Presidential Address by Dr. Kurtkoti (Sri Sankaracharya) at the Vijayanagar sexcentenary.]

After all, the contemplation of a glory that was great in the past and has now faded must create the same chastening and refining feelings upon our hearts, like the reading of a tragedy. A tragedy, especially if it is the fall of a great man or woman, first fills the heart with pity and makes us sad. Here is the great tragedy of Vijayanagar, which the great creator has unrolled before us. It fills us with pity, but it elates us with a sense of wonder. There is a sense of joy to contemplate the glory that it was, the glory that our ancestors had made of it; and there is the chastening and the refinement of the heart since even such a perfection of glory should have faded away. Empires there are and empires there have been in plenty since the dawn of creation. But history teaches us that no institution, much less an empire that subsists upon the common will for the achievement of a common purpose can last, when the will power begins to flag, when community of interest ceases to exist, when selfish ends drive out the sense of common purpose and spiritual motives give way to material interests. But even so the fall of a great State or of a great Empire must bring tears to our eyes. For we are men and, as the poet has said, we must weep when even the shadow of what once was great has passed away. That was Wordsworth's remark about the lost liberty and autonomy of Venice, once the head of a great Empire. The worth of Venice, the poet told us, did not fall below her birth and he described that town as the eldest child of liberty. I say that here in Hindustan after the first triumphs of the Muslims, Vijayanagar was the eldest child of liberty. The Marathas and the Sikhs came later. Vijayanagar prepared the ground for the Marathas in that she prevented the arts of state-craft from being forgotten among the Hindus. And she kept alive the instinct of defence without which where would Maratha soldiery have been? And yet there was a fall! All of them had a fall! But from every fall we must rise with a greater strength and a greater purpose, trusting in God who helps those that help themselves.

Religion in the Vijayanagar Empire.

[From the presidential address of Dr. M. H. Krishna, Professor of History, University of Mysore at the Karnatak Historical conference held at Hampi.]

One of the chief objects of Vijayanagara was to defend Dharma or religion. To the Turkish onslaught against Hinduism in other parts of India and the intolerance shown towards the faith of the idolator, Vijayanagara gave a fitting and dignified reply. Except for lapses for short periods on very rare occasions, the Empire adopted a policy of sympathetic tolerance and even encouragement of all creeds, whatever might have been the personal inclinations of the rulers or their ministers. The earliest kings appear to have been disciples of the Smartas for about three or four generations and from the days of Devaraya II there was much Virasaiva influence at the court. From the period of usurpations, the royal families were mostly disciples of the Srivaishnavas. During the greatness of the Empire under Krishnaraya, the Madhwa monks wielded considerable influence. But almost throughout her history the Empire followed a policy which was adopted at the foundation and openly declared in an inscription of Bukkaraya at Sravanabelgoda where he states in a dispute between the Vaishnavas and the Jains that no difference is to be made between the two sects, that even their essential teachings are the same, that the adversity or prosperity of the one is the adversity or prosperity of the other, and people of different sects should co-operate and help each other in the pursuit of their own religious practices.

The names of the great religious men of the period would fill several pages. Among the Smartas were men like Vidyatirtha, Vidyaranya, Ramachandra Bharati. The Madhwas were led by Akshobhya, Vyasaraaya and Vadiraja. The Srivaishnava leaders were Manavala Mahamuni, Sudarsanacharya Doddayyacharya, Tolappacharya and Lakshmikumar Tathacharya. Equally great men like Nagideva, Tontadarya, Gosala Chenna Basava and Nijaguna Sivayogi appeared among the Virasaivas. The Jains had their Nemichandra and others. They and the Muslims though small in numbers were fully protected by the State and numerous Bastis and Musjids were constructed during the time. However serious might have been the differences of opinion among the philosophers, the religion of the people at large appears to have been not only one of friendship and tolerance but even one of universal acceptance.

Liberalism in Religion and in Politics.

In the course of his Presidential address at the Congress Session, Faizpur Jawaharlal Nehru said :

"Changing conditions in the world demand a new political and economic orientation and if this does not come soon, there is friction and conflict.

Gradually this leads to a revolution in the minds of men and this seeks to materialise, and every delay in this change-over leads further conflict. The existing equilibrium having gone, giving place to no other, there is deterioration, reaction, and disaster. It is this disaster that faces us in the world to-day and war on a terrible scale is an ever present possibility. Except for the Fascist Powers every country and people dreads this war and yet they all prepare for it feverishly, and in doing so they line up on this side or that. The middle groups fade out or, ghostlike, they flit about, unreal, disillusioned self-tortured, ever-doubting. That has been the fate of the old liberalism everywhere, though in India perhaps those who call themselves Liberals, and others who think in their way, have yet to come out of the fog of complacency that envelops them. But we

"Move with new desires.

For where we used to build and love.

Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live.

Between two fires'."

The Liberals have been accused of many bad qualities and of many sins of omission and commission. They have been accused of want of patriotic fervour, of insufficient idealism, of unwillingness to sacrifice, etc. But all these accusations proceeded on the assumption that they were too realistic, too much addicted to facts and too much worried over difficulties. Mr. Jawaharlal would however add to their existing virtues that of being complacent.

Where does complacency come in? Admittedly the Liberals stand for progress. They have advocated it. They have worked for it as long as, and possibly longer than those who now denounce them. If they place their faith in evolution instead of revolution and do not share in the visions that are vouchsafed to the few and will not join in urging the people along dangerous paths they may have their reasons. But it is not complacency.

Much as one would like to believe that difficulties vanish by ignoring them or by surmounting them in thought, bitter experience of the past

invalidates such faith. In politics as in religion the faith that moves mountains may be a helpful equipment. But it is impossible to construct immediate national programmes on the assumption of the whole nation being endowed with such faith and on that faith annihilating all obstacles and ushering the country into an utopia.

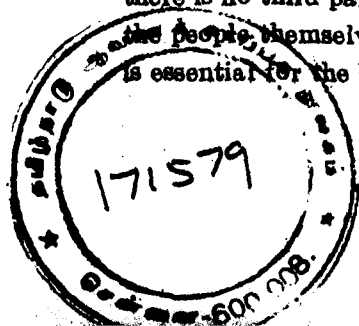
Just as in religion humanity has often suffered severely by an excessive emphasis upon distant goals, it is open to contention that in politics also it is a handicap to focus too much on the doubtful possibilities of the future ignoring the conditions of the present. Though miracles have occasionally happened they are the exception and not the rule. There is as much to be said for advocating progress along safe paths for a country in the situation which India occupies to day, as for embarking it on a voyage fraught with peril and risk.

Bhai Paramanand on Communal dissensions.

In the course of his presidential address at the Sind Hindu Conference at Sukkur (Sind) Bhai Paramanand spoke as follows :—

"I have intentionally left out of account Pundit Jawaharlal's utopian theories as being altogether beyond the scope of practical politics. He and his followers seem to despise to look upon this earth and earthly questions in the spirit of practical politics.

"We frequently hear it said that our subjection is due to foreign interference and whenever there is communal tension we say that the third party is responsible for it. It is quite true that the foreign bureaucracy for its own stability follows the policy of divide and rule. It is no use saying that this communal tangle will continue as long as we have a third party in the country, and in order to bring about communal unity we must first get rid of this third party. This argument puts us in a vicious circle. As long as the communal tension continues, there can be no self-government and as long as the foreign government continues there can be no unity. This kind of argument in a circle takes us nowhere. We know that there is no third party in China. China has a government of its own but it is going down everyday. Spain is another instance. Yet we know that there is no third party in China or in Spain. The cause of the disease is the people themselves and it is the lack of that national character which is essential for the building up of a nation.



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