

THE
Bharata Dharma

A MAGAZINE OF LIBERAL HINDUISM

—The Official Organ of the Arya Mata Sabha—

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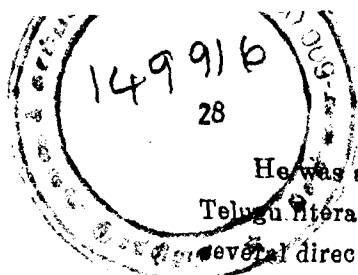
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VEERESALINGAM CENTENARY.

By

MR. K. KALIANA SWAMI, B.A., B.L.

If the Andhra Desa and the Andhras are what they are today intellectually, socially, morally and spiritually, it is largely, if not mainly, due to the life and labours of Rao Bahadur K. Veeresalingam Pantulu Garu, the greatest of modern Andhras, who had profoundly influenced the life and thought of the Andhra Desa by his varied incessant activities, extending over half a century, before he was called to his rest in 1919. His was a distinguished and multi-sided personality which had shed lustre on the various phases of Andhra life, purifying, reforming, renovating and revitalizing it, by the sheer force and intensity of his moral and spiritual fervour, no less than by his persistent action in all fields which conduced to the betterment of all classes of persons without distinction—men and women, the educated and the uneducated. He was both a destructive and a constructive reformer, as he had to relentlessly exposed the corruptions and immoralities of men and institutions of his day and rear up on the ashes of these all that made for right living and righteous conduct. He busied himself without rest or respite with all kinds of beneficent activities, either it be the righting of some wrong, or the uprooting of long standing superstitions or putting down corruptions and evil practices among those placed in authority, or working for the amelioration or uplift of the oppressed, the depressed or the down-trodden.



He was a great Telugu Scholar, who had inaugurated new trends in Telugu literature by his pioneering efforts which cut new ground in several directions. His great literary talents of a varied character were employed by him with great skill and ability in furthering the causes, the promotion of which he had at heart. He was a self-made man who rose from humble beginnings to be the outstanding personality that he was acclaimed to be.

He was born on Sunday, the 16th April 1848, at Rajahmundry, in a poor family and with what may be called a meagre education according to modern standards, started life as a pleader's clerk, which later on he had changed to that of a village school master, ultimately becoming a Telugu Pandit in a Government College. From the very beginning he had developed a spirit of revolt against all shams and hypocrises, against all kinds of injustice and in fact against everything which he felt was not in accordance with the voice of his conscience. As he grew in years, he was deeply touched by the social evils prevalent in his day which had strenuously endeavoured to reform by all the means in his power, heroically fighting against tremendous odds and undergoing many hardships and difficulties in the achievement of his purposes. With his facile pen and by his prolific writing he exposed all the social evils and the persons and institutions encouraging or responsible for their prevalence and growth. To the same end was also directed his Telugu Weekly Journal, "Vivekavardhani" and its advent, week after week, was awaited with great awe by moral delinquents and corrupt officials. He was a fearless critic of men and institutions and everything said or written by him was done with ultimate motive of reforming some rampant evil. His zeal for reform was neither narrow nor confined to only specific things but covered the whole range of items which were on the programme of the present day reformers. There is not one thing to which he did not direct his attention among the evils that had marred the social structure but what may be called the particular thing to which his whole life may be said to have been devoted is "Widow Remarriage" for which his energy, time and money were used in an unstinted manner. The woes of the child widow had touched his heart more deeply than every other thing for which he had laboured and he had worked and fought for this reform almost single handed, amidst a host of hostile circumstances, even at the risk of personal slander, social persecution and sometimes personal safety as well. The difficulties of those days in carrying out a reform of this kind with which almost none,

except a few of his immediate followers could sympathise, can be judged from the circumstance that the first widow marriage procession had to be conducted with the assistance of the local Sub-Collector and the District Superintendent of Police who had accompanied it through the streets of Rajahmundry.

The degraded condition of women no less claimed his attention. He had endeavoured to remove their ignorance and to enlighten them in many and varied useful ways by his popular writings, by means of which he had tried to dispel many superstitious belief and the baneful effects of a number of irrational customs and traditions under whose grip they had suffered untold misery in and out of their homes. In all his labours towards the women's cause and in all his social reform activities he had the enthusiastic support and whole hearted encouragement of his devoted wife, Srimati Rajyalakshamma Garu, who was like a mother to every forlorn woman and whose great delight was in creating a homely atmosphere to the homeless and the despised, to the lowliest and the lost. In the Theistic High School founded by him at Rajahmundry, free education was imparted to girls and Harijans. The widows home established by him was not only a rescue home for the helpless widows but a veritable training ground for them for the avocations of life according to their capacity and inclination. As a result of his disinterested labours in this direction, we find to-day scattered throughout the country grateful families of remarried widows leading decent and respectable lives. What Vidyasagar was to Bengal, Veeresalingam was to South India, in this respect, but in other fields he had far surpassed Vidyasagars.

He was pre-eminently a man of action who was sincere to the core. He would allow nothing to check his dauntless spirit in carrying out his schemes for the amelioration of his fellow-beings. With all that he was very simple and abstemious in his habits and life. He had a high sense of duty and expected the same from those who had worked with or under him, so much so, that most of them used to say or even complain that Pantulu Garu was a stern task-master with whom it was very difficult to work.

Though he was a poor and ill-paid Pandit in a college, he could leave property worth nearly fifty thousand rupees, all earned by his literary work, to a body of trustees known as the Hitakarni Samaj for the upkeep and maintenance of the institutions founded by him, namely the Theistic High School, the Victoria Widows Home, the Town Hall

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and Library and the Prathana Samaj at Rajahmundry, the place of his life-long labours.

He early realised that nothing truly great and good can be accomplished except under the dynamic influence of a spiritual force and started the Prathana Samaj movement in the Andhara Desa for the spiritual worship of God. He was nerved to do the great things that he did, by his firm faith in God, under whose guidance he always felt himself to be. He carried the spirit of prayer into all his activities and felt himself to be an instrument in the hands of God to carry out His will and to achieve His purposes for the good of his fellow-beings. With his prayerfulness and zeal for social reform he felt that the humiliating distinctions of caste and untouchability, the soul-killing superstition and meaningless ritual and ceremonies, encouraged and promoted by a self-seeking priesthood, are inconsistent with the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and the purer spiritual worship of God, which had always been the guiding principles of his life. During the latter part of his life he seems to have realised that social reform work unless broadbased on religion would not be lasting and with the courage of his conviction, which always characterised him, he became an exponent of liberal and practical theism and declared himself a Brahmo. He could see that by the practical application of these liberal religious principles to life, the reforms for which he had laboured would follow as a matter of course. With this firm conviction in him, he could find no difficulty in discarding his sacred thread or doing away with caste and the rituals enjoined by it. These daring and drastic changes in his spiritual and social life constitute, so to speak, the crowning acts of his glorious life, every capacity of which was dedicated to the service of God and man, illustrating the old adage that the true worship of God lay in the service of man.

He was made of the stuff of which heroes are made and was verily the Maker of Modern Andhra, as to him can be traced, directly or indirectly everything of which the Andhras are proud to-day in their intellectual, social or religious life. May the celebrations of his birth-centenary on 16th April, 1948, and the following days, all over the Andhra Desa and elsewhere, bring back to our minds the life-long labours of this great and revered Andhra and serve as a source of perennial inspiration to one and all, Andhras and others, to labour for the holy and sacred causes for which he had devoted all that was best in him, throughout his pretty long life, which came to a close on the 27th May, 1919, is our earnest prayer.

VAISAKHA PURNIMA.

By

SRI K. VISVANATHAN, MATUNGA, Bombay.

The full moon in the month of Vaisakha is the birth-tithi of three great sons of India. Opinion differs about the greatness or rather the degree of greatness of these, but none can deny that they are all great. They are Buddha, Ram Mohan Roy and Sankaracharya. Of these, two are known throughout the world. They are both national and international. They had a message for the whole humanity and for all time.

The war is over, but still peace is not visible. The dove of peace is being prevented from perching in this world and being hunted.

The world craves for peace. It is tired of wars. The people of every country have suffered terribly and bitter disillusionment has come to them. Racial superiority, invincibility and other things have been proved to be myth. The virtues of democracy have been preached, but few seem to practice it. Within 3 years of the war's end, speculation is ripe about the third world war. Antipathy has ever been against the massive man-slaughter called 'war'. The spring-catch of accumulated passion of civilised man for peace, love and non-violence has not been released. This is a valuable treasure acquired through age of human experience and culture, and jealously guarded through ravages of war and barbarities that take place periodically; and so it is costly.

Buddha's voice rises again. His spirit will succeed again and again. This day is the birth-day of Buddha. It is rarely celebrated in India which is his birth-place.

Amidst a myriad of questions-all important and doubts, the supreme fact or reality stands—the march of civilisation towards the ultimate unity of mankind, though the whites are not prepared to accept it. Today there are castes, sects, communities, nations. So long as these stand apart and deliberately glorify separatism and exclusiveness, they are destined to fly at one another's throat, leading to the inevitable goal, war. Peace can come only when they unite on a common ground with a common understanding and bound together by a community of feelings. This peace lasts only as long as they keep united. Before this is attained, all talk of "one world" is all moon-shine. It is an attempt to groify one race or nation. Even if it be the outcome of political exigencies only there is the eternal craving of alien men and nations for feeling that they belong to the same human family. Meetings are held

to foster this; occasional failure of such only proves to humanity that union on a high plane alone can abide and stand the test of time.

Ram Mohan Roy was born over a hundred years ago and his birthday also falls on the Vaisakh purnima. He pointed out such a higher cosmo-national plane—solid and substantial. His voice will rise again when the world is war-weary.

Matter grows and wealth accumulates; the spirit is then cornered and the overbearing vanity of the former, fights down and out. But matter stagnates, wealth destroys and decomposes the lifeless body, without the dynamic vitality of the spirit. It therefore becomes necessary that man has to be whipped back to the fact that without the soul ceaselessly working within, matter alone can lead him nowhere but destruction. Off and on he has to be reminded that he can enjoy wealth but this must be without any attachment to it. He has to realise that matter passes, and only the soul sustains.

The pure materialist leads to war. Only the transcending, super-material mind without any greedy attachment to perishable matter can bring the world back to Peace. Ahimsa may be the Path leading to Peace. Consolidation of men-communities and nations—into one great family may help to retain it. In between the two, stands the individual and social Man with the mind trained and nurtured, who will rule the material world around him and not allow the world with its wealth to rule over him. This he does by his cultured detachment from matter. This is what the world teacher Sankaracharya taught. His birthday falls on the same day. The voice of Sankara will rise once again, and his spirit triumph.

This day thus is symbolic of three great truths or facts. If the world sticks to any of these and practices it with unstinted devotion, it will be happy.

The place of Sanskrit in the curriculum of students in Secondary Schools of our Province.

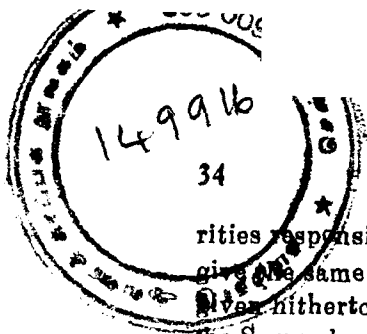
By

MR. K. BALASUBRAMANIA AYYAR, B.A., B.L., *Advocate, Mylapore.*

From the resolutions of the Dakshina Desiya Samskrita Sammelana published in this issue our readers will easily understand the problem for which the resolution has been given after nature consideration by the Sammelana which consisted of many scholars, educationists, and representatives of schools and colleges in our presidency.

The members of the Sammelana did not belong to any one community but were of all communities in our province. It was a very representative meeting and reflected the public opinion in our province. After the attainment of independence by our country, it is only natural that the angle of vision from which the problems of education have to be viewed is quite different from that which obtained before. As regards the relative importance of languages in the curriculum of studies in schools, nobody will have any two opinions about the place to be given to the mother tongue in our province. As regards English it should also be admitted that the original importance given to it when our rulers were Englishmen, cannot in the very nature of things, be given to it now. Our Minister of Education in the Government of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in an important pronouncement that English might have to occupy an important place in the curriculum in schools at least for another five years. But he too, did not say that it should have the same first rate importance was given to it when our rulers were Englishmen. One may be sure English will not be the state language in our country. It cannot also be maintained that it is absolutely necessary for our country's progress, economically, industrially and politically. The two most industrialised countries of the world before the war, namely, Germany and Japan did not know English at all. It is said that English, after the war, has become almost a world language of international importance. Hence it is argued that it should have an importance place in our curriculum of studies in schools. But it is certain at any rate, that the same importance should not be given to it as before and the periods of studies allotted to it hitherto, may very well be reduced as the educational system of our country may very well rest content with the providing to students the period necessary for the acquisition of a lower standard of knowledge of English than before.

Now therefore, we have to determine what languages have to be given importance in the curriculum of studies in schools in our province. That a student may have to acquire a knowledge of seems to be fairly necessary if regard is had to all aspect of Indian culture. Of course, first in importance comes the mother tongue. But next in importance comes Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the language of our culture, and of our systems of knowledge from time immemorial. All the important treatises in all the departments of knowledge which were developed from ancient times in our country, are found in that language. It is the language of our religion, of our law, of archaeology, of our history, of our architecture, and of our arts and painting, dance, music, etc. No student can be said to have attained the complete contentment of Sanskrit. But the Sammelana did not concern itself with the question whether Sanskrit studies should be compulsory for all students. The contentment of itself with putting forth the moderate demand of asking the



rities responsible for the re-organisation of education in our province to give the same facilities to those who want to study Sanskrit as were given hitherto even under British rule. It is this representation that the Sammelana has made after nature consideration of the periods of study that have to be allotted for the languages and for the sciences and arts to be studied in schools, without in any way being deflected by any prejudice or bias against or in favour of any language and with due regard to the necessities of culture in our province. Sanskrit being a highly inflectional language, it is easy to grasp it only when the language is learnt in the pliable period of early youth of every student, when the faculty of memory can lend itself to effective training. That is why educationists have to insist on students acquiring a knowledge of that language from the First form onwards in the secondary schools in our province. We hope and trust the resolution arrived at after a mature consideration by the Sammelana will receive that sympathetic consideration by the Minister and other authorities responsible for the education in our province which is its due.

Resolutions passed at the Sammelana.

Resolutions were passed at the Dakshina Desiya Samskrata Sammelana held on Monday the 29th of March, 1948 at the Rasika Ranjani Sabha Hall, Mylapore, Madras.

1. The study of Sanskrit being a vital part of the sound liberal education, this Sammelana appeals to the Government to maintain unimpaired all existing facilities for boys and girls who wish to take up the study of Sanskrit in any scheme of reorganisation of Secondary Education in the Province.
2. This Sammelana is of opinion that for the effective study of Sanskrit in the High Schools of the Province, students should be allowed to take it up as an optional subject in the language group from the first Form onwards and that it should be a subject for examination in all the Forms and in the Public (S.S.L.C.) Examination.
3. This Sammelana is of opinion that five periods at least, if not six, per week in the curriculum should be allotted to the study of Sanskrit and for this purpose the syllabus of study for the regional language should be divided into two parts one part compulsorily to be taken by all students, including Sanskrit students, and the other part, non-compulsory, which the Sanskrit students need not take.
4. This Sammelana is of opinion that the curriculum of studies in High Schools should make such provision for the study of Sanskrit as would enable students to pursue higher studies in Sanskrit provided by the Universities.

THE BHARATHA DHARMA

The Bharatha Dharma, a high class cultural journal, is the official organ of the Arya Mata Sabha devoted to the discussion of all topics of interest calculated to promote brotherhood and unity among the various sections of the people of Hindustan, such as religion, art, culture, politics, economics, sociology etc., from the point of the liberal Hindu thought.

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