

The VOICE of
ŚĀNKARĀ



THE SAGE OF KĀÑCĪ
SPECIAL NUMBER

esā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijagate
nirvāṇa-sandāyini

victorious is the voice of śaṅkara,
leading, as it does, to liberation

The Voice of Śaṅkara
is published under the guidance of
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ŚĀṆKARĀ

THE SAGE OF KĀŃCĪ: SPECIAL NUMBER

śaṅkara-bhāratī

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Editor

N. C. Krishnan

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OBITUARY : Dr. N. C. KRISHNAN

HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[154]

मात्सर्यमुख्यभयहेतुमृगावकीर्णे
सङ्कल्पनामकमहाजवपक्षियुक्ते ।
स्वान्ताख्यघोरविपिने चरतः कृपाब्धे
श्रीशङ्करार्य मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

*mātsaryamukhyabhayahetumṛgāvakīrṇe
saṅkalpanāmakamahājavapakṣiyukte
svāntākhyaghoravīpine carataḥ kṛpābdhe!
śrīśaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.*

Oh Śrī Śaṅkarācārya! as I roam about in the treacherous forest called the inner organ (mind) — (i) abounding in many wild animals in the form of jealousy etc. that cause enormous fear, and (ii) endowed with the bird of (free) will that flies aghast with enormous speed —, kindly, Oh Ocean of supreme Compassion! lift me up and give me the refuge at your holy pair of feet.

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वर्णाश्रमादिपरिपालनसक्तिमाशु
 दत्त्वा दृढां नृपततेरपि भूयसीं च ।
 श्रद्धां श्रुतिस्मृतिततिष्वचलां च लक्ष्मीं
 श्रीशंकरार्यं मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

varṇāśramādi-paripālana-saktim-āśu
dattvā dṛḍhām nṛpatater-api bhūyasīm ca
śraddhām śruti-smṛtitatiṣv-acalāñca lakṣmīm
śrīśaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.

Oh Śrī Śaṅkarācārya! kindly make me (i) firmly interested to follow the duties of *varṇa* (class) and *āśrama* (stage of life), etc., (ii) highly faithful towards the lineage of royal preceptors, (iii) have steadfast faith in the *Vedas* and the *Smṛtis*, and (iv) bounteous being the abode of permanent Lakṣmī (Goddess of fortune). O Śrī Śaṅkara! last but not the least, give me refuge at your holy pair of feet.

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimbhārati
 in the *Śrīśaṅkarācāryapadāvalambastava*

THE ADVENT OF THE SAGE OF KĀNCI

PART I

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE SAGE OF KĀNCĪ*

T.M.P. Mahadevan

1. *Introduction*

Any one who has read the works of Śrī Śaṅkara would certainly want to know what sort of a person the great Master was. In all his extensive writings he nowhere makes any reference to himself. The only isolated passage where one could see an oblique reference relates, not to any detail in personal biography, but to the inwardly-felt experience of the Impersonal Absolute. In this passage which occurs towards the end of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, he observes: "How is it possible for another to deny the realization of *Brahman*-knowledge, experienced in one's heart, while bearing a body?"¹ The reference here is to the plenary experience of *Brahman*, even while living in a body (*jīvanmukti*); and it is evident that the testimony offered here is from Śaṅkara's own experience. The outlines of the story of Śaṅkara's life could be

*Courtesy: Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Śaṅkara Mandir, Secunderabad, 1967.

1. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, IV, i, 15.

gathered only from the *Śaṅkara-vijayas* and other narratives. In spite of varying accounts in regard to some of the details, the image of the Master that one forms from these sources, taking into account also the grand teachings that are to be found in his own works, is that of a great spiritual leader who renounced all worldly attachments even as a boy, who was a prodigy in scriptural lore and wisdom, who spent every moment of his life in the service of the masses of mankind by placing before them, through precept and practice, the ideal of the life divine, and who was a teacher of teachers, the universal *guru*. Even as such a magnificent image is being formed, the doubt may arise in the minds of many: Is it possible that such a great one walked this earth? Is it possible that in a single ascetic frame was compressed several millennia of the highest spiritual human history? This doubt is sure to be dispelled in the case of those who have had the good fortune of meeting His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, the Sixty-eighth in the hallowed line of succession of Śaṅkarācāryas to adorn the Kāmakoti Pīṭha of Kāñcī. Anyone who comes into the august presence of His Holiness cannot but recall to his mind the image of Ādi Śaṅkara, the immaculate sage who was divine and yet human, whose saving grace was universal in its sweep, and whose concern was for all — even for the lowliest and the last. For sixty years Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī has been fulfilling the noble spiritual mission entrusted by Ādi Śaṅkara to his successors bearing his holy name. Numerous are the ways in which he has given the lead for human upliftment through inner awakening. When one considers his life of ceaseless and untiring dedication to the task of stabilizing and

promoting the renascent spirit of India so that humanity may be benefited thereby, one cannot but conclude that it is the unbounded grace of Śaṅkara that has assumed this new form in order to move the world one step higher on the ladder to universal perfection.

2. *Early Life*

‘Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī’ is the *sannyāsa* name given to Svāmināthan when he was barely thirteen. It was on the 20th of May, 1894, that Svāmināthan was born in Viḷuppuram (South Arcot District). His father, Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī, belonged to the Hoysala Karnāṭaka Smārta Brāhmaṇa family which had migrated years earlier to the Tamil country and had settled in Cola-deśa. After passing the Matriculation Examination from the Government School, Kumbhakonam, taking the first place, Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī served as a teacher for some time, and entered the Educational Service. At the time of Svāmināthan’s birth, he was at Viḷuppuram. Svāmināthan’s mother, Mahālakshmī, hailed from a family belonging to Īcchaṅguḍi, a village near Tiruvaivāru. An illustrious and saintly person connected with the family, Raja Govinda Dīkshita of the sixteenth century, was minister to the first Nāyak King of Tañjāvūr; Dīkshita, popularly known as Ayyaṅ, was responsible for many development projects in Cola territory; his name is still associated with a tank, a canal, etc. (Ayyaṅ Canal, Ayyaṅ Kuḷam).

Svāmināthan was the second child of his parents. He was named Svāmināthan after the Deity of the family, Lord Svāminātha of Svāmimalai. Two incidents relating to this early childhood period are recorded by the Ācārya himself in an article contri-

buted to a symposium on *What Life Has Taught Me.*² This is how he has described these incidents:

“A ‘*mara nāy*’ as they call it in Tamil or teddy cat (an animal which generally climbs on trees and destroys the fruits during nights) somehow got into a room in the house and thrust its head into a small copper pot with a neck, which was kept in a sling and contained jaggery. The animal was not able to pull out its head and was running here and there in the room all through the night. People in the house and neighbours were aroused by the noise, and thought that some thief was at his job. But the incessant noise continued even till morning hours, and some bravados armed with sticks opened the door of the room and found the greedy animal. It was roped and tied to a pillar. Some experienced men were brought and after being engaged in a tug-of-war, they ultimately succeeded in removing the vessel from the head of the animal. The animal was struggling for life. It was at last removed to some spot to roam freely, I presume. The first experience of my life was this dreadful ocular demonstration born of greed causing all our neighbours to spend an anxious and sleepless night.

The next experience was a man in the street who entered into the house seeing me alone with tiny golden bangles upon which he began to lay his hands. I asked him to tighten the hooks of the bangles which had become loose and gave a peremptory and authoritative direction to him to bring them back repaired without delay. The man took my orders most obediently and took leave of me with the golden booty. In

2. *What Life Has Taught Me*, Series II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1964, pp. 1.9.

glee of having arranged for repairs to my ornament I speeded to inform my people inside of the arrangement made by me with the man in the street who gave his name as Ponnusvāmi. The people inside hurried to the street to find out the culprit. But the booty had become his property true to his assumed name, Ponnusāmi (master of gold)."

Reflecting on these experiences, the Ācārya observes with characteristic humility: "I am prone to come to the conclusion that there lives none without predominantly selfish motives. But with years rolling on, an impression, that too a superficial one true to my nature, is dawning upon me that there breathe on this globe some souls firmly rooted in morals and ethics who live exclusively for others voluntarily forsaking not only their material gains and comforts but also their own *sādhana* towards their spiritual improvements."

A significant incident occurred in the year 1899. Svāmināthan's father was then serving as a teacher at a school in Porto-novo. He took the boy to Chidambaram for the Kumbhābhishekam of Ilaimaiyākkiṅṅār temple. Ilaimaiyākkiṅṅār it was that, according to a legend, gave salvation to Tirunīlakaṅṅhanāyaṅṅār, one of the sixtythree Śaiva saints whose biographies constitute the theme of Śekkiṅṅār's *Periyapurāṅṅam*. The father and son reached Chidambaram one evening and stayed at the house of Śrī Veṅkaṅṅapati Aiyar, an Inspector of Schools. Svāmināthan was asked by his father to go to sleep after being assured that he would be woken up at night, and taken to the temple to see the procession and have the *darśan* of the Deity. Svāmināthan woke up only next morning, and felt

that his father had disappointed him very much by not waking him up at night and taking him to the temple. He gave expression to his feeling of disappointment to his father. The latter consoled him saying that he himself had not gone to the temple, and added that it was very fortunate that none in the house had gone there. There was a fire accident that night at the temple, and many of those who were inside the temple perished in that great fire. On the same night, Svāmināthan's mother at Porto-novo had dreamt of the fire accident at the Chidambaram temple, and in the early hours of the next day she was very much perturbed imagining that danger might have befallen her husband and child. In a fit of frenzy she came out of the house only to be told by her servant-maid that there had been a gruesome fire accident at the Chidambaram temple. She proceeded towards the railway station to enquire from the people who were returning from Chidambaram about her husband and her son. Her joy knew no bounds when she saw both of them coming out of the railway station. The agony she had experienced in her dream the previous night, and the providential manner in which the father and son were saved from the tragedy should have some mysterious connection.

In the year 1900, Svāmināthan was in the first standard in a school at Chidambaram. Śrī M. Siṅgāra-velu Mudaliyār, the Assistant Inspector of Schools, visited the school on an inspection and discovered in the boy the makings of a genius. He asked him to read the Longman's English Reader prescribed for a higher standard; and Svāmināthan read it remarkably well. At his instance Svāmināthan was promoted to the third standard.

The *upanayanam* of the boy was performed in 1905 at Tiṇḍivanam to which place Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī had been transferred. It is significant that the Sixty-sixth Śaṅkarācārya of Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, who was at the time touring in South Arcot district, sent his blessings; and it was he that later on literally captivated the boy, and chose him as successor to the holy seat; and it is also significant that Svāmināthan came to bear the *sannyāsa* name of the Sixty-sixth Ācārya.

When Svāmināthan was ten years of age, he was admitted in the Second Form in the Arcot American Mission School, Tiṇḍivanam. The prodigy that the boy was, he gave an excellent record of himself at school. He used to carry away many prizes, including the one for proficiency in the Bible studies. The teachers of the school naturally took a great liking for Svāmināthan; they were proud of him and cited him to the other boys as a model student.

In 1906, when Svāmināthan was studying in the Fourth Form, the school was arranging for a dialogue from Shakespeare's *King John*. The teachers who were responsible for fixing the participants in the dialogue could not find a suitable candidate from the age-group fixed for taking on the role of Prince Arthur, the central character in the play. The Head-Master who knew Svāmināthan's extraordinary talents sent for the boy who was only twelve then, and assigned the role to him. After obtaining permission from his parents, Svāmināthan rehearsed his part for only two days, and acquitted himself remarkably well as Prince Arthur in the dialogue, winning the appreciation of the entire audience: the acting was so perfect and the

enunciation of Shakespeare's classical English so accurate. One of Svāmināthan's friends had lent him the attire of a prince and Svāmināthan really looked a prince. Many of the teachers went to Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī's house next day and expressed how greatly they were pleased with Svāmināthan's superb performance.

3. *Ascension to Śrī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha*

We have already referred to the Sixty-sixth Ācārya of Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha, Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī. In 1906 he was camping in the village Perumukkal near Tindivanam and was observing the *cāturmāsya-vrata* there. Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī went to that village along with his family to have the Ācārya's *darśana* and receive his blessing. Svāmināthan saw His Holiness from a distance in a temple during the *viśvarūpa-yātrā*.

His Holiness the Sixty-sixth Ācārya had the Navarātrī Celebrations performed at Marakkāṇam village. After the Navarātrī he was camping at Sāram village situated on the Tindivanam-Madurantakam rail route. Svāmināthan went there with a friend without informing his parents. He offered his homage at the lotus-feet of His Holiness and requested his permission to leave. His Holiness insisted that Svāmināthan should stay there itself. Two pandits attached to the Maṭha also asked Svāmināthan to stay there. But Svāmināthan said that he had to attend school and that he had not informed his parents about his coming over to the Maṭha. Thereupon His Holiness gave him permission to leave. Svāmināthan left for Tiṇḍivanam in a cart belonging to the Maṭha. After

Svāmināthan had left, His Holiness informed the two pandits of the Maṭha his keen desire to install Svāmināthan as his successor to the glorious pontifical seat of Kāñcī.

His Holiness the Sixty-sixth Ācārya attained *siddhi* at Kalavai and Svāmināthan's maternal cousin was installed as the Sixty-seventh Ācārya. He was the only child of Svāmināthan's mother's sister. And, he had lost his father when he was quite young. He studied the *Vedas* at Chidambaram, staying in Svāmināthan's family in the years 1900-1901. After that he was staying along with his mother in the Maṭha itself. When Svāmināthan's parents received the news about his installation to the Pīṭha, Svāmināthan's mother desired to see and console her sister whose only child had become an ascetic. The whole family planned to leave for Kalavai in a cart. But at the last minute, Svāmināthan's father received a telegram from Tiruchi asking him to attend an Education Conference at Tiruchi. And so, before leaving for Tiruchi, he desired the members of his family not to go to Kalavai in the cart because it was not quite safe to travel nearly fifty miles in a cart without proper escort; he asked them to go to Kāñcī by train and from there to Kalavai in a cart.

The epic journey to Kāñcī and Kalavai and the providential manner in which Svāmināthan came to be installed as the Head of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha at a very tender age is recounted by the Ācārya himself in the article *What Life Has Taught Me* already referred to, in the following words:

“In the beginning of the year 1907, when I was studying in a Christian Mission School at Tiṇḍivanam, a town in the South Arcot district, I heard one day that the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha who was amidst us in our town in the previous year, attained *siddhi* at Kalavai, a village about ten miles from Kāñcīpuram. Information was received that a maternal cousin of mine who, after some study in the *Ṛg Veda* had joined the camp of Ācārya offering his services to him, was installed on the Pīṭha.

He was the only son of the widowed and destitute sister of my mother, and there was not a soul in the camp to console her. At this juncture, my father who was a supervisor of schools in the Tiṇḍivanam taluk, planned to proceed with his family to Kalavai, some sixty miles from Tiṇḍivanam in his own touring bullock cart. But on account of an educational conference at Trichinopoly he cancelled the programme.

My mother with myself and other children started for Kalavai to console her sister on her son assuming the *sannyāsa āśrama*. We travelled by rail to Kāñcīpuram and halted at the Śaṅkarācārya Maṭha there. I had my ablution at the Kumara-kosṭatīrtha. A carriage of the Maṭha had come there from Kalavai with persons to buy articles for the Mahā Pūjā on the 10th day after the passing away of the late Ācārya Paramaguru. But one of them, a hereditary *maistry* of the Maṭha asked me to accompany him. A separate cart was engaged for the rest of the family to follow me.

During our journey, the *maistry* hinted to me that I might not return home and that the rest of my life might have to be spent in the Maṭha itself! At first

I thought that my elder cousin having become the Head of the Maṭha, it might have been his wish that I was to live with him. I was then only thirteen years of age and so I wondered as to what use I might be to him in the institution.

But the *maistry* gradually began to clarify as miles rolled on, that the Ācārya, my cousin in the *pūrvāśrama*, had fever which developed into delirium and that was why I was being separated from the family to be quickly taken to Kalavai. He told me that he was commissioned to go to Tiṇḍivanam itself and fetch me, but he was able to meet me at Kāñcīpuram itself. I was stunned with this unexpected turn of events. I lay in a kneeling posture in the cart itself, shocked as I was, repeating RĀMA RĀMA, the only spiritual prayer I knew, during the rest of my journey.

My mother and the other children came sometime later only to find that instead of her mission of consoling her sister, she herself was placed in the state of having to be consoled by someone else!"

Permission for installing Svāmināthan in the great pontifical seat of Kāñcī was obtained from his father through telegram and every arrangement was made as quickly as possible for his installation. Svāmināthan ascended the Śrī Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha on the 13th of February, 1907, as the Sixty-eighth Ācārya, assuming the *sannyāsa* name 'Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī'. His Holiness went in a procession to the *siddhisthala* and performed the *mahā-pūjā* of the Sixty-sixth Ācārya.

From Kalavai the new Ācārya proceeded to Kumbhakonam where the headquarters of the Maṭha

were located. The transfer of the headquarters from Kāñcī to Kumbhakonam had been necessitated by the unsettled political conditions in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam in the eighteenth century during the time of Sixty-second Ācārya. With the passage of time the responsibilities and the functions of the Maṭha increased. It is not a simple monastic institution. The Maṭha has to administer properties endowed for various religious and philanthropic purposes. The headship of such an organization, it is obvious, should be extremely difficult. The administration requires on the part of the Ācārya great spiritual power coupled with worldly wisdom, the ability to fill the status of the *Jagadguru*, as well as minute knowledge of men and matters. It is pertinent to mention here that the paternal grandfather of Svāmināthan, Gaṇapati Śāstrī, was closely connected with the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha as its manager (*sarvādhikārī*) for over fifty years from 1835 onwards. It was under his stewardship that permanent arrangements were made for adequate sources of income to meet the expenses of the Maṭha. The duties of the Maṭha had enormously increased since then. And, the new Ācārya lost no time in getting himself equipped for the tasks awaiting him. For this, he had first to go to the headquarters at Kumbhakonam.

Leaving Kalavai in the same year, *i.e.* 1907, the Ācārya went to Kumbhakonam after making a brief halt at Tiṇḍivanam. One could well imagine what a proud day it should have been for the people of Tiṇḍivanam when they received their own Svāmināthan as the new Ācārya of Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha. The town wore a festive appearance. The teachers of the American Mission School and the former school-fellows

vied with one another in meeting the Ācārya and conversing with him. The Ācārya had a good word for everyone, and spoke tenderly to each one of the teachers. After three days' stay at Tiṇḍivanam, the Ācārya resumed the journey and reached Kumbhakonam in the month of Chitra in the year Plavaṅga.

The head of an Ācārya-Pīṭha is looked upon by the disciples as the spiritual ruler, and is invested with all the regalia associated with a king. The disciples of the Maṭha desired to celebrate the installation of new Ācārya as the head of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha with due ceremony. The installation was performed on a grand scale on Thursday the 9th of May 1907 at the Kumbhakonam Maṭha. Her Highness Jeejambabhai Saheb and Her Highness Ramakumarambha-bhai Saheb, queens of Shivaji of the ruling family of Tanjore sent all the regal paraphernalia for the coronation. The ceremonial *abhisheka* was performed with jasmine flowers. First, the representatives of the Bangāru Kāmākshī, Kāmākshī and Akhilāṇḍesvarī temples performed the *abhisheka*. This was followed by the representatives of the princely family of Tanjore, of the various Zamindars, and of the several aristocratic families. Prominent scholars took an active part in the coronation. Seated on the throne of the Maṭha, the Ācārya blessed all the people assembled there. That night seated in the golden *ambūri* on the regal elephant, sent by the Tanjore ruling family, His Holiness went in a grand procession through the main streets of Kumbhakonam. Thus commenced the Ācārya's spiritual rulership as the *jagadguru*.

4. *The First Tour of Victory (Vijaya-yātrā)*

Tours of victory (*vijaya-yātrā*), in the present context, mean the journeys undertaken by the Ācārya to the different parts of the country to bless the people by his presence, to give them opportunities for participation in the daily *pūjā* performed to Śrī Chandramaulīśvara and Tripurasundarī (Paramesvara and Pārvatī), the presiding deities of the Maṭha, and to impart to them the light of spiritual knowledge and the guidelines for conduct. Wherever the Ācārya goes, the people of that place take the fullest advantage of his presence, celebrate the event as a great festival, listen to his soul-moving discourses in pindrop silence, and find in the very atmosphere a sense of exaltation.

The first tour undertaken by the Ācārya was to Jambukesvaram (Tiruvānaikkā) in 1908. It was here that Ādi Śaṅkara had adorned the Image of the Goddess Akhilāṇḍesvarī with ear-ornaments (*tāṭaṅka*). In 1901 arrangements were made for the *Kumbhābhishekam* of the temple there, after it had been renovated. Our Ācārya was invited by the temple Sthānikas and the authorities to grace the occasion with his presence. The *Kumbhābhishekam* was performed with all solemnity and grandeur. Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Narasiṃha Bhāratī, Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīṅgeri, visited the Temple a day after the *Kumbhābhishekam* was performed. Śrī Subrahmaṇya Bhāratī, Śaṅkarācārya of Śivagaṅga, visited the shrine a few months later.

From Jambukesvaram, our Ācārya proceeded to Ilaiyāttaṅkuḍi in Rāmanāthapuram District, the place where the Sixty-fifth Ācārya of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, Śrī Mahādevendra Sarasvatī, had attained *siddhi*.

On the way, he visited Pudukkottai, and stayed there for some days. At Ilaiyāttan̄kuḍi he offered his homage to his illustrious predecessor at the *adhiṣṭhānam*. From there he returned to Jambukesvaram for his *cāturmāsya*. At the end of the period, he went back to Kumbhakonam after a brief halt at Tañjāvūr. 1909 was a *Mahāmakha* year at Kumbhakonam — an event which occurs every twelfth year. The Maṭha did its part in playing host to the pilgrims. On the day of the festival, it was a feast for the eyes to see the Ācārya go for the ceremonial *bath* in the *mahāmakha* tank. In a grand procession he went, seated in an *ambāri* on the back of an elephant.

5. Study and Training

Our Ācārya was only fifteen years old in 1909. For two years, the learned *paṇḍitas* of the Maṭha imparted to him instruction in Samskrit classics at Kumbhakonam itself. The management of the Maṭha felt that a less congested place than Kumbhakonam — a place which would not be frequented by visiting crowds — would be more suitable for study. Mahendramaṅgalam, a quiet village on the northern bank of the Akhaṇḍa Kāverī, was selected for the purpose; a *parṇaśālā* was put up near the edge of the river. From 1911 to 1914, the Ācārya stayed there studying and receiving the requisite training. It was a strange relation between the teachers and the taught. The teachers were the disciples of the Maṭha. The Ācārya showed the utmost consideration for and respect to the teachers who were entrusted with his training; they too were conscious of the unique honour that was theirs.

Whenever experts in and exponents of musicology met him, he sought to improve his knowledge of this science and art through conversations with them. He used to snatch time to visit the nearby islands in the Kāverī to marvel at the natural scenery. Photographers sometimes took photographs of the natural surroundings. The Ācārya evinced keen interest in the photographic art. Some of the other areas of study of which he gained intimate knowledge are mathematics and astronomy.

In 1914 the Ācārya returned to the Maṭha at Kumbhakonam. He was twenty then. He had acquired by then encyclopaedic knowledge. Whenever scholars went to him, he used to put searching questions relating to their respective fields of study, and thereby gain a lot of information. When he was studying in Kumbhakonam, he made it a point to pay an annual visit to Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-choḷa-puram, and study the inscriptions to be found there and the niceties of temple-architecture. Thus, in a variety of ways the Ācārya equipped himself with the all-round knowledge and ability required for fulfilling the obligations of the leadership of the Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha.

Since the Ācārya had not reached the age of majority, the Maṭha was managed under the direction of the Court of Wards from 1911 to 1915. When the Ācārya completed twenty-one years of age in May 1915, he took over the management of the Maṭha under his direct supervision. But the actual execution of the affairs of the Maṭha was by duly appointed officers and agents. Even in the papers granting powers of attorney to the agents, the Ācārya would not sign — this is in

accordance with custom and usage. Only the official seal of the Maṭha would be affixed.

The Śaṅkara Jayantī Celebrations that year were performed on a grand scale. A new journal '*Arya-dharma*' commenced its publication under the auspices of the Maṭha. In October 1917, the Navarātrī festival was observed at the Maṭha with a new fervour. The poet Subrahmanya Bhāratī wrote in one of his essays praising, in the highest of terms, the manner in which the festival was conducted in the Maṭha. This is the annual festival at which worship is offered to the World-Mother in Her triple manifestations — as Durgā, Lakshmī, and Sarasvatī. Learned *paṇḍitas* came from all over the country to participate in the *sadas*. The foremost exponents of music gave concerts in the presence of the Ācārya. At the conclusion of the festival on the night of the tenth day, the Ācārya went round the town at the head of a huge and colourful procession.

Some of the very first measures taken by the Ācārya for the promotion of classical learning and of social welfare yielded rich results and marked only the beginning of many more to come. Distinguished scholars were honoured by award of titles such as 'Śāstra-ratnākara'. Essay-competitions were held for college students on subjects relating to our *dharma*. Free studentships were instituted for the benefit of deserving students in schools and colleges. A free Āyurvedic dispensary was started in the Maṭha. During the Ācārya's stay in Kumbhakoṇam from 1914 to 1918, almost every evening there were learned assemblies or music concerts. *Paṇḍitas* and *saṅgita-vidvāns* yearned for the Guru's grace. Even professors, scientists, engineers, and administrators went to him for guidance and en-

couragement. The followers of the other faiths found in the Ācārya a deep understanding of their respective doctrines and profound appreciation of every type and grade of spiritual endeavour. Everyone who came into contact with the Ācārya recognized in him the *Jagad-guru*.

6. *All-India Tour (1919-1939)*

The Ācārya's great tour of our sacred land commenced in March 1919. It was a long and strenuous tour; but it was supremely worthwhile because of the opportunities it gave to people all over the country to meet the Ācārya and receive his blessings. The Ācārya never uses any of the modern modes of transport. He mostly walks, and accepts the use of a palanquin only when it is absolutely necessary. An *entourage* accompanies him, consisting of the officials of the Maṭha, *paṇḍitas vaidikas*, servants, and animals such as cows, elephants, etc. Wherever the Ācārya camps, a lot of devotees gather and stay at the camp as long as they can in order to derive the utmost advantage from the Holy Presence. Besides the daily *anuṣṭhāna* and *pūjā*, meeting the devotees, receiving visitors, giving instructions to the people concerned for the conduct of the affairs of the Maṭha and of the many religious and welfare organizations occupy the Ācārya's time each day. He hardly gets two or three hours of rest out of twenty-four. With frugal diet taken in between fasting days, and with so much of pressing work day after day, it is a marvel how the Ācārya meets the demands on his time and attention with absolute serenity and with perfect poise. No one will fail to note that the ideal of the *sthita-prajña* (the sage who has gained steady wisdom) has become actual in the soul-elevating person of the Ācārya.

The long pilgrimage began, as we have seen, in March 1919. During the first three years, the Ācārya visited all the places of pilgrimage — even remote and out of the way villages — in the Tañjāvūr district, the district in which Kumbhakoṇam is situated. The *cātur-māsyā* in 1919 was in Veppattūr village at a distance of five miles to the east of Kumbhakoṇam. During the *cāturmāsyā*, the *sannyāsins* are to stay at one place so that no harm may be caused to insects and other creatures by treading on them when they come out of the ground in the rainy season. The *sannyāsins* camp at one place for four fortnights (*pakshas*); this observance starts on the full-moon day in the month of *Āshāḍha* which is dedicated to the worship of Sage Vyāsa, the author of the *Brahma-sūtra*. The day affords an occasion to the devotees to visit the Ācārya's camp and offer to him their obeisance.

In 1920, on the most auspicious occasion of the *mahodaya*, the Ācārya took the ceremonial bath in the sea at Vedāraṇyam. The *Vyāsapūjā* and *cātur-māsyā* that year were observed in Māyavaram. One day, during the Ācārya's stay at this place, a blind old Muslim gentleman wanted to meet the Ācārya. When the permission was given, the old Muslim's joy knew no bounds. At the command of the Ācārya, he expounded the essential principles of Islam to the assembled audience. And, before taking leave he said that in the person of the Ācārya he found God Himself.

In 1921, there was the *Mahāmakham* festival in Kumbhakoṇam. The Ācārya who was touring in the neighbourhood went to Kumbhakoṇam on the festival day, but not to the Maṭha, for according to

rule he could return to the Maṭha only after completing the *vijaya-yātrā*. A number of Congress volunteers helped in the orderly conduct of the festival. There was a contingent of Khilafat volunteers also. They went to Paṭṭīsvaram to pay their respects to His Holiness. The Ācārya spoke in appreciative terms about their services and blessed them. One of the leading nationalists of the day, Subrahmaṇyaśiva, met the Ācārya at his Paṭṭīsvaram camp, and asked for his benediction for the liberation of the Motherland from foreign rule and for the spread of devotion to God among the people. The Ācārya readily gave his benediction and said that those laudable objectives would be fulfilled. It may be mentioned here that right from the year 1918 when the Khādi movement came into prominence, the Ācārya has been wearing Khādi.

During this tour of the Tañjāvūr District, the Ācārya was one day going from one village to another, when he saw about two hundred Harijans waiting for his *darśana*, after having bathed, putting on clean clothes and wearing *vibhūti* on their foreheads. The Ācārya spent sometime with them, made kind enquiries about their welfare, and gave them new clothes. Similar events have occurred very often during the Ācārya's journeys. His concern for the poor is great and unlimited, and he never fails to exhort the better-placed sections of society to go to their succour, and asks the Maṭha to set an example in this direction. The Ācārya visited Rāmeśvaram and collected a small quantity of sand for consigning it later on in the waters of the Gaṅgā, which act is symbolic of the spiritual unity of India.

After touring in the districts of Rāmanāthapuram, Madurai, and Tirunelveli, the Ācārya went to Jambukesvaram. This time it was for the *tāṭaṅka-pratishthā*. Mention has been made of the Ācārya's earlier visit to this sacred place in 1908, and of the fact that the Image of Akhilāṅḍesvarī bears the *tāṭaṅkas* consecrated by Ādi Śaṅkara. In those early times, according to legend, the Image was manifesting the Goddess's fierce aspect. Śaṅkara changed this state of affairs and enabled the beneficent aspect to express itself by adorning the Image with a pair of ear-ornaments (*tāṭaṅkas*) made in the shape of *Śrī-cakra*. When the ornaments fall into disrepair periodically, they are set right and refixed. This task is the sacred responsibility of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha; and it is the Head of the Pīṭha that has the ornaments re-fixed. In 1846, the then Ācārya of the Pīṭha had this ceremony performed. Now, again, in 1923, arrangements were made for the refixing of the *tāṭaṅkas*. Our Ācārya went to Jambukesvaram for participation in this function. It was a great occasion for devotees to gather and pay their homage. Every detail of the ceremony was attended to with meticulous care. Opportunity was availed of for declaring open the renovated Maṭha of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha there. A Veda-pāṭhasālā and centre for scriptural learning started functioning at the Maṭha. It is interesting to note that the late Sri M. Visvesvarayya of Mysore said at a meeting in Tiruchi when he visited that town in 1923, that it was at the Kāmakoṭi Maṭha in Jambukesvaram that he had his *upanayanam* performed.

After the *tāṭaṅka-pratishthā* ceremony, the Ācārya resumed his journey. One of the places he immedia-

tely visited was Nerūr where the *adhishṭhāna* of Sadāsiva-brahmendra is situated. Born in Tiruvisainallūr near Kumbhakoṇam, Sadāsiva-brahmendra soon become a *jīvanmukta*, roamed about on the banks of the *Kāverī* as an *avadhūta*, and showered his blessings on several people of his time. Śrī Paramasivendra Sarasvatī was his *vidyā-guru*. Sadāsiva has written many Advaita works, and has also composed devotion-filled *kīrtanas*. Our Acārya spent several hours each day in the *adhishṭhāna* of Śadāsiva-brahmendra during the time he spent in Nerūr, quietly contemplating on the many benefits that had accrued as a result of Sadāsiva-brahmendra's exemplary life and precious teachings.

After Nerūr, the Ācārya was camping in the village Kuḷumaṇi near Tiruchi. One day, a prominent gentleman of Tiruchi, Sri F. G. Natesa Aiyar, who had himself lived twenty years of his life earlier as a convert to Christianity, brought along with him a young man from Kerala who had gone to Tiruchi with the intention of getting himself converted to Christian faith. The Ācārya engaged the young man in conversation on that day as well as on the subsequent few days. He explained to the youth the essentials of Hindu-dharma. It was all-comprehensive; the spiritual paths taught in the other religions were all to be found in Hinduism. It had its own additional advantages. There was no reason whatsoever for any one to leave Hinduism and embrace any other faith. The young man from Kerala was thoroughly convinced of the excellence of the faith he was born in; and he went back home revoking his earlier resolve.

The Ācārya's visit to different places in Cheṭṭināḍu and Pudukkoṭṭai State lasted about a year. During this period, many *paṇḍitas*, political workers, and nationalist leaders met the Ācārya and received his blessings. In 1925, Dr. U. V. Swāminātha Aiyar, the world-renowned scholar in Tamil, was awarded the title 'Dākshiṇātya-kalānidhi'. In those days whenever he happened to be near the camp, he would witness the *pūjā* performed by the Ācārya. Recalling an earlier experience of his, he said once, "When I was eighteen years old, I met the Sixty-fifth Ācārya, Śrī Mahādevendra Sarasvatī and watched his unique *Siva-pūjā*. It is the same experience I am now having, again." During the Ācārya's Cheṭṭināḍu visit, a great *Siva-bhakta*, Vaināgaram Rāmanāthan Cheṭṭiyār similarly enjoyed attending the *pūjā*, and meeting the Ācārya. The people of Cheṭṭināḍu organised a grand procession at Kaḍiyāpaṭṭi. During the procession the Ācārya looked out for Rāmanāthan Cheṭṭiyār, but he could not be seen. At the conclusion of the procession, the Ācārya enquired as to where Cheṭṭiyār was. Cheṭṭiyār who was standing at a distance in the crowd responded. Asked as to why he was not to be found in the procession, he replied with great elation that he had the privilege that night of being one of the Ācārya's palanquin-bearers. Another eminent scholar who was honoured by the Ācārya during his sojourn in Cheṭṭināḍu was Śrī Paṇḍitamaṇi M. Kadiresan Cheṭṭiyār who was proficient in both Tamil and Samskrit. The Ācārya and Paṇḍitamaṇi exchanged views about the ancient classical Tamil texts as also about the measures that were needed for promoting the study of Tamil and Samskrit.

Among the politicians and nationalist leaders who met the Ācārya during this period were: Śrī C. R. Dās, along with Śrī S. Satyamūrti and Śrī A. Ranga-swami Aiyangar, and Śrī Jamnalal Bajaj along with Śrī C. Rajagopalachari, and others. The latter group met the Ācārya in 1926 at Jambukesvaram. Śrī C. Rajagopalachari was staying out, sending in Śrī Jamnalal Bajaj. The Ācārya sent for Śrī C. Rajagopalachari and asked him why he had not come in. When the latter replied that the reason was that he had not bathed that day, the Ācārya told him that those who were engaged in national work might not find the necessary time for daily bath, etc., and that Śrī C. Rajagopalachari who had dedicated his life for the service of the nation could meet him at any time, and in any condition. The Ācārya made it clear to the politicians and political leaders that he, as a *sannyāsin*, would not identify himself with party politics of any brand; but he was free to ask them all to keep the good of the people always at heart and to work towards its achievement, and also to do all they could to strengthen faith in God.

An incident which occurred in 1926 deserves special mention. The Ācārya was proceeding to Paṭṭukkoṭṭai from Karambakkudi. Among the people who saw the Ācārya off at the latter place, there were some Muslims also. One of the Muslims followed the party, touching the palanquin with his hands as a mark of respect. After about three miles of the journey, the Ācārya stopped, and called for the Muslim gentleman and made kind enquiries. The Muslim placed before the Ācārya some personal matters for his advice and guidance, and then offered

some verses of praise he had composed along with flowers and fruit. At the command of the Ācārya, the Muslim read out those verses and explained their meaning also. When taking leave he expressed his joy in these words: "To my eyes the Ācārya appears as the embodiment of Allah Himself. The Ācārya's *darśana* is enough for a man who wants to get liberation from worldly bondage."

In July 1926, the Ācārya went to Uḍaiyār-pālaiyam, a Zamindāri closely associated with Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha. When the transfer of the headquarters of the Maṭha from Kāñcī to Kumbhakoṇam was being made in the eighteenth century, the then chief of the Zamindārī had rendered all assistance to the Sixty-second Ācārya. Since that time the ruling family had been closely associated with Kāñcī and Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha. Hence, it was a great occasion for Uḍaiyār-pālaiyam when our Ācārya visited it in 1926. The Zamindār, his family, and the people accorded to the Ācārya a magnificent reception, and valuable presents were made to the Maṭha to mark the occasion.

When the Ācārya was camping at Tiruppādirip-puliyūr, an old lady who was a scholar in Tamil, and national worker came for his *darśana*. Achalāmbikai was her name. She had composed a narrative poem on the life of Mahātmā Gāndhi. She had known the Ācārya as a child in his *pūrvāśrama*; and had also studied under the Ācārya's father. Tears of joy streamed from her eyes when she now beheld the son of her teacher shine as the *Jagadguru*.

There is a place called Vaḍavāmbalam on the northern bank of South Peṇṇār where a Pūrva Ācārya

of the Kāmakoti Pīṭha had his *samādhi*. At our Ācārya's wish the *samādhi* which had been obliterated was reconstructed, and arrangements were made for regular worship there.

At Pondicherry, the officials of the French Government and the people gave the Ācārya a royal welcome. During his stay there, the shocking news of the destruction of the famous temple-car at Tiruvārūr as a result of incendiarism arrived. The *āstikas* of the district of Tañjāvūr rose as one man and resolved to build a new car. The Ācārya blessed the effort; and through his blessing a new car equalling the old in magnificence was built in two years' time. One Īḷulūr Subbarāya Vādhyār took a leading part in this laudable effort. Later on, he became a *sannyāsin* bearing the name, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Brahmānanda; even as a *sannyāsin* he did great service in renovating old temples and performing *kumbhābhishekams*.

In March 1927, the Ācārya went to Salem and toured in the district. At Erode, a Muslim gentleman offered a few verses in Samskrit which he had composed in praise of the Ācārya. The letters of the verses were written in small squares which together formed the figure of the Śiva-liṅga. In the presence of the Ācārya, the Muslim scholar read out the verses and explained their meaning. When the Ācārya asked him as to how he had mastered the language to such an extent as to be able to compose verses, he replied that his forbears were scholars in Samskrit, and that he himself had studied the language under his own father. The Ācārya complimented him on the proficiency he had attained in Samskrit and advised him to keep up his studies.

After visiting Coimbatore in April 1927, the Ācārya, arrived in Pālghāṭ in the first week of May. Kerala which had given birth to Ādi Śaṅkara was now jubilant at the visit of an illustrious successor in whose life and mission the greatness of the Ādi-Guru was luminously reflected. The Ācārya spoke to the śiṣyas in Malayālam. The people who listened to him mistook him for a Keralīya. It was during the Ācārya's Pālghāṭ visit that Śrī T.M. Krishnaswami Aiyar, a leading Advocate of Madras who later served as Chief Judge of Travancore, met the Guru with a party of devotees and conducted Tiruppugaḷ Bhajana. The Ācārya was greatly pleased with the devotion and the music, and blessed the leader by conferring on him the title 'Tiruppugaḷ-maṇi'.

In the latter half of 1927, Mahātmā Gāndhi was touring the South. He had heard about the Sage of Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, and wanted very much to meet him. The meeting took place at Nallicheri in Pālghāṭ. They met in a cattle-shed in the Ācārya's camp. It was a unique experience for the Mahātmā. Here was an authentic successor of Ādi Śaṅkara, dressed in a piece of ochre cloth made of Khādi, and seated on the floor. The Ācārya too appreciated the occasion provided for getting to know at first hand the leader of the nation who had adopted voluntarily the mode of a simple peasant's life. The Ācārya conversed in Samskrit, and the Mahātmā in Hindi. The conversation took place in a most cordial atmosphere. On taking leave of the Ācārya, the Mahātmā gave expression to the immense benefit he had derived from this unique meeting. How profoundly he was drawn to the Ācārya will be evident from a small incident that

occurred during the interview. It was 5-30 in the evening. Śrī C. Rajagopalachari went inside the cattle-shed and reminded the Mahātmā about his evening meal; for the Mahātmā would not take any food after 6 O'clock. The Mahātmā made this significant observation to Śrī C. Rajagopalachari: "The conversation I am having now with the Ācārya is itself my evening meal for to-day."

The Ācārya visited several places in Kerala, including Guruvāyūr, Tīruchūr, Erṇākuḷam, Quilon, and Trivandrum. The States of Cochin and Travancore accorded to the Ācārya the highest veneration. At Allepy the Ācārya paid a visit to the Śrī Candrasekharendra Pāṭhasālā, and blessed the pupils of the school. At Cape Comorin, he worshipped at the Kanyā Kumārī temple after a bath in the confluence of the seas. After completing the Kerala tour, he proceeded northwards again. At Madurai, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru of Allahabad met the Ācārya and sought his blessings for the effort he was making to convene an All Parties' Conference, in order to impress on the British Government that it should not ignore the demands of the nationalist forces. The Ācārya told Sir Sapru that the urgent need in India was for achieving the good of the people through peaceful means, and that any effort in that direction had his good wishes.

In February 1929, the Ācārya began his tour of the South Arcot district. The *cāturmāsya* that year was observed in Maṅalūrpeṭṭai. For about a month the Ācārya was having fever. In utter neglect of the state of his body, he performed the daily worship,

taking his usual bath. In due course the fever left, relieving the devotees of their great anxiety.

During the present tour, the Ācārya was passing through Taṇḍalam village. A cowherd of the place wanted to sell his small holding and give the proceeds as his offering to the Ācārya. The Ācārya dissuaded him from doing so; but the devotee would not go back on his resolve. He actually sold his piece of land to a rich man of the place and made his heart-offering to the Ācārya. The Ācārya, however, did not like that the cowherd should become a destitute. He, therefore, arranged through the local Tahsildar for the allotment of sufficient piece of *puramboke* land to the cowherd.

In December 1929, the Ācārya went to Tiruvaṅṅāmalai for the *Dīpam* festival. Tiruvaṅṅāmalai is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage. The holy hill Aruṅāchala is itself worshipped as a Śivaliṅga. According to *Purāṇa* it was here that the Lord Śiva appeared as a column of light whose top and bottom Brahmā and Viṣṇu could not discover. And, it was here that Pārvatī acquired half of Śiva's body and as a consequence the Lord became Ardhanārīśvara. Saint Aruṅagirināthar had his vision of Subrahmaṇya here, and became the bard who sang the *Tiruppugal*. The *samādhi* of Iḍaikkāṭṭu Siddhar is said to be within the precincts of the great temple of Aruṅācalesvara. In our own time Tiruvaṅṅāmalai became the hallowed residence of Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi. Once a year on the full-moon day in the month of Kṛittikā, just at sun-down, a beacon is lit at the top of the sacred hill signifying that Śiva is worshipped at Tiruvaṅṅāmalai in the form of light and fire. This is

known as the *Dīpam* festival. Our Ācārya visited the sacred place during this festival in 1929, staying there for about a month, walking round the hill several times, and worshipping at the temple.

The next place to be visited was Aḍaiyapalam near Āraṇi. It was here the famous Appaya Dīkshita had lived about four centuries earlier. Dīkshita was a great Advaitin as well as an ardent Śaiva. He was a polymath who wrote several classical works. The Ācārya reminded the people of Aḍaiyapalam of the great service rendered by Dīkshita to Advaita and Śaivism, and asked them to observe the birth-anniversary of this eminent teacher and to arrange for popularising his works.

In December 1930, at Tirukkaḷukkunṅam (Pakshī-tīrtham), an address of welcome was presented to the Ācārya on behalf of the All-India Sādhu Mahāsaṅgham. The address referred in glowing terms to the invaluable service that the Ācārya was doing to Hindu *dharma* and society, both through precept and practice, following faithfully the grand tradition of Ādi Śaṅkara. In January 1931, the town of Chingleput had the privilege of receiving the Ācārya — the privilege to which the people of the town had been looking forward for a long time.

A notable event that took place during the Ācārya's sojourn in Chingleput was the visit of Mr Paul Brunton, a noted British writer, journalist, and spiritual seeker. Mr Brunton was on an extensive tour of India looking out for contact with mystics, Yogins, and spiritual leaders. It was the desire for

*A Search in Secret India*³ that had brought him to this country from far off England. While in Madras, he met Śrī K. S. Venkataramani, the talented author in English of essays and novels on village life. It was Śrī Venkataramani that took Mr Brunton to Chingleput for an interview with the Ācārya. Through his personal representation to the Ācārya, he succeeded in securing for the English visitor an audience with the Ācārya. The beatific face and the glowing eyes of the Sage produced at once an experience of exaltation in the visiting aspirant. Mr Brunton looked at the Ācārya in silence, and was struck with what he saw. Referring to this memorable meeting, he wrote later in his book, "His noble face, pictured in grey and brown, takes an honoured place in the long portrait gallery of my memory. That elusive element which the French aptly term *spirituel* is present in his face. His expression is modest and mild, the large dark eyes being extraordinarily tranquil and beautiful. The nose is short, straight and classically regular. There is a rugged little beard on his chin, and the gravity of his mouth is most noticeable. Such a face might have belonged to one of the saints who graced the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, except that this one possesses the added quality of intellectuality. I suppose we of the practical West would say that he has the eyes of a dreamer. Somehow, I feel in an inexplicable way that there is something more than mere dreams behind those heavy lids."⁴

3. This is the title of a book he later on published, giving an account of his search (Rider & Company, London, 1934). Sir Francis Younghusband says in his Foreword, "Sacred India" would be as apt a title for this book.

4. *A Search in Secret India*, p. 90.

Mr Brunton put to the Ācārya questions about the world, the improvement of its political and economic conditions, disarmament, etc. In his own characteristic way, the Ācārya probed behind the questions and explained how the inward transformation of man was the pre-condition of a better world.

“If you scrap your battleships and let your cannons rust, that will not stop war. People will continue to fight, even if they have to use sticks!”

“Nothing but spiritual understanding between one nation and another, and between rich and poor, will produce goodwill and thus bring real peace and prosperity.”

The Indian attitude towards life and the world, according to the critics, is one of pessimism. But that this view is utterly wrong is borne out by the answer which the Ācārya gave to one of Mr Brunton's questions.

Mr Brunton: “Is it your opinion, then, that men are becoming more degraded?”

The Ācārya: “No, I do not think so. There is an indwelling divine soul in man which, in the end must bring him back to God. Do not blame people so much as the environments into which they are born. Their surroundings and circumstances force them to become worse than they really are. That is true of both the East and West. Society must be brought into tune with a higher note.”

Mr Brunton does not fail to make a note of the universalistic and catholic vision of the Ācārya. “I am

quick to notice," he writes, "that Śrī Śaṅkara does not decry the West in order to exalt the East, as so many in his land do. He admits that each half of the globe possesses its own set of virtues and vices, and that in this way they are roughly equal! He hopes that a wiser generation will fuse the best points of Asiatic and European civilizations into a higher and balanced social scheme."

Adverting to the purpose for which he had come to India, Mr Brunton asked if the Ācārya would recommend anyone who could serve as his spiritual preceptor, or if the Ācārya himself would be his guide. "I am at the head of a public institution," said the Ācārya, "a man whose time no longer belongs to himself. My activities demand almost all my time. For years I have spent only three hours in sleep each night. How can I take personal pupils? You must find a master who devotes his time to them."

It was as directed by the Ācārya that Mr Brunton went to Tiruvaṅṅāmalai and found the Master he had been in quest of, in Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi. Already a devotee of the Maharshi had told Mr Brunton in Madras about the Sage of Aruṅāchala. Mr Brunton was not keen then, because he thought that the Maharshi might turn out to be another Yogī like the ones he had met earlier in this country. But now, it was different. The Ācārya himself had asked him not to leave South India before he had met the Maharshi.

After the interview at Chingleput, Mr Brunton returned to his residence in Madras. That night he saw the Ācārya in a vision. There was a sudden awakening. The room was totally dark. He became

conscious of some bright object. He immediately sat up and looked straight at it. This is what he writes:

“My astounded gaze meets the face and form of His Holiness Śrī Śaṅkara. It is clearly and unmistakably visible. He does not appear to be some ethereal ghost, but rather a solid human being. There is a mysterious luminosity around the figure which separates it from the surrounding darkness.

“Surely the vision is an impossible one? Have I not left him at Chingleput? I close my eyes tightly in an effort to test the matter. There is no difference and still I see him quite plainly!

“Let it suffice that I receive the sence of a benign and friendly presence. I open my eyes and regard the kindly figure in the loose yellow robe.

The face alters, for the lips smile and seem to say:

“Be humble and then you shall find what you seek!”

“The vision disappears as mysteriously as it has come. It leaves one feeling exalted, happy and unperturbed by its supernormal nature. Shall I dismiss it as a dream? What matters it?”

From Chingleput, the Ācārya went to Kāñcī, the seat of the headship of the Pīṭha. The ceremonial entry into the holy city was made on Sunday the 25th of January, 1931. The city wore a festive appearance that day, the citizens offered to the Ācārya a reveren-

tial and enthusiastic welcome. Kāñcī is the city of temples par excellence. The temple of Śrī Kāmākshī occupies the central place. Ādi Śaṅkara installed the Śrī Chakra in this temple. In the inner *prākāra*, there is a shrine for Śaṅkara with a life-size image. Tradition has it that he ascended the *Sarvajña Pīṭha* and attained *siddhi* in Kāñcī. There are sculptured representations of Śaṅkara in many of the temples including those of Śrī Ekāmreśvara and Śrī Varadarāja. For several centuries past the management of the Kāmākshī temple was being carried on under the general supervision of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha. In 1840 the Sixty-fourth Ācārya, Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, performed the *kumbhābhisheka*. The very next year, the British Government in India arranged for the taking over of the direct management of the Temple by the Maṭha itself. During our Ācārya's stay in Kāñcī in 1931, he made arrangements for the renovation of the temple and for the proper and regular conduct of the daily worship.

Leaving Kāñcī towards the end of April 1931, the Ācārya visited Uttiramerūr which is a place of historical importance as there are inscriptions there regarding the ancient democratic institutions. Another great place in Chingleput district to which the Ācārya went was Śrīperumbūdūr, the birth-place of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. In a discourse which he gave at the Śrī Ādikesava Perumāḷ Temple, he explained the significance of the verse in Pushpadanta's *Śivamahimna-stotra* in which the various religious paths are compared to the different rivers joining the same ocean, and the differences in approach to God are attributed to the differences in taste.

The *cāturmārya* in 1931 was in Chittoor. After that the tour was resumed. While the Ācārya was camping in Āraṇi, a party of about two hundred volunteers of the Indian National Congress wanted to have his *darśana*. Those were the peak days of the struggle for freedom. The British Government would come down upon anyone who showed any hospitality to the volunteers. Therefore, the officials of the Maṭha were hesitant in the matter of receiving the volunteers. When the Ācārya was informed of the intention of the volunteers, he immediately asked the officials to admit them and arrange for their hospitality. He made individual enquiries of the members of the party and gave to each one of them *vibhūti-prasāda*.

In March 1932, the Ācārya went to Kālahasti for the *Mahā-śiva-rātri*. During his stay there, he walked round the Kailāsa hill, a distance of about thirty miles along difficult forest paths. From Kālahasti, the Ācārya proceeded to Tirupati and Tirumalai; vast concourses of people listened to his daily discourses in chaste Telugu. Among other places in Chittoor district, the Ācārya visited Venkaṭagiri and Nagari. In Nagari, the Ācārya was presiding over a discussion on Vedānta among scholars, one day. The Manager of the Maṭha received a telegram from Kumbhakoṇam carrying the sad news of the passing away of the Ācārya's Mother on the 14th of June 1932. As the Manager was approaching the Ācārya with the telegram in his hand, the Ācārya enquired if it had come from Kumbhakoṇam, to which the Manager replied 'Yes'. The Ācārya made no further enquiry, but asked the Manager to get back. He remained silent for

some time,* and then asked the assembled scholars: "What should a *sannyāsin* do when he hears of the passing away of his mother?" Guessing what had happened, the scholars were deeply distressed and could not say anything. The Ācārya got up and walked to a water-falls at a distance of two miles followed by a great number of people chanting the Lord's name. He took his bath, the others too did the same. The passing away of the Mother of the *Jagad-guru* was felt as a personal loss by everyone of the *śishyas*.

There is a spot of natural beauty near Nagari, called Buggā. In the same temple here, there are the shrines of Kāsī Visvanātha and Prayāga Mādhava. A perennial river flows by the temple; and five streams feed the river. Commencing from the 17th of July 1932, the Ācārya observed the *cāturmāsya* at this fascinating place. During his stay there, the temple was renovated and *kumbhābhishekam* was performed on a grand scale. A large number of devotees from Madras went to Buggā and invited the Ācārya to the Presidency City. *En route* to Madras the Ācārya visited Tiruttani and the famous Subrahmaṇya shrine there.

Before we follow the Ācārya to Madras, let us record here the epic of a faithful and devoted dog. Since 1927, a dog was following the retinue of the Maṭha. It was a strange dog — an intelligent animal

6. The Ācārya's father, Śrī Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī passed away in Kumbhakoṇam on the 24th of July 1929. When the news was conveyed to the Ācārya he remained silent for some time, and said nothing.

without the least trace of uncleanness. It would keep watch over the camp during the nights. It would eat only the food given to it from the Maṭha. The Ācārya would therefore enquire every evening if the dog had been fed. When the camp moved from one place to another, the dog would follow, walking underneath the palanquin, and when the entourage stopped so that the devotees of the wayside villages could pay their homage, it would run to a distance and watch devoutly from there, only to rejoin the retinue when it was on the move again. One day, a small boy hit the dog; and the dog was about to retaliate, when the officials of the Maṭha, in fear, caused the dog to be taken to a distance of twentyfive miles blindfolded and left there in a village. But strange as it may seem, the dog returned to where the Ācārya was even before the person who had taken it away could return. From that day onwards the dog would not eat without the Ācārya's *darśana*, and stayed till the end of its life with the Maṭha.

The citizens of Madras had the great privilege of receiving the Ācārya on the 28th of September, 1932. During the four months' stay of the Ācārya in the city, the people felt in their life a visible change for the better. In their crowds they flocked to the camp at the Madras Samskrit College and later in the different parts of the city, and drank deep of the elevating presence and the soul-moving speeches of the Ācārya. On the first night, there was a huge and colourful procession terminating at the Samskrit College. Seated in a decorated palanquin, the Ācārya showered his blessings on the people. Śrī K. Bāsubrahmaṇya Aiyar and other devotees had made all arrangement for the Ācārya's stay at the Samskrit College, founded by

Śrī Balasubrahmanya Aiyar. A discourse-hall for studying the Śāṅkara-bhāṣya on the Vijayadaśami day was built, for which the Ācārya himself gave the name, Bhāshya-vijaya-maṅṭapa.

The Corporation of Madras wanted very much to present the Ācārya with an address of welcome. Śrī T. S. Ramaswami Aiyar was then the Mayor. Moving the resolution to present an address, Śrī A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar referred to the fact that that was the first occasion when the Corporation would be presenting an Address to a religious leader, paid his tribute to the Ācārya, saying that he was held in great esteem not only by the Hindus but also by the followers of other religions, and hoped that the resolution would be passed unanimously. The resolution was passed with acclaim by the entire House. But when the invitation was conveyed to the Ācārya, he politely declined as it would not be proper for him to associate himself directly with a secular function at the Corporation Buildings.

The *navarātri* in 1932 was celebrated at the Samskrit College. During this *pūjā* festival, the Ācārya fasts and observes silence on all the nine days. Women are honoured with offerings of gifts, as they are manifestations of Parā Śakti (the Great Mother of the World). And, ceremonial *pūjā* is performed to girls, commencing with two-year old on the first day and ending with a ten-year old on the last day. This is what is known as *kanyā-pūjā*. Along with the recitation of the *Vedas*, *pārāyaṇam* of the *Devī-bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Gītā* and other texts, the *Chaṇḍī* and Śrī-Vidyā homas are performed during the festival. Thousands of people participated in the *navarātri* festival at the Samskrit Collage and received the Ācārya's benedictions.

(to be continued)

ADORATION TO LORD VIṢṆU

ध्येयं वदन्ति शिवमेव हि केचिदन्ये
 शक्तिं गणेशमपरे तु दिवाकरं वै ।
 रूपैस्तु तैरपि विभासि यतस्त्वमेव
 तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शङ्खपाणे ॥

*dhyeyam vadanti śivameva hi kecidanye
 śaktim gaṇeśamapare tu divākaram vai
 rūpaistu tairapi vibhāsi yatastvameva
 tasmāttvameva śaraṇam mama śaṅkhapāṇe.*

Some people hold that the Lord to be meditated upon is Lord Śiva; others hold that Goddess Śakti is to be meditated upon; a few others hold that the deity to be meditated upon is Lord Gaṇeśa, and others hold that the Sun is to be meditated upon. Oh Lord Viṣṇu holding the conch (*śaṅkha*) in your hand! since you shine through all the above forms, I seek you alone as my support.

(*Hariśaraṇāṣṭaka*, 1)

PART II

FROM THE DISCOURSES OF
THE SAGE OF KĀNCĪ

THE SWGE OF KYŨCI
FROM THE DISCOURSES OF
PART II

HINDU DHARMA*

Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

There are ever so many religions in this world. Each has a separate name of its own to distinguish it from the others. All these names are personal and are derived from the founders of the respective faiths. Thus Buddhism takes its name from its founder, Lord Buddha, Jainism from Jina, Muhammadanism from Prophet Muhammad, Christianity from Jesus Christ, Zoroastrianism (the religion of the Parsees) from its founder Zoroaster, and the Chinese religion, Confucianism, from its propounder, Confucius. No doubt all these founders of new religions have been great men possessing the power to attract many men to their way of thinking. Thus every other religion has a distinctive name of its own on the above lines. But if you ask a youngster belonging to our religion what religion he professes, he would, if he happens to have received a little English education, at once reply that he belongs to the Hindu religion. On the other

* Courtesy: Hindu Samaya Manram, Kanchipuram-2.

hand if we ask our peasants about the name of our religion, they would be at a loss to give a common name to it. If we put the same query to those employed in writing negotiable documents in the South of India, they would describe themselves as they do at the top of these documents, as belonging to the Śaivite or the Vaiṣṇavite cult. These are really sub-divisions in our faith and cannot be taken as representing the whole of it; but even these names are not derived from those of any historic personages but merely follow the names of the respective divine forms selected for personal worship. If Hinduism is really the name of our religion, it should have been known and described as such even during the period of our remote forefathers. But it would appear that to our ancestors of even a few centuries back, the name Hinduism would have been a strange and meaningless term. It is so because ours is a religion without a name.

No doubt the sub-divisions in our faith go by certain specific names. These again take their names only after the various forms of the one Almighty selected for *upāsana* and not after human beings. For the general faith however it would be difficult to find a common name. Of late a name has been much in use *viz.*, Sanātana Dharma, but even this cannot be said to be the strictly traditional name of our religion, for in that case it should be known as such to the poor peasant and to the humble widow, as in the case of the followers of other man-made religions. But such is not the case.

The term Hinduism is really a name somebody has presented us with. We can find in History a clue as to how this term came to be coined. Our forefathers

were once the inhabitants of the region watered by the river Sindhu (the modern Indus) which, to some foreigners who came into contact with us was known as Indus. From this they christened the land in which this river flowed as the Indu Deśa or 'the land of the Indus'. Naturally and in course of time they applied this name to the entire Bhāratavarṣa of which the part watered by Sindhu formed but a slice.

Again, every religion has some distinguishing symbol which at once marks it off from the others. The cross of the Christians is one such example. The Hindus on the other hand, have no apparent symbol to point to as being common to all of them. As we are without a name, even so we are without a common symbolising badge. Ours, therefore, appears to be a religion without a name and a distinguishing mark! For instance, some of us wear the sacred ash, while others wear the "Viṣṇupāda" on their foreheads. Some among us are "Vīra Vaiṣṇavas" and an equal number, the "Liṅgāyats" and similar others, are "Vīra Śaivas". All these, however, have the consciousness that they are the adherents of one common religion.

The real grandeur of our faith consists in its being nameless. The need for names for an article arises only when there are many of that type so that each could, in some way, be distinguished from the others. But if there is one and one only of that article, why need a name for it? To take a concrete instance, if there are, say, four Rāmasvāmis or Mukerjis, in a village we must give them different initial of personal names to tell the one from the other or otherwise distinguish between them by calling one of them,

Rāmasvāmi or Mukerji, the dark, another of them, Rāmasavāmi or Mukerji, the fair, and so forth. If there be only one Mukerji or Rāmasvāmi, there is hardly any further naming required.

Even so, with our religion. What is religion? It is that which shows us the way out of this miserable cycle of births and deaths or in other words sins and sorrows. It was pointed out at the outset that other religions are known by the names of their respective founders. These religions therefore did not exist before the rise of these great personages. Specific dates are assigned to every such religion. It naturally follows that ours is a religion which existed before all these other faiths were born. Thus should it have existed at a time when it was the only religion in the world, administering to the spiritual needs of the humanity as a whole. This then explains our religion not having had a specific original name, as there was no second religion from which this name should distinguish it. It was merely the Dharma — a word synonymous with Religion.

It would appear then that its having no specific name is itself a distinctive symbol. Although the religion has no distinguishing name of its own there is a common basis — *viz., the faith in the final authority of the Vedas i.e., "Veda Prāmānyam," in spiritual matters.* This is also implied in the saying current in some of our mother tongues that makes the *Vedas* a simile for authoritativeness!

Because of their unshakable authority as the eternal divine laws even persons who were ordained by them as ineligible to utter the Vedic *mantras*, as part

of the Vedic duties, reverentially obeyed the teachings. The question then arises that, if ours was the only religion prevalent at the time, were our religious principles observed by all the inhabitants of the world? We can now give plenty of instances to show that the reply to this question is in the affirmative.

For instance, one of the charges against Jesus which made the Jews crucify him was that Jesus drank water from a well intended for the lower classes. Does this not imply the existence of a caste system even before Jesus's time?

Again an inscription unearthed in *Egypt*, dated 1280 B. C. contains the terms of a treaty between Rameses II and the Hittites. In this treaty the Vedic deity, "*Maitravaruna*", has curiously enough been cited as the witness! (See H.R. Hall's "*Ancient History of the Near East*"—pp. 364 *et seq.*) Besides, in the ancient Egyptian Chronology, we find a series of kings bearing the name of Rāma as for example, Rameses I, Rameses II, Rameses III, etc.

In the island of *Madagascar* off the Eastern coast of South Africa, as many as seventy-five percent of the names of places happen to be Sankrit names. Most of them are akin to the name of the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

We are all aware of the *Great Sahara Desert* in Northern Africa. There is a theory that all deserts once formed the beds of the seas or *Sāgaras*. Is the suggestion far-fetched, that the modern name, Sahara, is a corruption of the Sanskrit "*Sāgara*"? It is said that while the Sahara was under water there was a

thick population around its banks and that the names of those people were mostly Sanskrit and were even related to the name of the lord of Kosala. (*See Encyclopadia Britannica, Vol. XXIII, Title — Sahara*).

Evidences such as these are not wanting in the opposite part of the Globe. In distant *Mexico* a festival is being celebrated at about the same time as the Indian "Navarātri" or "Dusserah" and it is known as "Rāmasitā" (*See p. 56 of the Text and Plate 24 in T.W.F. Gann's "The Maya Indians of Southern Yucaton, North and British Honduras."*) Further, the excavations made in the country have resulted in an abundance of the idols of Lord Gaṇeśa being unearthed (*Baron Humboldt quoted in Har Bilas Sarda's "Hindu Superiority" p. 151*). The ancient inhabitants of those parts were "Āstikas" (*i.e.*, those who believed in "Veda Prāmāṇyam" or the authoritativeness of the *Vedas*) a term which still lingers in the modern name "Aztecs" which is now given to this group!

In Peru, a country in the West of South America, the inhabitants were sun worshippers. Their principal festivals of the year fell on the solstices. (*See Asiatic Researches, Vol. I. p. 426.*) They were known as the "Incas", a name derived from one of the names of the Sun, "Ina".

While speculating in this strain, it is tempting to make another observation on the remarkable similarity between a series of the places in California and several Purāṇic names. We have all heard of the well-known story of the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara being burnt to ashes by the sage Kapila, to save whose souls their descendant Bhagīrata, is said to have

brought down the Ganges to the earth. The story goes that the horse sought for by the sons of Sagara was found in the netherlands (*Pātāḷa Loka*). America being roughly India's antipodes on the globe, is this description of that land in the *Purāṇas* as the netherland to be laughed at? Is it not very suggestive that California might be a corruption of "*Kapila Aranya*" (Kapila's forest), and that the two modern islands nearby, viz., "*The Horse Island*" and "*The Ash Island*," might represent the places where the horse of King Sagara was kept and where King Sagara's sixty thousand sons were burnt to ashes?

Figs. 128 and 129 at page 621 of "The Native Tribes of Central Australia," by Spencer and Gillen (Macmillan, 1899) depict a kind of dance said to be current among the wild native tribes of Australia. This dance is described in the book as "The Śiva Dance." On closer examination, the dancers appear to have painted on their forehead a third eye, a fact suggestive of the possibility that the people of even such distant lands as Australia were once well-versed in Vedic lore.

Nearer home in the Eastern Archipelago evidences of the prevalence of the Hindu Faith are abundant. *Java* bristles with relics of Hindu cult and worship. In *Borneo* there is a forest which the Westerners were for a long time describing as a virgin forest (*i.e.*,) not having been penetrated by man (*Wallace* — "*The Malay Archipelago*," pp. 44-45). A party of explorers, after they had gone a few hundreds of miles, discovered a stone which contained an inscription commemorating in detail the performance of some specified "*Yāgas*" and "*Yajñas*" (Vedic sacrifices) by a certain king (Yūpa Inscriptions of Mūlavarman of Koeti, Borneo).

All these evidences only go to prove that our religion which was the only religion the world possessed for a long time, had spread all over the world.

It will not be out of place to examine here some conceptions of Hinduism about the Universe. The common Hindu belief about our terrestrial globe is that it is composed of seven "*Dvīpas*" or land masses. Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya refers to this in the following sentence in one of his works:

सप्तद्वीपा च मेदिनी ।

Each one of these "*Dvīpas*" consists of several "*Varṇas*" each of which in turn consists of several *Khaṇḍas*. Our country (*India*) has been described in our scriptures as *Bharata Khaṇḍa*, said to be a part of "*Bhārata Varṣa*", which in turn is supposed to be situated in "*Jambūdvīpa*." Mount "*Meru*" (the modern peak, *Everest* in the *Himalayas*) is supposed to be to the north of all the seven "*Dvīpas*". There is an ocean belt between every two *Dvīpas*. The sun and the moon are said to move round "*Meru*".

Let us now examine in detail the real import of these conceptions. The Westerners teach us in our geography books that the earth is round and they flatter themselves with the thought that this truth was first revealed to us by them. The Sanskrit term for "geography" is "*Bhū Goḷa*" which itself means "*the round earth*". Is not the very existence of this word proof of the fact that our ancients were aware of this fundamental geographical truth about the special nature of the Earth? In the ancient Indian mathematical science, words such as "*Khagola*" and "*Bhū*

Goḷa" occur which are further evidences in support of the above. In our "*Saṅkalpa Mantras*" we use the word "*Brahmāṇḍa*" while referring to the earth. The term *aṇḍa* in this word really means an egg (*i.e.*) an oval-shaped body!

Let us now imagine the whole earth as a lime fruit with the part of it containing "*Meru*" (Himalayas) directed towards the north as its apex. Then "*Meru*" becomes the north pole and, hence, the northern most point on the earth. This position, then, will sufficiently explain the saying — "सर्वेषामपि वर्षाणां मेरुत्तरतः स्थितः।" The rest of the sphere is all to the south of it. To the eye of a man standing on the apex of it, the sun and the moon would appear to go round it (*i.e.*) the sun would not be exactly overhead at any part of the year, but would always be to a side of it. This is what is meant by the statement in our *Sāstras* that the sun goes round "*Meru*". There is thus nothing in these conceptions which could be considered as being contradicted by modern geographical discoveries.

Let us take another conception. Our *Sāstras* say that the Pole Star ("*Dhruva*") is exactly above "*Meru*". At first sight this appears to be against the established truths of modern geography. Imagine, for a while, that our earth were a spinning top. Let the position occupied by the Pole Star be indicated by a spot exactly above the apex of the top when it rotates quite vertically. As the motion of the top varies, its vertical position will also change, so that positions on it other than its apex will come to be directly under the position of Pole Star. This phenomenon suggests the possibility that the Pole Star might have been directly over mount "*Meru*" at the time our ancients saw things

and recorded them for us in our *Śāstras*, and that, in course of time, this position was swerved from due to changes in the rotation of the earth.

All these modern discoveries about the geography of our earth seem, therefore, to have already dawned on our ancient seers. References to these truths are also found in the works of *Āryabhaṭṭa*, *Varāhamihira*, and *Appayya Dikṣita*.

Thus we come back to the truth which we established at the outset, *viz.*, ours was the only religion extant on the face of the earth for a long time. All the other religions of the world have only taken up and developed some phases of our bigger faith which contains all the aspects of the different religions.

As our religion or Dharma is the one faith common to all the world, even so, Sanskrit, the language of our religion, is common to all the other tongues of the world. Today they call Sanskrit a "*dead language*". Even taking this expression to mean literally, it contains a sublime truth. Which is it that dies? — the body, or the soul? It is the body that dies. The soul is eternal and imperishable. Sanskrit is the soul of all the other languages. Most of the words in the etymology of these languages can be derived from Sanskrit roots or *Dhātus*. The other "*living*" languages of the world have therefore themselves for the body and Sanskrit for their soul. Applying this theory to Sanskrit, we find that it is a language which is all soul *sans* a body to envelope it. Hence, the expression *dead language* does not seem to be an altogether inappropriate description of it!

To conclude, our faith and our language once had world-wide existence. The one basis of our religion is the supreme authoritativeness of the *Vedas* (*Veda Prāmānyam*). All the other extant religions of the world are but phases of our bigger faith. With a little propaganda characterised more by kindness and love than by conceit and arrogance, it might yet be possible for us to convince others of this truth.

ADORATION TO ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA

श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानामालयं करुणालयम् ।
नमामि भगवत्पादशङ्करं लोकशङ्करम् ॥

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇānām-ālayam karuṇālayam
namāmi bhagavatpādaśaṅkaram lokaśaṅkaram.*

I adore Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, (i) the benefactor of the whole world, (ii) the abode of the sublime knowledge of the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas* and (iii) the abode of supreme compassion.

VEDA-VYĀSA*

Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvati

Vyāsa is known as Veda-Vyāsa. There were many Vedas. Before the commencement of Kali-yuga, and at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, Bhagavān Vyāsa classified the Vedas into four. He thought: ‘In the *yuga* that is to commence, the life-span of people will be short; their memory-power will be weak; the supernatural powers of *yoga* will decrease; something should be done in order to save the Veda from utter destruction.’”

Bright day is succeeded by dark night; rainy season is followed by severe summer. So also, if at one time the Veda flourishes, at another time it is found to be on the decline. At that time, the Veda should be protected: What should be done?

In rural areas, when days are short and nights are long, during night-time when the sky is dark, there should be cases of theft. At that time, if ten people keep watch by going round the village, will not cases of theft become less? Similarly, in the Kali-yuga that

* Courtesy: Hindu Samaya Manram, Kanchipuram-2

was about to commence, if the entire Veda was not to be lost, at least four people, if not all, might each save a part of the Veda. Thus thought Vyāsa, and classified the Veda into four: *R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharvaṇa*. He taught the four Vedas to four sages (*r̥ṣis*), one to each, so that the Veda would be in vogue from generation to generation, each hearing the Veda and reciting with the proper intonation, and thus transmitting it without a break. The four sages were: Sumantu, Paila, Jaimini, and Vaisampāyana. Vyāsa entrusted the four Vedas to them: to Jaimini *Sāma*-veda; to Vaisampāyana, *Yajur*-veda; to Smantu, *R̥g*-veda; and to Paila, *Atharvaṇa*-veda.

The entire Veda is full of *mantras*. If with great restraint and purity the *mantras* are repeated, by the operation of those *mantras*, good will redound to the world. In order to achieve this end, restraint and purity are absolutely necessary. There are rules regarding the time when the Veda should be recited. One should not read it from a book. Veda is *śruti*, what is heard; one should hear it and utter it correctly.

In order to facilitate this, there are certain auxiliary disciplines. The Veda should be studied along with the auxiliaries. Those who are entrusted with the task of preserving the Veda should observe the rules strictly. All that they have to do in the world is but this. If the Veda is thus preserved, the entire world will fare well. It is not possible for all to devote themselves to this task. At least the sages (*r̥ṣis*) and those who have come in their line should spend their whole time in preserving the Veda. And so it was that Mahārṣi Vyāsa divided the Vedas into four and taught them to the four sages.

For the Veda itself there is the name *ṛṣi*. Therefore, the one who sees a Vedic *mantra* is also called *ṛṣi*.

ṛṣayo mantra-draṣṭārah.

The *ṛṣis* are the seers of *mantra*. The meaning of this statement is not 'seeing with the eyes what is written in a book.'

There is the radio. The receiver receives the sound waves and amplifies them. There is the tape-recorder. What I speak now, it records and keeps. Whenever we want, at whatever time, it reproduces the same sound-waves. But, only if I speak, the recorder will take it on the tape.

Any number of sounds, from beginningless time, pervade the ether. Through the practice of *yoga*, the *ṛṣis* grasp the powers of *mantra*, the beginningless sounds. It is those who have the ability to grasp in this manner that are called 'seers'. Just as Arjuna beheld the cosmic form (*viśva-rūpa*) of Mahā Viṣṇu, these sages grasped, by their yogic power, the *mantras* which are of the nature of beginningless sounds.

There is a special *yoga-sāstra* which explains this matter. In that text there is reference to 'divine ear' (*divya-śrotra*). With the ordinary eye we can see only up to a certain distance. What cannot be seen with the external eye can be seen with the inner eye. With the latter we can see things at any distance. The Lord says in the *Gītā*:

'divyam dadāmi te cakṣuḥ'

'I shall give thee the eye divine.' The inner eye has the power to see what is limitless.

Similarly, with the ordinary ear we hear the outer sounds. But, through yogic practice and meditation, one acquires the power to hear the beginningless sounds that are in ether. Those, who can in this way grasp — *i.e.* see the *mantras*, of the form of sounds, are called *ṛṣis*. The *mantras* seen by them are also termed *ṛṣis*. The knowledge that makes known what are super-sensuous is referred to as the *Veda*.

From the time immemorial, the descendants of *ṛṣis* preserved the *Veda* without the aid of a book. When we utter '*abhivādaye*' we mention the line of *ṛṣi* to which we belong, the particular *gotra*, and *sūtra*. From this we learn the *ṛṣi*-line in which we have come.

If a medicine is brought and kept without use for some time, it loses its potency. Similarly, if the *Veda* is not repeatedly studied, the power of its *mantras* will diminish. In order to regain for it the power, along with *pūjā* and *homa*, the *mantras* should be repeated many a time. For all lapses, what serves as the sure recompense is the repetition of *Gāyatrī*.

The main aim of those who are descended from the *ṛṣis* should be to protect the *Veda*. Earning, eating, etc., are only subordinate avocations.

With a view to preserve the limitless *Veda* from destruction in the *Kali-yuga*, *Maharṣi Vyāsa* classified the *Veda* into four, and taught it to four of his disciples. He did so, thinking that in the line of each disciple at least one of the *Vedic* branches might be studied.

After teaching to his four disciples the *Veda* which has to be preserved through observing restraints and

purity, Vyāsa wrote the eighteen *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, embodying in them the essence of the Vedas, in order that all people might be benefited, and taught these texts to Sūta. This Sūta was born in the Sūta family; he is celebrated as *Sūta Paurāṇika*.

We usually imagine that *varṇa* is *jāti*; but it is not so. *Varṇas* are four; but *jātis* are stated to be more than twenty in the *Manu-smṛti*, and more than fifty in the *Sūta-saṁhita*. In the *Yajur-veda*, seventh Kāṇḍa, there is mention, similarly, of many *jātis*.

Sometimes it so happened that a person belonging to one *varṇa* had to marry one that belonged to another *varṇa*. To which *varṇa*, could we say, the child born to them belongs? If the woman is of the Vaisya caste and the man of the Kṣatriya caste, or if the woman is of the Kṣatriya caste and the man is of the brāhmaṇa caste, the progeny in such cases is said to belong to *anuloma* clans. This is the general name. There are also separate name for the clans. On the contrary, if the woman is of the Kṣatriya caste and the man of the Vaisya caste, or if the woman is of the brāhmaṇa caste and the man of Kṣatriya caste, the progeny in such cases is said to belong to *pratiloma* clans.

Sūta was born in such a clan. Seeing his ability and knowledge, Vyāsa elected him for the status mentioned above. He was the first one made eligible to receive the eighteen *Purāṇas*. Vyāsa taught him the *Purāṇas*, and blessed him so that he could teach the *Purāṇas* to people belonging to all the castes and clans.

After accomplishing all these, Vyāsa wrote a work expounding the nature of Brahman the supreme reality, that is the purport of all the earlier works he had written. The name of that work is *Brahma-sūtra*. It is also known as *Bhikṣu-sūtra* and *Vyāsa-sūtra*. Another name of Vyāsa is *Bādarāyaṇa*.

The age in which Vyāsa lived is the end of Dvāpara-yuga. We may take it that he was born as an *avatāra* before the commencement of Kali-yuga. Āñjaneya, Vyāsa, Asvatthāma, Bali and suth others live for ever.

To Vyāsa's *Brahma-sūtra*, many teachers who came after him wrote commentaries. Of those commentators, our Ācārya, Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, is one. Of the extant commentaries, his is the earliest. There should have been commentaries prior to his. This is known from the references in Śaṅkara's commentary. But, who were those commentators, it is not possible to say definitely. In his explanation of the *sūtras*, the Ācārya makes such remarks as follows: "For this *sūtra*, they give this meaning These views may be accepted This is wrong It is better to say thus." From such remarks it may be inferred that there were several commentaries before the Ācārya.

After the Ācārya's *bhāṣya* came the commentaries of Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya written according to the Vaiṣṇava traditions. Rāmānujācārya remained in Śrīrangam; Madhvācārya belonged to South Canara, Vallabhācārya who was in Gujarat wrote a commentary. Many saints and merchants of Gujarat regard him as their *guru*. He hailed from Andhra, but

settled down in Gujarat. A *Maṭha* belonging to this order is in Madras too, in Sowcarpet.

Thus, many teachers have written commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra*. In South India, the best-known commentaries are those of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva. Mostly, it is these three that are taught to students: sāstraic discussions are held as based on these three; and periodical examinations are also conducted.

Śrīkaṅṭhācārya wrote a commentary following the Śaiva tradition. Appaya Dīkṣita has written a lengthy gloss on this. In order to provide for the study of it by five-hundred students, the ruler of those time made a gift of lands. There is an inscription relating to this in the temple near Arni. Some of the Śivācāryas who officiate in Śiva temples have studied that gloss. But this gloss is not widely known. Most scholars know only of the three commentaries referred to already.

When we consider the *sūtra* and the *Veda* of these scholars, it is seen that they belong to one or other of the three *Vedas*; of these scholars it is seen that they belong to one or other of the three Vedas – *R̥g*, *Yajur*, and *Sāma*. That the *Atharvaṇa-veda* was in vogue in our country until three or four centuries ago is known from inscriptions.

In Orissa, North India, there are eighteen clans of Brāhmaṇas. Of these, one is called *Ātharvanika*. In the territories of Kosala and Gujarat, there are four or five scholars who have studied the *Atharvaṇa-veda*. Near Tindivanam there is a place called Perani, and another known as Eṇṇāyiram; near Kanchipuram there is a place, Walajabad. There are quite a few

inscriptions in these places. When we examine the inscriptions of Chola and Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, we come to know that in those far-off days there were scholars well-versed in the *Atharvāna-veda*.

There are some *sūtras*, e.g., *Āpastamba-sūtra*, *Bodhāyana-sūtra*, *Āśvalāyana-sūtra*, etc. The source of all these was Vyāsa. For the commentaries of our Ācārya, of Rāmānuja, of Madhva, of Śrkaṇṭha, of Vallabha, and of others, the basic text is Vyāsa's *Brahma-sūtra*. Whatever be one's Veda, the one who taught the Veda to the ṛṣi, who handed it down to us, was Vyāsa.

There may be several branches. Seeing the branches, we may think: "One branch is in one direction; another branch is right in the opposite direction: what relation there could be between the two?" But when we look down the tree, we realize that the trunk — and the root — is one and the same. Similarly, for our *Vedas*, *Sūtras*, *Purāṇas* etc., the root is Vyāsa. Let us honour his picture at least, and let us not forget the *Veda*; and let us unite in doing our allotted work.

A portrait of Vyāsa was kept in a house; and the householder was worshipping it. At present, the conference of the Veda-dharma-sāstra-paripālana-sabhā is in session. The *Veda* is common to the Vaiṣṇavas, Madhvas, Śaivas, and others. With a view to impress on all a sense of unity, I brought from that household the portrait of Vyāsa who is the root of the *Veda*. My idea is that the portrait should be of use during the conference.

The *Veda* should be studied by all. Not studying is a sin. For that sin, could not one pay one rupee as penalty? Collecting at the rate of one rupee from each person that does not study the *Veda*, with the money that is thus collected, the Vedic scholars should be honoured: this is the idea. Should we not respect those who have preserved the *Veda* through oral tradition, without the aid of any book? Conferences such as the present one should be held in the different parts of the country. We may differ when it is a question of philosophy. I may be an Advaitin, and you a Viśiṣṭ-ādvaitin, and so on. All these schools of philosophy are the branches of one tree. In matters philosophical, let us differ. For me Śaṅkara is great; for another Rāmānuja. Let this be so. But all of us — whatever be our respective philosophical persuasion — are under one obligation to honour Vyāsa. We should celebrate his services by taking ont his portrait in procession. If we have not done this so far, it is our fault.

The source of us all is Vyāsa. As recompense for what we have failed to do so far, let us carry his portrait on our shoulders in every devision of the city. It is for this purpose that each year the conference is convened to take place in a different locality.

Whatever be the honour we may receive, it will pass away after sometime. If we are not respected for protecting the *Veda*, even that does not matter. If this one truth survives, it wll protect us for all time. This is our sole duty. Doing our duty should be regarded by us as our honour, our self-respect.

Veda Vyāsa it was who has enabled the *Veda* to survive during such a long stretch of time. We should

honour him, that is our duty. It is with this end in view that this conference has been convened. In the city of Madras two such conferences were held previously. This fact is not known to many. Today there was a session in Vaidika Sabhā. The devotees carried the portrait of Vyāsa on their shoulders and have brought it here.

Many of you may wonder: "What is this portrait? Why was it carried to this place?" In order to explain the significance, I have spoken so far. For the four *Vedas*, for the eighteen *Purāṇas*, for all the sacred texts — the source is Bhagavān Vyāsa. It is because of him that we today are faring well at least to a little extent

THE VEDAS*

Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

Of the fourteen *dharma-sthānas* (the sources of knowledge of *dharma*), six are the auxiliaries, four are sub-auxiliaries, and the rest are the *Vedas*. The *R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva* are the four *Vedas*.

The greatness of the *Veda* is limitless. Yet, on the empirical level we may understand its greatness in a way.

Of the holy places in the world, Kāsī is believed to be the greatest. While speaking about other holy places, it is said that they are equal to Kāsī. From this, the greatness of Kāsī is evident. This place (*i.e.* Vārāṇasī) is referred to as the Southern Kāsī. Uttarakāsī is on the Himālayas. Vriddhachalam is known as Vriddha-Kāsī. Some time ago I stayed at Buggas, that place is also called a Kāsī. There is a place (in the South) which bears the name Ten-Kāsī. Thus while referring to other sacred places, it is said: "This

* Courtesy: Hindu Samaya Manram, Kanchipuram-2.

one is equal in greatness to Kāśī; this other one is even a little greater." There is a verse about Kumbhakoṇam:

*Anyakṣetrakṛtam pāpam
punyakṣetre vinaśyati,
punyakṣetrakṛtaṁ pāpaṁ
vārāṇasyām vinaśyati.
vārāṇasyām kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ
kumbhakoṇe vinaśyati,
kumbhakoṇe kṛtam-pāpam
kumbhakoṇe hi naśyati.*

The purport of this is that Kumbhakoṇam is holier than Kāśī. By saying so it is made evident that Kāśī is holy in a special manner. By giving Kāśī as the standard of comparison, its greatness gets increased. About a hundred years ago a great man composed a *śloka* about Kāśī:

*kṣetrāṇām uttamānāmapi yadupamayā kā'pi loke praśastaiḥ
cittadravyeṇa muktikrayam abhilapatām yā' dbhutā
panyavithī,
sākṣād viśveśvarasya tribhuvanamahitā yā purā rājadhānī
ramyā kāśī sakāśibhavatu hitakarī bhuktaye muktaye naḥ*

— *Mahiṣa-śataka-vyākhyānam*

That which has become famous by being cited as the example for the most sacred places is Kāśī. There, if one gives the money which is *bhakti* (devotion) one could easily get *mukti* (release). The market where this is obtained is Kāśī. This is what is stated in this *śloka*.

Similarly, the *Veda* which is great by virtue of its contents has received esteem in empirical usage also.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is a well-known epic. It is in different forms. The story of Rāma has been told in plays, musical compositions, poems, etc. Everyone talks about the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In Tamil, Kambar has sung the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the *virutta* metre. Aruṇācala Kavirāyar wrote in the form of a play. There are versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in all languages such as Marāthi and Telugu. Kālidāsa wrote the *kāvya* 'Raghuvamśa'. It mostly relates to the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. King Bhoja composed the *Rāmāyaṇa-campū*. Bhavabhūti wrote the *Uttararāmacarita*. Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita wrote a play called *Jānakī-pariṇaya*. There are several types of *Rāmāyaṇa*: *Ānanda-rāmāyaṇa*, *Tattva-saṅgraha-rāmāyaṇa*, etc. To the question, 'Why is the *Rāmāyaṇa* so all-pervasive?' one who has written the story of Rāma replies thus: just as sugar is put into the *pāyasam* prepared in any house, so the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a necessary ingredient (of anything that is good). When there is no *pūjā* possible, some people recite the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its place. When the greatness of the *Rāmāyaṇa* which is so all-pervasive is referred to, it is said that it is the *Veda* itself:

*vedaḥ prācetasādāsīt
sākṣād-rāmāyaṇātmanā.*

The *Mahābhārata* is also called a *Veda*.

bhārataḥ pañcamo vedaḥ.

Even as the *Rāmāyaṇa* is held in high esteem, the Vaiṣṇavas hold in esteem the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. It is said, "Māraṇ Śaṭhakopan did the *Veda* into Tamil." Thus, that too is regarded as a *Veda*. In Tamil the most famous work on ethics is the *Kuṛaḷ*; and it is described as the *Veda*.

Tiruvalluvar wrote the *Tirukkural*. At the time there was in Madurai the last *Sangham*. There was kept a plank given by Lord Sundaresvara. Those who had the necessary fitness could sit on it. If anyone did not possess the fitness, the plank would reject him. We are not inclined to believe this. But we are ready to believe that if a coin is put in, a ticket comes out of the machine kept for the purpose. Tiruvalluvar went to the Madurai Sangham taking his *Kural* with him. Generally scholars bestow no esteem on others. Because of this, one who is dull-witted cannot claim that he is a learned person. When taken in this way, the scholars' attitude does some good. But the tendency should not be allowed to exceed the limit. That would be wrong.

The members of the Madurai Sangham asked Tiruvalluvar to place the manuscript he took with him on the plank. It accommodated that manuscript alone, and threw out the other scholars who attempted to get on to it. This made scholars realise the greatness of *Kural*; and each one of them composed a verse praising the great work. One of them said thus:

"It is not easy to weigh the relative merits of Sanskrit and Tamil and say that one is superior to the other — because Sanskrit possesses the *Veda*, while Tamil the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar." (*Tiruvalluva-malai*)

The question, which is greater - Sanskrit or Tamil? might have had meaning till yesterday; but from today it has lost significance. Sanskrit is great because in that language there is the *Veda*. There has come into being in Tamil a work which is equal to it—the *Kural*. The scholar who composed the verse quoted above

gives the reason why the *Kuṛaḥ* is great. The meaning is that the *Kuṛaḥ* is equal in greatness to the *Veda*.

It is well-known that *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* are regarded as the Tamil Veda. These fall within our religion. The Christians brought their scripture to this country. They named it *Satya-Veda*. Thus, when we consider the usage current in the world it is clear that the *Veda* is accorded special esteem. It is a well-known practice to refer to an established great text while speaking about the greatness of other texts.

At the end of the Dvāpara Age and at the beginning of Kali, *i.e.*, about 5,000 years ago, Sage Vyāsa classified the *Veda* into four parts. He it was that was responsible for the coming into being of *Uttara-mīmāṃsā* the eighteen *Purāṇas*, the *Bhārata*, etc. He divided the *Veda* into many branches, taking into consideration the ability of a single person to study and benefit by it. Each branch is called a *śākhā*; Vyāsa's four disciples Sumantu, Paila, Jaimini, and Vaisāmpāyana, learned from him the four *Vedas*, *Ṛg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva* respectively. Vyāsa taught the *Purāṇas* to Sūta. Therefore, in the *Purāṇas* it is mentioned that Sūta spoke them.

In the *Ṛg-veda* there are many *śākhās*. Of them, only one *śākhā* is extant. It is known as the *Aitareya-śākhā*. For the *Yajur-veda* there were 101 *śākhās*. Of these, only three are extant. There were 1000 *śākhās* for the *Sāma-veda*. Only two of them are available now — *Gautama-śākhā* and *Talavakāra-śākhā*. Not even one *śākhā* of the *Atharva-veda* is at present available. In Orissa (Utkal) in the North there are eighteen subdivisions of Brahmins. Of them, one group is known

as Ātharvaṇika. From this name we come to know that the forebears of this group should have studied the *Atharvaṇa-śākhā*.

Vyāsa divided the *Veda* into 1180 *śākhās*. At present only eight remain. [Although there were many more, Vyāsa thought that number was enough for the Kali age. That number itself has been so considerably reduced now.] In a *śākhā* are contained all topics that are necessary for a Brahmin to perform his *karmas* from birth to death:

ekāṁ śākhāṁ adhitya śrotriyo bhavati.

The kings of those days used to grant what are known as *śrotriya* villages to a scholar who had studied an entire *śākhā* of the *Veda*. No tax would be levied on such villages. As those who studied the *Veda* had no other profession, it was known that they could not pay *kist*. Even now there is no tax on *Śrotriya* villages. It is only in our country that there have been generations of families who perform duties relating to spiritual welfare, without engaging themselves in secular professions. Therefore, our country has a greatness which will never be destroyed. Those foreigners who have come to know of our country's greatness through Vivekananda and others hold us in high esteem. Paul Deussen of Germany says that there is no one greater than our Śaṅkarācārya. He had studied well the Advaita-sāstras. He has sent a photograph of his to be placed in Kālaḍi, the birth-place of the Master. It is in our country that there is the power which makes for instructing the Truth that is the Self. Those who study the *Veda* will not endeavour to ensure for themselves the means for empirical comfort.

So, in order to keep them above want, the kings gave them a little land and levied no tax on it. Hence it was that in our country there were many *Śrotriyas* (those who had studied the *Veda*).

Each *śākhā* has a threefold division: (1) *Mantra*, (2) *Brāhmaṇa*, and (3) *Upaniṣad*. *Mantra* is that which yields merit by the recitation. Dedicating to the particular deity which a *mantra* celebrates, the sacrificial material should be offered into the sacred fire, saying “*na mama*”. “This is not mine” is the meaning of that expression. It signifies that everything is offered unto God. Which *karma* is to be performed in dedication of which deity is explained in the *Brāhmaṇas*. *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa* constitute the ritual sections. The concluding part of each *śākhā* is an *Upaniṣad*. Why do we perform *karma* in accordance with the directions found in the *Brāhmaṇa*? If good acts are performed for the sake of good results, and if these are dedicated to God, we shall receive God’s grace, and truth will be revealed.

The *Bhāgavata* says:

janmādy-asya yato’nvayād-itaratas’cārtheṣvabhijñāḥ
svarāt
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādikavaye muhyanti yat
sūrayaḥ,

tejo vārimṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra trisargo’ mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ
param dhīmahi.

We stay away from truth. Sometimes we think that it would be good if we act in a particular way. But that does not become possible. The *Upaniṣad* teaches that

all our actions should be dedicated to God. It also shows the way to reach the supreme Self.

There is an *Upaniṣad* for each *śākhā*. We find an *Upaniṣad* in everyone of the *śākhās* known to us. In the *Kāṇvaśākhā* alone there are two *Upaniṣads* - the *Īśāvāsyā* and the *Bṛhadāranyaka*. There are some *Upaniṣads* belonging to *Śākhās* of which we do not know. In the *Ṛg-Veda* there is the *Kāthopaniṣad*. Its *śākhā* is not known. The same is the case with the *Kauṣītakī-brāhmaṇa - Upaniṣad*. Even though the *śākhās* might have disappeared, the truth has been preserved in our country. Vyāsa divided the *Veda* into *śākhās* so that one may study at least one *śākhā*. But, even then, we have not been able to preserve all of them, and have lost many of them.

In Tamil there is an ancient work on grammar called *Tolkāppiyam*. It was written by Triṇadhūmāgni, one of the twelve disciples of Agastya. One who has written a commentary on this work says in one place that it was composed before Veda-Vyāsa classified the *Vedas*, and that there were at the time four *Vedas*, which were called then *Taittirīya*, *Pauliya*, *Talavakāra*, and *Sāma*. In the *Divya-prabandham* there occur the words 'Pauliya, Chāndoga'. These however, are not names of the *Vedas*. *Taittirīya* and *Pauliya* are the names of *śākhās*.

In Kerala, the Nambūdiri Brahmins are known for their Vedic studies. Even those who are engaged in secular pursuit would have studied the *Veda* when they were young. Those who are Brahmachārins would follow the ancient tradition of wearing cod-piece (*kaupīna*) and wearing such marks as deer-skin, staff,

etc. But now even they are changing. The cultivating class - when they ran - fall very low.

Among the Nambūdiris many belong to the *Ṛg-Veda*. In one of the manuscripts preserved by them the name *Paulīya* is found written for the *Ṛg-Veda*. It is learnt from this that *Paulīya* is a name for the *Ṛg-Veda*.

If one performs the rituals enjoined in *Mantra*, *Saṁhitā*, etc., one would gain prosperity in many future births. If the very same rituals are performed in a spirit of dedication to God, they will produce purity of heart, and thereby pave the way for *mokṣa*.

We possess several instruments for knowing what we do not know. Some things we know through our eyes; some others, through our ears. Some we know through inference, and some through words. What happens in America cannot be known directly through words; it must be known through telegrams, newspapers, etc.

For knowing that which cannot be known through the means of communications available in this world, we require a medium. The *Veda* is the name for the knowledge which cannot be known through empirical instruments, and which belongs to a region which is not accessible to telegrams.

There are some portions of the *Veda* which are to be set aside. They are called *arthavāda*. If the *Veda* says what can be known through other means, that saying cannot be *pramāṇa*. The *Veda* is not intended for this purpose. Its purpose is to convey what cannot be understood through any other means. What is it that we do not know?

There are two views in regard to metaphysical reality. There is this doubt: Are the things that we see as many really one, or are they really many? In the field of science, it was thought at first that the things that constitute the world are separate from one another. Then, it was discovered that the primary elements are 72. It is by mutual combinations that these 72 give rise to the various things. If this inquiry is pursued it will be realised that the 72 elements are traceable to one substance. Those who inquire into the nature of the Self declare that all arise from consciousness.

In our country, we call the one, Advaita: and the many, *dvaita*. Of these two, which is the truth? What does the *Veda* say? If *dvaita* were the truth, one need not go to the *Veda* for knowing about it. What appears before our eyes is *dvaita*. Is not the purpose of the *Veda* to tell us what we do not know? It declares what we cannot understand with our intellect. That is what is important. What we do not know is *advaita*. If the *Veda* teaches anything, it must be *advaita*. Even if *dvaita* were true, the *Veda* will not say about it. If one considers the *karma-kāṇḍa* (ritual section) of the *Veda* it may appear that the *Veda* favours *dvaita*. But when we consider the conclusion, it is unity that will stand out. If the *Veda* says what could be known through other *pramāṇas*, that is called *anu-vāda* (restatement). Thus it has been declared:

anuvādo'vadhārite.

Some critics ask, "Can we trust the *Veda*? Tell us a reason." If something is within the grasp of reason, why should the *Veda* say it? The *Veda* is that which declared what is beyond the reach of reason.

The *Veda* is eternal. The sages endowed with divine vision imparted it to us. The *Veda* has come to tell us of that which cannot be proved, that which cannot be reached by the intellect. The *Veda* makes known that which is supersensuous.

All those who have listened to what has been said about the *Veda* should perform some obligatory duty. The Brahmins should perform *Brahma-yajña* everyday. This is one of the five *mahā-yajñas*. *Brahma* (in the present context) means the *Veda*. We should perform *Brahma-yajña* so that the power of *Mantra* will shine like perennial lamp. *Tarpaṇa* should be offered to the *Maharṣi* pertaining to the *śākhā* which one has to study. After this, at least two *akṣaras* of the *Veda* should be recited. Even if this becomes impossible. *Gāyatrī-japa* should be done without fail. *Gāyatrī* is the quintessence of the *Veda*. It is laid down that only after being initiated into *Gāyatrī* one should begin the recitation of the *Veda*. The *Gāyatrī* should be recited everyday a thousand times. If there is no time for this, the *mantra* should be recited at least ten times, *Gāyatrī-mantra* will produce the quietitude of mind. The deity of the *mantra* is *Sūrya* (Sun-God). The day dedicated to *Sūrya* is Sun-day. Conveniently this happens to be the weekly holiday. Therefore, on that day one should get up from bed at 4 O'clock, and do *Gāyatrī-japa* a thousand times. This would bring about welfare. This is what I would say to you.

ADVAITA VEDĀNTA*

Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

At first, Śrīmad Ācārya (*i.e.* Śrī Śaṅkara) established Advaita-siddhānta. Among the texts that teach Advaita-siddhānta, the principal ones are the commentaries on the three *prasthānas*, *viz.* the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahma-sūtra*. These three are the basic authoritative texts for Advaita-siddhānta. Besides these, the Ācārya has written several manuals (*prakaraṇas*). The *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, etc., are the most important among them. And, in addition, he has composed many a hymn — Śiva-stotras, Viṣṇu-stotras, Ambikā-stotras, etc. He has also written a text on *mantra-śāstra* bearing the title *Prapañcasāra*.

Many great learned preceptors have written commentaries on the works of the Ācārya. Of the works of the Ācārya, the most important is the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*. This is a commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* of

*This is a rendering into English of a discourse in Tamil given in Madras on the 13th of October, 1932 by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

Sage Vyāsa. In the *Brahma-sūtra* are to be found topics that are taught in the ten principal *Upaniṣads*. The essence of these teachings is given in the *Brahma-sūtra* in aphoristic form. The *bhāṣya* explains in an extensive way how the *Brahma-sūtra* refers to the topics dealt with in the ten *Upaniṣads*. Many preceptors, down to the present day, have written commentaries on the *bhāṣya*.

Padmapāda, one of the chief disciples of the Ācārya, wrote a commentary by name '*Pañcapādikā*'. For this, there is a commentary by Vivaraṇācārya; it is called *Tattvadīpana*. Thus, there is one branch of commentaries (known as the Vivaraṇa school).

There is a commentary called '*Bhāmatī*' for the Ācārya's *bhāṣya*, written by Vācaspatimīśra who lived in North India. Amalānanda wrote a commentary '*Kalpataru*' on it. Appayya Dīkṣita wrote a gloss '*Parimala*' on the *Kalpataru*. There is another gloss on the *Kalpataru* by Koṭṭaiyūr Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha Vājapeya; this is called *Ābhoga*. This is another (Advaita) tradition (known as the *Bhāmatī* school).

For the *Sūtra-bhāṣya*, there is a commentary, the *Ratnaprabhā*, by one Rāmānanda; there is also a commentary on the *Ratnaprabhā*. For the same *Sūtra-bhāṣya*, Ānandagiri, a disciple of the Ācārya (Śaṅkara), wrote a commentary: this is called '*Ānandagirīya*'. About one hundred-and-fifty years ago one Tryambaka Bhaṭṭācārya wrote a commentary on the *bhāṣya*: *Bhaṣyabhānuṣrabhā*.

One Raghunātha-sūri of Mahārāṣṭra wrote a commentary for one section (*pāda*) of the *sūtra-bhāṣya*:

this bears the name '*Śaṅkara-pāda-bhūṣaṇa*'. These are the commentaries (on the *bhāṣya*) known to us.

Thus, for a single *bhāṣya* there are so many commentaries.

Of the ten principal *Upaniṣads*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Taittirīya* have *Vārtikas* by Suresvarācārya. Hence, this preceptor is also known as the *Vārtika-kāra*.

There is a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Ācārya. Following this commentary, there are ten commentaries. All these are texts which expound Advaita-siddhānta.

Similarly, there is Dvaita-siddhānta. For the aforesaid *Brahma-sūtra*, Śrī Madhvācārya who appeared on the West-Coast wrote a *bhāṣya* after the Dvaita-siddhānta. Many scholars have written commentaries on this *bhāṣya*. In those commentaries, they have opposed the doctrine of Advaita-siddhānta. About four-hundred years ago, a work called '*Nyāyāmṛta*' was written criticising Advaita-siddhānta. Criticising this, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī wrote a work by name *Advaita-siddhi*. On behalf of Dvaita, a work bearing the title *Taraṅgiṇī*, was written criticising the *Advaita-siddhi*. Criticising the *Taraṅgiṇī*, a great preceptor by name Brahmānanda who lived in Gauḍa-deśa wrote his *Candrikā*. This work is also known as '*Gauḍa-brahmānandīya*'. Criticising this from the standpoint of Dvaita, one Vanamālāmīśra wrote '*Vanamālāmiśriya*'. Tryambaka Bhaṭṭa, the author of the *Bhāṣya-bhāṇuṣṭhā*, wrote also the *Siddhānta-vaijayantī* in which he criticised Vanamālāmīśra's work.

More than sixty years ago, Anantālvār wrote a work called '*Nyāya-bhāskara*' criticising the *Gauḍa-brahmānandīya* from the standpoint of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Criticising the *Nyāyabhāskara*, Rāju Śāstrin who came in the lineage of Appayya Dīkṣita wrote the *Nyāyendusekhara*. Thus, we have the *Siddhānta-vaijayantī* as the last critique of the Dvaita standpoint and the *Nyāyendusekhara* as the last critique of the Viśiṣṭādvaita standpoint. The series of critical works so far stops with these two works. But it may be extended hereafter. Any critique, by whomsoever written, must be studied by all.

A study of such works will lead to clarity. It is only when differences of view arises that doctrines gain clarity. In our country, any scholar who is well-versed in the literature of his own philosophical school usually has close acquaintance with the literature of other schools. This is our tradition.

There are so many works relating to our tradition. We do not read them. We know more about the books written in other countries. Which book is our authority, we do not know. Bundles upon bundles of books which have no relevance to our tradition, we know. We do not know our texts. If we become aware at least of their titles, we may begin to take some interest. If scholars who are versed in these texts volunteer to expound them, we do not lend an ear to them; we disregard them. Our country is in a very low state now. The people of other countries praise our *Ātma-vidyā*. If we should gain esteem in the world, we should augment that culture of our country which has been the object of true esteem. What is the greatness of our country? It consists in the fact that here countless

sages have realised the Bliss that is the Self. If we do not come to be aware of the grounds of that greatness, we shall be demeaning ourselves.

So far I have mentioned the series of the important works on Advaita-siddhānta. What is that Advaita? What shall we gain from it? Do we know it or do not know? Could we gain its fruit, or not? Or, do all these belong to the region of mere imagination? Will Advaita become fruitful in experience? We shall consider these questions.

What does 'Advaita' mean? Its meaning is 'without a second'. That there is no second does not appear to us to be true. There are thousands of things. If there is no second, what do we gain? Is this not clear? It is only because there is no second, that for which we strive will get fulfilled. What for do we strive? We strive for the removal of all the miseries that afflict us. The removal of miseries will be accomplished through (the realisation of) that which is without a second (*i.e.* non-duality). We strive for removing poverty, hunger, dishonour, disease, empirical usage (*vyavahāra*), mental pain, etc. Is there any place where these miseries are absent? No. Yet, we continue to strive for the removal of miseries. Through our empirical endeavours, there is only temporary appeasement. If through medical treatment one disease is cured, another disease comes. The means for the absolute removal of all miseries is Advaita. Through it, hunger, disease, death, dishonour, empirical usage, anger, poverty, etc. will not recur.

Why do we have misery? It will be good if hunger, etc., do not afflict us. But, why do they afflict us? Let us see through which course they come. They

will come as long as the body lasts. But, if this body goes, another takes its place. For that body also, hunger, thirst, disease, etc. will come. So, if we could do without body, then these miseries will disappear. We take many births. What is the cause of those births? On account of what, do we take a body? We have to reap the consequences of the good and bad deeds done in the previous births. The self cannot reap them. Fire cannot burn the self; nor the application of sandal paste make it cool. Therefore, a body is needed. As the result of the good and bad deeds done by us, God endows us with a body, and punishes us by making us imagine that the body is "I". If a boy commits a mistake, he is beaten for that. By his side there is a doctor. If the boy swoons not being able to bear the pain, he is revived and again beaten. He is given food, and again beaten. For the sins we have committed, God gives us a body and thus punishes. If this is not enough, He endows us with another body and punishes. Thus, the sins that we commit are the cause for the body. If we do not commit anymore sins, we shall not be endowed with a body hereafter. Constantly we should remember that we should not commit sin.

What is the cause of merit and demerit? There is the desire to eliminate them by refraining from the deeds that give rise to them; but we are not able to avoid those deeds. If a tree is to be prevented from growing, it is not enough to cut off the branches; the root-trunk must be removed. Similarly, we must discern the cause of sin, and destroy that cause. Why do we perform evil deeds? We desire to possess an object. We device short-cuts to obtain it. That is

sinful. The cause for our performing sinful deeds is desire. If an object is beautiful, there arises desire to possess it. The knowledge that a thing is good produces desire. In order to fulfil that desire, we perform actions. Knowing through the senses that a thing is beautiful is the cause of desire. Through effort, we can produce desire, or change it. Knowledge cannot be produced, nor changed.

The punishment for the sins we do is the body. Therefore, if we remove desire which is the cause of sin, there will be destruction of misery. How to remove desire? The way to remove misery is not taught in the other sacred texts.

Vedānta does not omit this teaching. Vedānta which is the peak of the *Vedas* teaches the way for the removal of sorrow.

Hatred and desire arise only in respect of objects other than us. There arises neither desire nor hatred in regard to ourselves. Since desire arises in regard to objects other than us, that desire will not arise if those objects are rendered identical with us. If all become identical with us, and if there is nothing other than us, then desire will not arise. If there is no desire, there will be no effort. If this be so, there will be no sin. When there is no sin, there will be no body. When that is not there, there will be no misery. It is for the destruction of misery that we put forth several efforts.

If there is something as a second to us, and if that thing is more powerful than us, there arises fear. If there is something beautiful, there arises desire; and the mind is disturbed. If there is no second, there is no desire, no hatred, no fear. Scorpions and snakes

cause fear in us. If we ourselves remain as scorpions and snakes, how then could there be fear? Would we be afraid of ourselves? As long as there is something other as a second, there will be fear. Therefore, what Advaita accomplishes is the bringing about of secondlessness. The Upanishad declares that there is no fear when there is no second thing.

Are there not in the world many people? How can all of them become one? How to accomplish secondlessness? Vedānta teaches that what we see in this world as many are illusory. It declares that all are of the nature of Īśvara. We do not see thus. If it is true that Īśvara is all, then what we see must be illusory. If what we see is true, then the declaration that Īśvara is all must be false. If what appears to us is true, then there should be no misery for us. But misery does come to us. Therefore, what Vedānta teaches must be true. If that be so, that all are of the nature of Īśvara should be regarded firmly as the truth. What appears to us is illusory. The real is not this. Our eyes see what are illusory. Advaita teaches that there is a Reality as the basis of the entire world. What appear to us to exist are all illusory; the true Existence that is one is alone real.

If all is Īśvara, are we alone different? We should dissolve ourselves too as that Īśvara. Then, there will be no second entity. Now, we see things as different. But the true seeing is seeing all as Īśvara. If we too get dissolved without leaving a second, then good will result. Even in the empirical world if two minds become one, there is no strife. Similarly, if all become one as Īśvara, we shall become all; then, there will be

no desire in regard to ourselves. In the absence of desire, there will be no sin; and if there is no sin, there will be no body; and if there is no body, there will be no misery at all. For the destruction of misery, Advaita is the medicine. Advaita is that which accomplishes secondlessness. Seeing all as Īsvara is Advaita. Seeing what is real is Advaita. It is this that is taught in the books mentioned above.

Many objections are raised against this position. Some of them are logical; the others are unreasonable. The sacred texts reply to those objections. They outline the disciplines that lead to Advaita. The manuals written by the Ācārya impart the same teaching.

We go to sleep. From sleep we wake up. Sometimes we sleep well. Sometimes we experience dreams. The waking state is *jāgrad-avasthā*. Experiencing dreams is *svapnu-avasthā*. Deep sleep is *susṭi-avasthā*. Thus there are three states of experiences. Our waking is for doing work. Deep sleep is for getting rid of tiredness that results from work. These two seem to be enough! Why should there be dream-experience? I reflected on this. Īsvara is everywhere. He is the non-dual Brahman. All is of the nature of Ātman. In order to prove this truth, it appears, He has projected the dream-world as an example. There is no other purpose. The apparent plurality of the empirical world is similar to that of dreams. In dream there occur multifarious difficulties and pleasures. But at the termination of the dream there is nothing left. Even the body which appeared when the dream was experienced is not there. Only he who realizes that such dream was seen is left as the residue. All else that

appeared to exist in dream disappears. When we wake up from this empirical world which is a dream, only consciousness will remain. That is the true reality. It is that which is called Advaita. We are all Advaitins; we are in Dvaita-experience. But, those of us who have faith in Advaita see the Dvaita-dream in the empirical state. In this dream, we go through disease and misery. But we are those who believe that there will be a state in which there will be no disease. By what is Dvaita made known? It is given in immediate experience, now, through the sense of sight, etc. Advaita is made known only by Vedānta. Advaita is that which is made known by the sacred texts; Dvaita is that which is evidenced by the sense of sight, etc. Science tells us that the sun is very big; but our eyes tell us that the sun's diameter is just a span in length. With the palm the sun could be covered. Therefore, the sun appears small. But, what is the truth? If what we see is alone true, there is no need for the texts. It is only what we do not know that should be revealed by the sacred texts.

In the *Upaniṣads*, at certain places, Dvaita is mentioned; at some other places, Advaita. In what context is Advaita mentioned? It is mentioned in the context where the nature of supreme Brahman is taught. In the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣads*, for instance, when the significance of *Pranava* is taught, it is declared that all is of the nature of Advaita, that *Om* is all; here the expression 'Advaita' occurs. The term 'Dvaita' occurs in an *Upaniṣad*. The context there is this. "Remaining as different, how can one perceive an object that is different? If all is of the nature of Ātman, who can experience what as different?" In this context occur the words "Where, indeed, there is

Dvaita (duality) as it were". The meaning is: In the state where duality appears to be, there would be that (differentiated) experience:

*yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati, taditarah itaram
paśyati; yatra tvasya sarvam ātmaivābhūt, tatkena
kam paśyet — Bṛhadāraṇyaka.*

Where, however, all has become the Ātman, there, it is declared, there is duality *as it were*. In the context of the expression *as it were (iva)*, duality is mentioned, and in the context of the statement 'where, however, all has become the Ātman', non-duality is taught. There is also the word 'tu' (however) mentioned in the context where Advaita is declared. If after a statement, the word *tu* (however) or the word '*atha*' (then) occurs, it means that the final position is set forth thereafter. After the words '*yatra tu*' (where, however) it is declared 'all has become the Ātman.' Thus, from the expression '*tu*' (however) we have to understand the conclusive truth that all is of the nature of Ātman. The expression '*iva*' (*as it were*) indicates appearance and not reality. The expression 'like him' means 'not he himself'. Hence, when it is said 'duality, as it were' it means that there is no duality — this is the *siddhānta*. To our senses, duality is presented. That is mere appearance. What is understood with the help of sacred texts is Advaita. That alone is the *siddhānta*. That all is the Self (Ātman) alone is the truth.

Here, the expression 'Ātman' occurs; should not the expression be 'Paramātman' (supreme Self)?— Thus it may be asked. If there is 'Paramātman', there would be '*alpātman*' (little self) as different from it.

There is no Paramātman too. It is only in the state of duality that there is the distinction of 'Paramātman' and 'jīvātman'. When the state of Advaita is realised, there is only the Self (Ātman).

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* declares: *dvitīyād-vai bhayaṃ bhavati*. It is from duality that fear, misery, strifes, arise. Only if there are two different entities, there would arise desire, fear, misery, etc.

If some one that is dear to us dies, there arises misery. If he passes away before our eyes, we feel distressed. We think that there would be no distress if we pass away. If we pass away, there would be no misery for us. Therefore, if all are ourselves, then there will be no misery whatsoever. When there occurs misery, there is the thought of difference. What is it that occasions desire? It is only when there is consciousness of duality that there arise desire and misery. If the other becomes us, then there is no misery at all. How to effect this identity? If all become the Paramātman, there would be the one Self alone.

Hence, Vedānta declares: There need not be duality; non-duality alone is the truth. This truth our Ācārya has expounded as a glowing lamp, and has asked us not to forget. His commentary is called '*bhāṣya-dīpa*'. Simply because the expression 'Dvaita' occurs in Vedānta, people begin to say 'Dvaita' 'Dvaita'. They do not inquire as to where, what for, and before which concluding statement, the expression occurs. This is like the conclusion that there was the prevalence of drinking toddy among the Vedic circles, which some scholars arrive at, on the ground of the Vedic statement, 'Do not drink toddy'.

We are now in the state of dream. If we wake up from this state, that is the state of Advaita. If this *siddhānta* is retained in memory, at least one in a hundred-thousand will endeavour to attain that state. It is with this end in view that the great preceptors have written their works. It is not enough if we know that there is the Gaṅgā at Kāśī; we must buy the necessary ticket, travel by the appropriate train, cross the railway junctions *en route*, and without oversleeping arrive at Kāśī and actually bathe in the Gaṅgā.

The *Veda* declares that Advaita-experience is that whence words, speech and mind return, not being able to reach it:

yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha —

Taittirīyopaniṣad.

If it cannot be thought by the mind, how to know it? What is the meaning of this Vedic declaration? What is the meaning of the statement that the status of the Self cannot be thought by the mind? If it be that the supreme Self could be known, it would become an object of knowledge. The knower would then be different. In the *Kenopaniṣad*, it is said: "He by whom it is not contemplated, by him it is contemplated. He by whom it is contemplated knows it not."

yasyāmatam tasya matam matam yasya na veda sah.

What is the meaning of the statement that the Self is not known? The meaning is that it is not an object of knowledge. There is no meaning in bringing in another lamp to show a lamp. It is only for illuminating what is non-luminous that a lamp is

required. To see a lamp nothing else is needed. Consciousness is self-luminous. Īsvara is the nature of that very consciousness. In many places in the Tamil hymns, such as the *Tēvāram*, the *Tiruvācakam*, and the songs of Tāyumānavar, it is declared that Īsvara is 'consciousness alone,' that He is 'of the form of consciousness.'

By the mind, the Self is not thought; the mind thinks by it. All that the mind thinks is false; that by which it thinks is true.

yan-manasā na manute, yenāhur-mano matam—

Kenopaniṣad

All that is seen in dream is false. The seeing consciousness alone is real. It is this self that appeared in dream as all the objects seen. When the dream terminates, it will be realised that the one (consciousness) alone remains. If there be one that speaks and one that knows, they would be different. If there is no difference, there will be neither speech nor knowing. It is this non-duality that is declared in the Upanishads; and in the aforesaid sacred texts.

On the tree that is the *Veda*, there are the flowers, the Upanishads. The *Brahma-sūtra* serves as the thread which helps in making a garland out of them, fit to be worn round the neck:

vedāntavākya-kusuma-grathanārthatvāt sūtrāṇām.

If the maker of the thread (*sūtra*) was Sage Vyāsa, the one who made the garland was the Ācārya. Those who wear the garland are we. That garland should adorn our neck.

What we have conclusively understood is this: "The truth is only one; all is of the nature of Īsvara." On account of past impressions, things appear as different. But all must be made into one. Even what is referred to as 'we' must be dissolved. For that, the appropriate sacred texts should be studied. The means to this are the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis*, the *Purāṇas*, the sight of temples, *pūjā*, etc. We sacrifice so much for the sake of the objects of the world. We can do anything for gaining the bliss that is stable. The royal sage Janaka said: "I have given away the entire Videha kingdom; I have given away myself too."

videhān dadāmi mām cāpi saha dāsyāya.

To reach this state, the easy path is meditation on Śrī Candramaulīśvara. Thus Appayya Dīkshita has said. Following this way, all should gain Advaita-siddhi.

*īśvarānugrahād-eva puṁsām advaitavāsanā,
mahadbhayaparitrāṇā dvitrāṇām upajāyate.*

On the Significance of Śaṅkara Jayantī

Today is Śrī Śaṅkara-Jayantī. It was by the *avatāra* of Śrī Śaṅkara that the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis*, etc., were resuscitated. It is by their resuscitation alone that the observances connected with auspicious days such as Śrī Rāma-navamī, Nṛsīṁha-jayantī, Kṛṣṇa-jayantī, Uttarāyana-saṅkrānti, Śiva-rātri, etc., have been revived. The Jayantī of Śrī Śaṅkara is the Jayantī that has imparted to all Jayantīs their character as Jayantīs. On the fifth day of the bright-half of the month of Vaiśākha falls Śrī Śaṅkara Jayantī. Like the pure white jasmine (*vāsantī, mādhavī*) creeper,

that causes delight, let this fifth day of the bright-half month in the spring season (*vāsantī, mādhavī*) embellish and delight our intelligence.

Who is Śaṅkara? Śaṅkara is the one who brings delight to the world. He alone is Śiva, the giver of auspiciousness.

DEVOTION

द्रुतस्य भगवद्धर्माद् धारावाहिकतां गता ।
सर्वेशे मनसो वृत्तिः भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥

drutasya bhagavad dharmād
dhārāvāhikatām gatā
sarveṣe manaso vṛttiḥ
bhaktirityabhidhīyate||

Devotion (*bhakti*) consists in the constant and perfect state of mind (i) that is firmly rooted in the Lord's form and His benign features, and (ii) that is continuous like the flow of oil.

PART III
REMINISCENCES

ВЕРТИКАЛЬНЫЕ
ВЫЕМЫ

REMINISCENCES

V.A. Devasenapathi

“Count your blessings and name them one by one. It will surprise you to see what the Lord has done” — these words echo through the corridors of my memory. Naming the blessings I feel that a very blessing for over three decades has been the rare privilege of having *darśan* of His Holiness, the Paramācārya of Kanchi. When the Paramācārya was camping in the premises of the Sanskrit college, Madras in 1957, Professor P. Sankaranarayana Iyer sent word one day that I could meet him at the entrance to the college and that he would take me to the presence of His Holiness. Accordingly I went in the evening. After the *pūjā* the large gathering started moving towards the dais on which the Paramācārya was sitting. Professor Sankaranarayana Iyer took me by the hand and led me to sit next to the dais. His Holiness gave a discourse on *Tiruppāvai-Tiruvempāvai*. It did not have the formality of a discourse, but it was a homely talk as from a parent to his child, making me wonder whether anyone else could charge simple

words with such profundity as to make an impact on the mind and the heart. What a blessing to see the divine form of the Paramācārya and to listen to his words! When the discourse was over, Professor Sankaranarayana Iyer introduced me to His Holiness. After asking me for details about my native place and family background, His Holiness gave me *prasādam* with the words, “இயன்ற பணியைச் செய்து கொண்டிரு” (“Do whatever service is possible”).

A special programme was drawn up to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras in 1977, with lectures related to Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, Śaiva Siddhānta, Vīraśaivism, Christianity, Islam, Social Philosophy and Aesthetics (in the context of Tamil literature), Buddhism and Jainism from Tamil sources. I submitted the programme to His Holiness, seeking His blessings. After going through it, His Holiness asked me whether I knew that there were Advaita classics in Tamil. He directed that I could include Buddhism and Jainism from *Pāli* and *Prākṛt* sources. I was reminded of Ādiśaṅkara rescuing the *Amarakośa* from the flames, after its author, defeated by Ādiśaṅkara in a philosophical contest, committed all his Jaina works to flame. Verily, the Paramācārya typifies the Indian spirit of “live and let live,” giving a fair chance even to rival systems to make themselves heard.

Once, the Paramācārya gave me a copy of a souvenir of the Golden Jubilee celebration of Advaitasabha, Kumbakonam. It contained articles on Tamil classics from the *Tolkāppiyam* up to Tāyumānavar, viewed from the Advaita standpoint. Later, he asked me to keep *vedānta-siddhānta-samarasa* in mind, when

I write. On a later occasion, the Paramācārya repeated the following verse in full.

“தேவர் குறளும் திருநான்மறை முடிவும்
முவர் தமிழும் முனிமொழியும் — கோவை
திருவாசகமும் திருமுலர் சொல்லும்
ஒருவாசகம் என்று உணர்.”

Paraphrased in English the verse quoted above means:

Realise that the following are one in their declaration: The *Tirukkural* of Tiruvalluvar, the conclusions of the four *Vedas* (viz. the *Vedānta* or the *Upaniṣads*), the *Tevāram* (Tamil verses of Tirujñānasambandar, Appar, and Sundarar), the *Tiruvāymoḷi* of Saint Nammālvār, the *Tirukkōvaiyār* and the *Tiruvācagam*, and the utterance of Tirumūlar (viz. the *Tirumandiram*).

Once, the Paramācārya asked me to repeat the following verse of the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. As I did so, he took up the words, two or more at a time, uttering them slowly so that their meaning would be duly impressed in my mind:

“பிணக்கு அற அறுவகைச் சமயமும்
நெறி உள்ளி உரைத்த
கணக்கு அறுநலத்தனன் அந்தம் இல்
ஆதி அம்பகவன்
வணக்கு உடைத்தவநெறி வழிநின்று
புறநெறி களைகட்டு
உணக்குமின் பசை அற! அவனுடை
உணர்வு கொண்டு உணர்ந்தே.”

Paraphrased in English, the verse could be taken to convey the following lesson:

The Lord who is the beginning of everything and who has no end is of incalculable excellence. He has set forth the six religious faiths thoughtfully in such a way that they do not conflict with one another. Take to the path of worshipful penance, remove the weeds of alien faiths, dry them up leaving no trace. Understand them in the light of His Wisdom.

Once, there was a reference to the following verse of Saint Appar:

“போற்றும் தகையன பொல்லா முயலகன் கோபப்
புன்மை
ஆற்றும் தகையன அறுசமயத் தவரவரைத்
தேற்றும் தகையன தேறிய தொண்டரைச்
செந்நெறிக்கே
ஏற்றும் தகையன இன்னம்பரான் தன் இணை அடியே”

This could be rendered as follows in English:

The two feet of the Lord of Innambar (a Śaivite place of pilgrimage) are adorable! They are such as to remove the meanness of the anger of Muyalakan (the prostrate figure symbolising *ānava* (egoism) at the feet of the Lord). They are such as to encourage the followers of the six faiths in their respective pursuits. They are such as to lift the followers thus encouraged on to the path of perfection.

The Paramācārya asked Dr N. Veezhinathan who, like Dr R. Balasubramanian, has taken me to the presence of His Holiness on quite a few occasions, to

get from me reference to Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti in Śaiva Siddhānta. I submitted two. One of them is an oft-quoted verse:

“கலலாலின் புடை அமர்ந்து நால்மறை ஆறங்கம்
முதல் கற்ற கேள்வி
வல்லார்கள் நால்வருக்கும் வாக்கிறந்த பூரணமாய்
மனத்துக்கு அப்பாலாய்
எல்லாமாய் அல்லதுமாய் இருந்ததனை இருந்தபடி
இருத்து காட்டிச்
சொல்லாமல் சொன்னவரை நினையாமல் நனைந்து
பவத்தொடக்கை வெல்வாம்.”

Stated in English the above verse would be somewhat as follows:

Reality is the *plenum* (*pūrṇa* or fullness) beyond the reach of words and mind. It is everything. It is nothing. We shall overcome the bond of births, by thinking without thought the One who showed that Reality as it is by Himself being that Reality, declaring It without words to the four well-versed in the four *Vedas*, the six *aṅgas* and all knowledge by hearing.

When Dr Veezhinathan began with the initial words of the Tamil verse, the Paramācārya said ‘*prasiddham*’ (well-known). So Dr Veezhinathan stopped. But the Paramācārya asked him to proceed and complete the verse as the words have a charm all their own.

The second reference to *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is the following verse:

“கல்லால் நிழல் மலை
வில்லார் அருளிய
பொல்லார் இணைமலர்
நல்லார் புனைவரே”

Paraphrased in English the above verse is to the effect:

Good persons adorn their heads with the twin flowers (*viz.* the feet) of the One graciously granted by the Lord who is under the shade of the banyan tree and who used a mountain as a bow (or, alternatively, who is free from all doubt).

The allusion is to Gaṇapati as the son of *Dakṣiṇā-mūrti*. This is the invocatory verse in the *Sivajñāna-bodham* of Meykaṇḍār, the first of the four *Santānā-cāryas*.

Perhaps, the Paramācārya's direction to me is to focus on *vedānta-siddhānta-samarasa-svabhāva* as preliminary to the attainment of the good state of *samarasa* (சமரசநன்னிலை). Let us hear what Tāyumanavar says about this *svabhāva*:

“சந்ததமும் எனது செயல் நினது செயல்
யானெனும்
தன்மை நினையன்றி யில்லாத
தன்மையால் வேறலேன், வேதாந்த சித்தாந்த
சமரச சுபாவ மிதுவே...”

Rendered in English, this is to the effect:

Ever and anon, my acts are your acts. As my nature as “I” is not such as to exist without you, I am not different from you. This, indeed, is *vedānta-siddhānta-samarasa-svabhāva*.

As metaphysical standpoints, Vedānta and Siddhānta seem to be in conflict. Vedānta maintains that ultimately there is nothing and none apart from Brahman. Siddhānta affirms that with *Brahman (pati)*, we have *jīva (paśu)* and *pāśa* (the three strands, *āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*). In the state of release also *paśu* and *pāśa* continue to exist. How and as what, are explained by the Siddhāntins. That need not detain us here. *Svabhāva* or natural state of mind stressed here is to see how the two standpoints may be adjusted or accommodated. Tāyumānavar speaks of the accommodating spirit thus. In the final analysis we find that all our action is God's action. Not even an atom can move without His sanction or contrary to His will. Likewise, what I consider as my nature — as *cit* or intelligence — does not exist without His nature as Supreme Intelligence. In other words, when I act, it is really He who acts. When I exist as intelligence it is really because He exists as intelligence. If this is our attitude or permanent state of mind, Vedānta and Siddhānta, without being in conflict, can be in perfect accord.

Tāyumānavar says that the Lord knows how he longed and pined to attain this state of mind. His prayer in the second half of his verse is also *my* prayer to the Paramācārya.

இந்நிலையிலே சற்றிருக்க என்றால் மடமை
 இதசத்ருவாக வந்து
 சிந்தை குடிகொள்ளுதே, மலமாயை கன்மம்
 தீரும்புமோ, தொடுவழக்காய்ச்
 சென்மம் வருமோ எனவும் யோசிக்குதே மனது
 சிரத்தையெனும் வாளாமுதவிப்

பந்தமற மெய்ஞ் ஞான தீரமுந் தந்தெனைப்
 பாதுகாத்தருள் செய்குவாய்
 பார்க்கும் இடம் எங்கும் ஒரு நீக்கமற நிறைகின்ற
 பரிபூரணானந்தமே”

The above may be rendered in English as follows:

If I wish to stay a little in this state (of *samarasa-svabhāva*), ignorance comes as an enemy in friendly disguise to reside in my mind. My mind keeps thinking whether *mala*, *māyā*, and *karma*, will return, whether, as a continuing habit, birth will recur. Protect me by granting me the sword of firm faith and the bravery of wisdom, to overcome bondage.

Samarasa-svabhāva may also be stated in the following words of Aruṇagirināthar:

“எனதுயானும் வேறாகி எவரும் யாதும் யானாகும்
 இதய பாவனாதீதம்”

This may be stated as follows in English:

The transcendental state of “mine” and “I” transformed into “everyone and everything is myself.”

May the Paramācārya grant us this *samarasa-svabhāva* and transcendental state!

THE SAGE OF KĀÑCĪ
Reminiscences of a Devotee

A. Kuppuswamy

The First Glimpse Creates an Indelible Impression

It is more than 75 years since I had the first *darshan* of His Holiness Jagadguru Pūjyasrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, the Senior Ācārya of Śrī Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, who is familiarly known as "Periyavāḷ" (in Tamil), meaning "The Great One".

This humble devotee was born in a house in the Math Street, in the temple-town of Kumbhakonam. The house stood about a hundred yards south of the Śaṅkarācārya Branch Math on the southern bank of the river Kāverī, flowing through the northern extremity of the town.

On the fifth day of Navarātri (festival of nine days sacred for worship of Śakti), of the cyclic year Naḷa (1916), which day happened to be my sixth birthday, my mother took me to the Śaṅkarācārya Math at about 7 p.m. Thousands of people were

seen, some going in and many coming out of the Math. Many were stagnating near the flanks of lofty and wide gateway, gazing at the countless brass lamps burning brightly with wick and oil. And these lamps had been fitted to wooden frames carved in the shape of elephants, horses, guards etc.; the frames in turn had been nailed to the spacious walls on either side of the portal. I learnt (later on) the Navarātri festival was being celebrated in the Math, with the lighting of a lakh of lamps (spread over the nine days), with feeding of devotees and the poor on a mass scale and with *lakṣārcana* to *Devī Tripurasundarī*. My mother and myself got into the inner courtyard of the Maṭha with much difficulty. Getting seated at a distance from the threshold of the *pūjā maṇḍapa*, we managed to have a view of the Ācārya's *Pūjā* to Śrī Candramaulī-svara (name, learnt by me later) and the Devī, which had just been commenced.

The radiating brilliance of the Great Preceptor's face and his steady and methodical performance of the worship, to the deities, made an indelible impression on my tender mind. That first glimpse of the then young Ācārya has been a never-to-be forgotten experience of mine.

Unsurpassed Memory

About fourteen years later, when I was studying in the Senior Degree class, in a College at Madras, I happened to live with a near relative, at Adambakkam, near St. Thomas Mount. On a cold December day, in 1930, His Holiness was camping at Alandur, near St. Thomas Mount (on the outskirts of the Metropolitan City of Madras). The camping place was about three

furlongs away from my relative's residence. At about 7 p.m. that day, my relative (paternal cousin sister's husband — then a Superintendent in the Accountant General's Office at Madras) and myself went to Alandur in order to listen to the Ācārya's discourse, programmed to be begun at 7.30 p.m. We managed to get some space for sitting, in the rear part of the spacious ground where a large concourse of people had already gathered.

Amidst pin-drop silence, the Ācārya commenced to speak. In the course of the speech he touched on the expert skill of the sculptors of the Chola kingdom of the ancient past and incidentally referred to the existence of an exquisite and ancient piece of sculpture, known as '*Koḍuṅgai*' in the famous Śiva temple at Āvuḍayārkoil, in the Tañjāvūr district. After a pause for about two minutes His Holiness raised his hand and pointing it towards the place where we were seated, said "Are you not the son of Ramaswami Iyer of Kaṭṭukarai, near Āvuḍayārkoil? You must have seen the Koḍuṅgai." My cousin sister's husband, who was a native of Kaṭṭukarai village, stood up in all reverence, and replied in the affirmative. Not only he, but the entire audience were struck with wonder at the prodigious memory of the Great One. My relative whispered into my ear "It is more than eight years since Śrī Periyavā! visited my village, when my father was alive."

Prophetic Words

The great *Guru* was camping at a choultry, in Chaibasa, the headquarters of Singhbhum district of Bihar, for about nine days, early in February, 1936.

On the second day of the stay there, Prahlāda, the big elephant of the Math was taken by the mahout to the pretty large tank in the northern end of the town, for being washed. The animal seemed to have turned a little nuttish on that day. The elephant, while being washed, suddenly got up, ran to the middle of the tank and began to dive into deep water. Neither the mahout's threatening orders nor his coaxing words were of any avail. Prahlāda remained in the deep central part of the tank, displaying all sorts of pranks. People of the town — elders, youngsters and children — gathered off and on, around the tank, by day and night to have a look at the mighty elephant standing in the deep, unwilling to reach the bank.

All attempts to persuade the animal to get out of the tank proved futile. On the evening of the second day of this incident, the District Collector of Chaibasa sent word to the authorities of the Math that if they failed to make the elephant get out of the tank within the next twentyfour hours, the animal would have to be shot, so that much of damage to the irrigation tank might be averted. We were all in a fix.

At about 7.15 p.m. before His Holiness sat for the evening worship, I was summoned and asked by the Ācārya "Has Prahlāda come out of the tank?" I replied in the negative. About fifteen minutes later, a tumultuous uproar came off from the road in front of the choultry. I went out to find out the reason for the noise. I saw Prahlāda led by the mahout, with a crowd of joyous men, women and children clapping their hands following behind. On enquiring the mahout, I understood that the elephant had come out of the tank of its own accord a quarter of an hour earlier and had

faithfully followed the keeper. It flashed on my mind that the animal should have got out of the tank just at the time when the great *Guru* prophetically asked me about it, before he sat for the *pūjā*.

Wonderful Spiritual Power

About 56 years have elapsed, when, I recall now from my memory, another thrilling incident that happened on the last day (Sunday, 17th February 1936), of the Ācārya's stay at the same choultry in Chaibasa.

A decision had already been taken to the effect that the Śivarātri Pūjā and the Guru Ārādhana of the year should be performed at Keonjargarh, the capital of the then ruling State of Keonjargarh, in Orissa, in accordance with the request of the ruler of that state. Arrangements were made by the State Government of Keonjargarh for a day's halt at Hātgamaria, Champua and Palāspaṅka — places on the route from Chaibasa to Keonjargarh. The people of Chaibasa came to know that the Swāmi would be leaving Chaibasa by that evening. Hence, there was a rush of devotees yearning for darshan of the Ācārya, at the campus, from the early morning. And so, the *Guru* had to sit for Pūjā of Śrī Candramaulīswara at about 11 a.m.

At about noon, the local Forest Officer, followed by an attendant, stepped into the office of the Math camp. Having been directed by one of our Office staff, the Officer came and sat before my desk. He put a number of questions about the Math and its Head, about the necessity for a paraphernalia of horset elephants etc. for a religious head, and so on. Though I answered all his questions, it seemed as if he was no,

satisfied. Finally, he asked me if he could meet His Holiness. I told him that I would consult the Swāmi, after the Pūjā was over, and let him know at about 2 p.m. He left saying that he would send his attendant at 2 p.m. to collect the information from me.

As soon as the Pūjā had been finished, I informed His Holiness about the questions put to me by the Forest Officer and his desire to have *darśan*. I was ordered by Guruji to inform the Officer that he could have *darśan* at 4 p.m. When the Officer's peon came later, I informed him that his master could have *darśan* at 4 p.m.

By about 3.45 p.m. the office boxes, the bags containing groceries, the utensils etc. were all loaded on the bullock-carts, kept ready outside. And the convoy of the carts began to move slowly on the road to Hatgamaria, the next halt. The palanquin-bearers were asked to be ready, since His Holiness and the entire staff ought to start from the place before the commencement of the inauspicious Rāhukālam (i.e., 4.30 p.m. as it was a Sunday). Exactly at 4 0' clock, the Forest Officer arrived. I took him to the small room, in the outer verandah of the choultry in which the Ācārya was seated. I closed the door of the room, as per instructions, and waited outside. Fifteen minutes elapsed. There was no sign of the Ācārya coming out. I was worried over the time nearing the commencement of Rāhukālam. At about twenty minutes past four, the door opened, and the Swāmiji stepped out of the room, followed by the Forest Officer, his clothes almost totally drenched with perspiration. As the Ācārya paced quickly towards the palanquin, the Forest Officer placed a five rupee *currency note* before

His Holiness, and bowed. In chaste Hindi, the Ācārya said "Your wife has made offerings of fruits and cash this morning, and so take back this *note*." The Officer was stunned. The Ācārya got into the palanquin and the bearers were about to lift it. The Officer humbly said in a trembling voice "Maharaj! My wife told me that, during this forenoon, there was a heavy rush of devotees and that she could have *darśan* only with much difficulty. How could you know that she made offerings?" The Ācārya simply smiled. The palanquin-bearers lifted the palanquin and began to pace slowly along the road. The Forest Officer walked quickly by the side of the palanquin, looking intently at the Ācārya, who asked him to stop. But he did not. He (the Officer) requested to be blessed with a picture of His Holiness. As I was walking ahead, one of the guards accompanying the palanquin informed me that I was wanted. When I neared the moving palanquin I was ordered to get a picture for the Officer. I submitted that I would send one to him the next day, by post, as the cart carrying the office boxes had already left about half-an-hour ago. It seemed that my answer was not relished, for, at once, the Ācārya said "Ask the rider of the black horse to ride quickly, overtake the carts, and stop them. Let him fetch a picture by informing the *kārvār* (the official in charge of vehicles and menial servants). We can wait here on the road till the rider comes back." The palanquin was set down at one edge of the road. In another half-an-hour, Mannāji, who had ridden fast on the horse, came back and handed over the colour picture of His Holiness to me. On my placing it in the palanquin, the great *Guru* beckoned the Forest Officer standing at a distance, and bade him take the picture.

The journey was resumed. I could see tears of joy mixed with devotion as the Officer took leave of His Holiness.

All Encompassing Knowledge

One day, in about the second week of January 1937, Śrī Rājārām Rājā, Senior Prince of the once great Maharata ruling house of Tañjāvūr, had *darśan* of the Ācārya at Gannavaram (in Andhra Pradesh). He represented to the Guru Deva the contents of a communication received by him, from the Government of India, asking him to show cause as to why the political pension received by him till then, should not be stopped in view of the fact that the long-drawn litigation between the Tanjore royal family and the Ruler of Satara, regarding the right to private properties of the Tañjāvūr Raja, had ended in his (the Prince's) favour, according to the Judgment of the Privy Council, and as to why the Prince should not be asked to vacate the palace to reside somewhere else. Because of the prolonged litigation between the two parties in successive Courts, from the Subordinate Judge's Court at Tañjāvūr up to the Privy Council in England, and the debts left by the father of Rajaram, (the Prince), the aforesaid private properties of the Tañjāvūr Raj had dwindled to almost nothing. The Prince told the Ācārya that the dignity of the descendants of the once great rulers of the Tañjāvūr Maharata principality could be protected only through the blessings and assistance of the Ācārya Swami.

Prince Rajaram left Gannavaram the same evening. His Holiness was much moved by the pathetic representations made by the Prince — a descendant

of the rulers of Tañjāvūr who had been staunch devotees of the Kāñcī Śaṅkarācārya Maṭha hereditarily, and who had rendered yeoman service to the Math in the past. The Ācārya determined that effective steps should be taken to preserve the dignity of the Prince and his family. His Holiness decided that, as a first step, a memorial should be prepared to the effect that the political pension, till then paid by the Government to the Senior Prince of Tañjāvūr, should be continued, and that the Prince and his descendants should be allowed to reside in the palace, citing the reasons for the same, and that signatures of title-holders, Zamindars, Legislators, Chairmen of Municipalities, and other prominent citizens, primarily of the Madras Presidency, should be obtained on the memorial, and then it ought to be sent to the Viceroy of India, with a copy of it forwarded to the Governor of Madras.

The next morning, when I performed obeisance, Guru Deva informed me of the plan for helping the Prince and bade me to shoulder the responsibility of carrying it out. I felt that I was unequal to the task. I submitted to the Ācārya that I felt diffident because I had no experience in such work and since I was too young for the job. His Holiness observed "Sincerity of purpose, self-confidence, and faith in God, will make even the unfit become fit for any task. Leave by the night train for Madras, meet K. S. Venkatramani* first, acquaint him with the facts, and tell him that it is my desire that he and T. R. Venkatrama

* (Late) Kaveripatnam Siddhanatha Venkatramani, renowned author of 'Murugan, the Tiller', 'Kandan, the Patriot', 'Paper Boats' etc.

Sastri* should draft the memorial." With these words I was blessed with *prasad*. I bowed and took leave.

Soon after my reaching Madras on the next day, I met Śrī Venkatramani at his residence in Mylapore and acquainted him with full details of the Government of India's communique to the Prince of Tañjāvūr, his representation to the *guru* and the Ācārya's wishes. In the afternoon, Śrī Venkatramani began writing. The rough draft of the memorial got finished by night. The next morning both of us met Sri Venkatrama Sastri. Sri Venkatramani informed Sastriar in detail about why Śrī Periyavā! had sent me to Madras and handed over the rough draft to him. The learned lawyer perused the draft patiently and made some slight alterations. Then, he made kind enquiries about the Ācārya's tour etc. Handing over the draft of the memorial to me, he observed that I should show the draft to His Holiness, get His approval, and only then give it to the printing press. On the succeeding day, I left Madras by the night train and on the next morning reached Rajahmundry whence I took a bus to Polavaram, a village near which (I came to know) the Ācārya was camping. At about 10 a.m. I was before the Holy presence. On rising up after prostrations, I placed the typed draft before Swamiji who asked if the matter had been sent for printing. I informed that Venkatrama Sastriar had asked me to give it for printing, only after Śrī Periyavā! had perused and approved it and, if necessary, including any other points suggested by His Holiness. Thereupon, Śrī Periyavā! perused the draft twice, and then spoke "Since that famous lawyer has

* (Late) T. R. Venkatrama Sastriar, a famous lawyer and long-term Advocate General of the Madras High Court.

asked you to include any point desired by me, I would like to suggest something. The copy of the judgment of the Privy Council contains an observation made by Justice Philips that "If at any time the British Government of India thinks of restoring any State, already annexed, to its former ruler or to his heirs, Tañjāvūr should be given the first preference." A small paragraph, quoting the remarks of Philips and citing the Rendition of Benares by the British Government as an example of such restoration, may be added. And, further, on the basis of these, a prayer for granting a small State of seven square miles, around Tañjāvūr town, may be included. Whenever a petition is made to the Government, something more than what is actually desired for, should be requested. Convey these suggestions to Venkatramani and Sastrigal for their consideration."

Accordingly, I went to Madras again and, at first informed Sri Venkatramani about the suggestions of His Holiness. Later, the learned author and myself met Sri Venkatrama Śāstri at his residence. I conveyed to Śāstri the point suggested by the Ācārya. Śāstri observed "Do you now understand why I asked you to show the draft to Śrī Periyavāḷ? Venkatramani, myself, and perhaps, you too have read the judgment of Philips and know about the Rendition of Benares, but the idea of including it in a connected manner in the draft had not risen in our minds. Is it not? Now, you can go ahead with the printing." Such is the unsurpassed, all-round, knowledge of the great One who has studied in school only for about eight years. And, yet, the extent of Ācārya's knowledge has baffled many a scholar, many a lawyer, and many a scholar and thinker.

The Meaning of a Strange Gesture

I have been residing in a house, very near the eastern gateway of the temple of Śrī Kamakshi, at Kanchi, since December 1986. At about 4 a.m. on the 4th of February 1991, about three months after the Great One had curtailed almost all mundane activities and chosen to be in seclusion, I woke up all of a sudden, because of a dream or vision — I could not make out easily. In that state, I could perceive someone's right forearm only, with three lines of *vibhūti*, besmeared, just about the wrist. That hand was waving quickly, for about a minute, as if asking me to get out of the house. Unable to understand the meaning of the gesture and being somewhat upset, I sat up on my bed for a few minutes, and after some thinking concluded that the forearm, seen in the dream, should be that of the great Ācārya. I lay down again. About an hour later, I got up, rolled up the bed, went to the backyard washed my mouth, hands and feet, and then switched on the bore-pump. To my great surprise the motor, set up recently, did not work, though it had pumped out water lavishly even the previous night. Only a humming sound was heard, but not even a drop of water came out.

Having put off the switch, I went to the Kamakshi temple and, after bathing in the tank inside the temple, I returned home. Ablutions over, I had *darśan* of the Devī in the temple, and made a humble prayer to enlighten me about the strange gesture. As I was leaving the temple, I requested one of the chief priests of the temple, who was a long-time friend, to be pleased to find out some spacious house, with good water facilities and situated near the Śaṅkara Maṭha.

When he asked me for the almost sudden decision, I replied that I would tell him some time later, and that I desired an early shifting. The friend said that he would try. Then, I walked on towards the Math. Having made the customary prostrations before the Lotus Feet of the great *Guru*, I reported the happenings of the early hours of that day and also submitted that I could not understand the strange gesture of the forearm of the great person not fully visible, in the vision that I had had about two hours before sunrise. A gentle smile lit the face of the Sage. The Ācārya lifted his right hand, indicated by gesture that I should shift from the house (then occupied by me) and reside in some other house, and blessed me.

Scarcely two hours later, on my way back from the Math, as I was nearing my house, I heard someone calling "Master!" That is the manner of Sri Ramu Sastri's (the friend mentioned earlier) addressing me. I stopped. Sri Ramu Sastri came near me, and told "A spacious house, in Salai Street with good water supply situated about half-a-furlong from the Math, is vacant. The house has not been let out to anyone for about two years. When I told the owner of the house that you are in need of a residence near the Math, the owner agreed. You may go and see the house in the afternoon. If you are satisfied, you can occupy the house within a week after necessary white-washing, cleaning etc., are finished." I was much elated. In the afternoon, I was taken by my friend to the spot. I found the house quite to my liking. The necessary advance was paid in the evening.

The house in Kamakshi Sannidhi Street was vacated, and on an auspicious day in the next week, I

occupied the new residence. Four days passed on. In the morning of the fifth day, I got information about a tragic incident in my former residence. Many friends and acquaintances whom I met during the course of the day asked me if I knew Astrology. I chose to reply "I am no astrologer. It is all due to the benign grace of the Mahā Periyavāḷ, who is the Astrologer of all Astrologers."

THE GREAT GURU

गुरुरेव गतिर्गुरुमेव भजे
 गुरुणैव सहास्मि नमो गुरुवे ।
 न गुरोः परमं शिशुरस्मि गुरोः
 मतिरस्ति गुरौ मम, पाहि गुरो ॥

Guru alone is my refuge. I adore him alone. I accompany my master forever. Salutations to Guru. There is no one greater than Guru. I am the child of my master. My mind dwells on the Master alone. Oh Master! save me.

HIS HOLINESS ŚRĪ CANDRAŚEKHARENDRA
SARASVATĪ ŚRĪPĀDĀH

*S. Ramaswami**

The mere mention of His auspicious name will suffice to purify and sanctify our lives. To be one of millions of His humble devotees is an inestimable privilege which only the *tapas* of generations of one's ancestors could have earned for one. To be His contemporary, to be able to have *darśan* of Him, to have and to have had the inexpressible, the ineffable glory of 'conversation,' of communion with His thoughts, to have had in abundance His *anugraha*, His blessing in so many words where His mere look, *kaṭākṣa* would have been exhilaratingly satisfying — these are blessings one has cherished all one's life and would hand over to one's posterity as the most precious *kuladhana*. And one can never cease to wonder at the graciousness of the Parabrahman that we should have in this greatest of the Ācāryas of the *Śāṅkarapītha*, since the Bhagavat-pāda Himself, a living human embodiment, visible yet ineffable, very near and yet very, very far indeed, for

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He is a Mount Everest of the Himalayas of Brahmā-nubhava. One is thrilled, almost *atremble*, when one thinks of Him or speaks of Him, as one recalls His auspicious person before one's mind's eye. How fortunate indeed this generation is to have Him in our midst, seemingly treading the very ground one treads, for He (like the great Yudhiṣṭhira), walks with His feet a little above the ground—there is in this a manifestation of the mysterious, the magnificent beneficence of the Parabrahman who (as the *Brahmasūtra* has it) has no partialities whatsoever!

What can one say of the teachings of One who is Himself a living scripture, breathing and having His being in the Parabrahman — a Jīvanmukta — yet wafting all over the world, as the *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* has it, a kindly, fragrant, healing and auspicious breeze rich in the air which will enrich, ennoble and sanctify our lives as nothing else can. The Ācārya is more than a living scripture. He is a speaking, articulate, authentic scripture, recalling and emphasizing in his own mere presence, the substance of the Advaita Vedānta which the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* proclaim as the saving gospel of mankind.

Gibbon speaking of the great Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius said, 'His life was the noblest commentary on the teachings of Zeno, the great stoic Ācārya.' Of our Paramācārya, it may be said with absolute truth that he is not a mere commentary but the very scripture itself requiring little except a willing and eager heart and mind to grasp it, thereby to feel fit to grapple with life's problems, those 'little ironies' as they seem which so easily unsettle our

being and our living. It is no exaggeration to say that He is the authentic indication of the validity, the utility and the vigour of the Upanishadic teaching — *sarvam khalu idam-brahma, tat tvam asi* and *aham brahma asmi*. How else is one to explain the phenomenon, one finding oneself speechless, with an ineffable pervasive *ānanda* when one is in His presence? How easily one becomes oblivious of the countless cares, anxieties and worries of one's life when one gets a bare glimpse of the Being in front of one. And one dwells long, lovingly, endlessly on this experience, so illuminating, so healthy and healing, so catharstic. Let us dwell a little on the lessons implicit in His personality.

The first lesson, it would seem, that He teaches by the way He functions, is a sense of duty. Under all circumstances, be it heavy rain, or bitter, biting cold, or roasting heat, He does his *nitya anuṣṭhāna* as a Sannyāsin with meticulous rigour with an awesome earnestness and persistence. He seeks no excuses, offers none. When the body runs a high temperature and the lungs are filled with phlegm, He does not make any concessions to Himself at all. I have watched him bathe thrice a day and perform his *pūjā* to Lord Śrī Candramaulīśvara and Devī Tripurasundarī with the same rigour, minuteness of detail when he was far from physically well, as when He was quite fit. His fasting is not limited to the prescribed occasions. When someone has failed in his her observance towards Him, say, by seeking *darśana* with a full shaven face, or by a person who has not surrendered her hair when widowed, or in any other circumstance — He takes the burden of their offence on himself, and fasts for three days in an expiation of their possibly unconscious breach

of obligation. When someone from a temple offers *prasāda*, *vibhūti*, flowers or *kuṅkumam*, He gets up and receives these with a moving reverence and thankfulness. I ventured on one occasion, after a visit to Delhi, to offer Him a *kuḍam* filled with water of the sacred *Gaṅgā*. The *kuḍam* had been secured from pollution with a woolen shawl. He said with a smile — “from Gajamukhesvara?” How did he know? But He did. He knows every square inch of this great *Punyabhūmi*, having walked across it from one end to the other in the sacred footsteps of His great Master Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. On one occasion, He was asked: “You call yourself a Jagadguru?” “Yes”, was the answer, “One to whom the *Jagat* is *Guru*.” “And you call yourself Śaṅkarācārya.” “Yes, my Guru called on me to bear the name and head this holy *Pīṭha*. It is my sacred duty, my inescapable responsibility to fill this office to the best of my ability and to defend its authenticity and sacred history against attacks from malicious or unbalanced or ill-conditioned critics.” “How does one fill so great an office?” “Oh Yes! One can if one has the *śraddhā*, the *vinaya*, the *vidvat sampat*, the sense of the sacredness of an ineffably sacred gospel, the gospel of Advaita.” And Paramācārya has all these. And in His sweet submission to the will of the Lord, which is constant and unremitting, He goes on foot to every nook and corner of this land, in loving concession to the yearnings of the humblest devotees. On one occasion returning to Kumbhakoṇam from a visit to Koḍavāsal, he passed on the road a small Harijan hamlet. The hamlet’s men, women and children rushed to the edge of the road, crying out full-throatedly, “Svāmiyē daṇḍam.” He did not pass an inch forward. He halted and sat on a small

plaṅk. He called the manager to go to all the nearest places and collect all the dhoties, towels and sarees that the shops there had. And He gave them away to the *harijans* of the hamlet along with His *prasād*. He remembered, one presumes, the famous *Maniṣā Pañcaka* verse which hails even a Caṇḍāla as a *Guru*. These Harijans were inexpressibly dear to Him because they knew only God and treated him as their nearest accessible representative of Him. He recalled to me, on one occasion how the great son of Bharath, Sri V. Krishnaswamy Iyer visited the Math at Kumbakonam to offer his respects to the Ācārya. The Ācārya was still in his early teens and the Math was under the supervision of the Court of wards then under Sri V. Krishnaswamy Iyer's jurisdiction. Sri Iyer most respectfully begged our Ācārya bowing in humble salutation to him "This Pīṭha is a great pontificate. It has an illustrious tradition of the richest and robust scholarship in its occupants, beginning with Ādi Śaṅkara and continuing in this tradition, Sarvajñātmamuni and Abhinava Śaṅkara. We have got from these, the *San̄kṣepaśārīraka*, *Śārīrakamīmāṃsā Rudrabhāṣya*, *Ātmavidyā-sahasranāma* and *Ātmavidyā-vilāsa* and a great many works, not known yet to fame. Pray let me have the blessing of the sending down to the Math, regularly some of the lions of Vedānta scholarship which I am privileged to have on the staff of my Sanskrit College at Madras. Let them have the privilege of studying our sacred *Prasthānas* with you." And young Candrasekharendra was then privileged to be the humble pupil, a very unusual kind of pupil indeed, who was really a fellow-student of them, and often seeing more and more clearly the drift of Vedāntic texts. This was the feeling of nearly all the

Professors of Vedānta who had taken up the task of instructing the Ācārya in our sacred scriptures. Once Śrī Karuṅḡam Krishna Śāstrigaḷ, a '*Vedānta kesari*' himself said in a conversation with me, "One wonders often whether we are his teachers or his pupils! He is so wonderfully quick in grasp, and so fantastically original in his interpretations."

Later, years later, addressing a crowd of devotees on the Madras Sanskrit College grounds, when *bhikṣā* had been offered to him by the staff of the Indian Bank founded by Śrī Krishnaswami Iyer in the wake of the notorious crash of *Arbutnot and Co.*, the Ācārya paid rich tribute to Sri Krishnaswami Iyer as: "He was a *Mahāpuruṣa*, Look at the way this great man vested his savings. He took care of "*Uḍal, Poruḷ and Āvi*" [உடல், பொருள், & ஆவி]; (i) *uḍal* (physical welfare) in the form of the Veṅkatramaṇa Āyurvedic College and Dispensary, (ii) *Poruḷ* (material prosperity) in the form of the Indian Bank, (iii) and *Āvi* (*ātman* - self) in the form of the Madras Sanskrit College itself with Vedānta as the centre of its scheme of Śāstraic studies. It was a truly inspired perception of the manifold benefactions of Śrī Krishnaswami Iyer's far-seeing philanthropy. And whatever vicissitudes of time may have, the great Ācārya's blessings will see all these institutions through all the crises that may beset them.

He recognizes the inexpressible value of *bhakti* as the true, essential foundation of the truly Vedāntic life. His daily *pūjā* — now taken over so far as the actual ritual part of it is concerned by Śrī Jayendra and Śrī Śaṅkara Vijayendra is an example to all of us of the need for *bhakti*. *Brahmānubhava* is the *prasāda* of Īsvara.

One may not abandon the foundations, if one does not want to drift aimlessly. *Adhikāri-bheda* is indispensable to any careful organisation of human activity, and if the Ācārya limits his Vedāntic instruction to a select few, it is in obedience to this basic fact that *uttama-adhikāris* alone can profit from instructions in Vedānta; and one must strive hard and become *uttama-adhikāris* before one seeks to enter the world of Vedāntic experience. The star-sown, star-studded space all around us is filled with the glory of the Divine with His grandeur and with His overwhelming presence.

*“tena tyaktena bhujñīthāḥ,
mā gṛdhāḥ kasyavid dhanam”*

— (the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, 1 cd). Whose is all this wealth? *Yours!* emphatically yours. Don't rush for it. One's heritage is always there for one. Let us fit ourselves to be worthy of it.

That our Ācārya is perhaps the greatest living testimony to the validity of the Advaita gospel is apparent to all who keep their eyes and ears open. That He dwells in our midst, being a constant counsellor of *ādhyātmic* wisdom, all of us know in our inmost hearts. That He Himself is His Teaching is the lesson one learns from the endless contemplation of One who is all kindness and compassion unto us all.

COVET NO MAN'S WEALTH

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

*īśāvāsyamidam sarvam
yatkiñca jagatyām jagat |
tena tyaktena bhññjīthāḥ
mā grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam ||*

In the heart of all things, of whatever there is in the universe, dwells the Lord. He alone is the Reality. Wherefore, renouncing vain appearances, rejoice in Him. Covet no man's wealth.

(Īśāvāsyopaniṣad, 21)

PART IV
TEACHINGS OF THE SAGE OF KĀNCĪ

PART II.

TEACHINGS OF THE SAGE OF PAW.

THUS SPAKE THE SAGE OF KĀŅCI

A Compilation

R. Balasubramanian

[1]

Frequently, when challenging the statement of a person, it is asked in Tamil, "What? Is his statement a *Vedavāk*?" signifying that *Veda-vāk*, a Vedic statement, is inherently true.

[2]

The *Vedas* are the tap-root of all sects of our religion. Whatever denomination we may belong to, our common allegiance is to the *Vedas*.

[3]

Truth is not man-made. Truth exists forever, from an infinite past.

[4]

The present life of every person is a glorious opportunity to be used in such a manner that there

will be no more lives hereafter. The death that will come inevitably at the end of this life must be the last, and the soul surviving that should not hereafter enter into another body by the operation of the law of *karma*.

[5]

Smṛti implies what is remembered. *Smṛti* is a record of the memory of the sages of the Vedic texts including what might have been lost in the passage of time.

[6]

Appeal to conscience or the inner voice must be made only when all other forms of guidance that have been enumerated, namely, *śruti*, *smṛti*, the way of life of those well-versed in *smṛti*, and the example of good men are not available. Then, and *only then*, can we act as our conscience bids us act. Now-a-days, however, the fashion is to make it all topsy-turvy, to give the first place to what is called one's conscience relegating all the other prescribed guidances to a secondary place, or as is often done, to condemn them as meaningless or irrational.

[7]

To lead a good life, we must get rid of evil in our mind, speech, and conduct. To this end, we must be continuously engaged in thinking good thoughts, and doing good deeds prescribed by the *śāstras*.

[8]

An old *sannyāsin* was asked how he overcame the promptings of *kāma*. He replied that, when *kāma* knocked at his mind's door, it found him so busy that it went away of its own accord.

[9]

Attach yourself to God to be detached from the world.

[10]

One way of worshipping God is to consider our body as the temple of God, and whatever we do is itself worship of God.

[11]

The purpose of prayer is to find relief from the heartaches of life by communicating with One who will give ear to what is said and who alone can heal them.

[12]

Surely, if a man is helped to shake off his pride, control his mind, restrain his senses, and feel an *inclusive love* for everything in the world, he will automatically attain *śānti* (peace of mind) and cross the sea of *samsāra*.

[13]

Time is a great healer. The agonies of today pale into insignificance after a lapse of years. When he has to face present suffering, the *jñāni* looks on it with a mind of thirty years hence and laughs at it.

[14]

A bridge across a river has a number of arches. To a man standing under one arch, all the other arches will appear smaller than the one he stands under. This arch will appear biggest to his eyes. Even so, to a votary of a particular deity, all other deities will appear inferior. But the truth is that all deities are manifestations of the one God. All arches are similarly constructed and have the same dimension.

[15]

To get at the one Supreme, you must start from some manifestation of It; and you choose it as your *iṣṭa-devatā*. Another man may choose some other manifestation. As each progresses in his devotion and concentration, he will be led on to the One where the differences disappear. That has been the experience of great sages and saints.

[16]

One should observe the traditional practices in religion; else, one is a fallen man. Invitation to a new religion implies that all who lived before the birth of that religion did not attain salvation, and also that salvation is denied to all those who do not belong to that religion. Obviously this is absurd.

[17]

To ask a man to give up his old religion is, in fact, to ask him to give up the God whom he worshipped. It is a sin against God.

[18]

It is not necessary that we should try to bring out uniformity in religions. Unity is what is important, not uniformity.

[19]

There is no justification for one caste considering itself superior to another.

[20]

Let no one pride oneself over one's caste or status. We should think only of the duties of our respective castes without any consciousness of superiority or inferiority. Whatever be one's caste, if one has devotion to God, one can become divine in essence.

[21]

The greatest and noblest among us looked upon themselves as the lowest. Arrogance of caste superiority is a sin according to our *śāstras*

[22]

There is a wrong view that *sannyāsins* are parasites of society, because they do not do "productive work". It is said that they do not contribute to national wealth and, like beggars, they prey upon society... A true *sannyāsīn* lives in communion with the Spirit, acquires *śānti* (peace), and sets the tone of the spiritual life of the community. He is the exemplar of the highest values of life and as such is an asset to society.

[23]

A *saṅgha* is never contemplated for the order of *sannyāsins*. Forming a *saṅgha* is not a *sannyāsi-lakṣaṇa*. That will lead to involvement in worldly affairs, holding offices, handling money, claiming rights and perquisites. The *sannyāsin* must live in solitude and, as far as possible, away from men.

[24]

A person who has not purified himself cannot purify others. The mere *existence* in the world of a few such souls engaged in self-purification creates an aura by itself which tends to bring solace and peace to an innumerable number of troubled hearts. It is in this way that *sannyāsins* are *lokopakārins* (benefactors of society) much more than any political or social leader. Any movement tending to disturb this ideal is not at all beneficial to the welfare of humanity at large. *Sannyāsa*, to which alone *ahimsā* in mind, word, and action is ordained, is the highest summit of our culture.

[25]

The true worshipper of a *mūrti* never feels that he is worshipping a stone or a piece of metal. He thinks only of God — forgetting all else.

[26]

The frail mind must go from the concrete to the abstract, from the forms of God in images to God without form.

[27]

The word *liṅga* means a symbol... The universe of myriad created objects may be considered as a *liṅga* of the Almighty. Our *śāstras* have prescribed the *Liṅga* in Śiva temples as one such *liṅga* of the Almighty, the sight of which will make us think of God.

[29]

The *Liṅga* has, as it were, a formless form and is intended to lead the worshipper's mind to the contemplation of the formless, qualitless supreme Reality or Brahman.

[29]

While this is true of a *liṅga* made of any material, there is a special significance attaching to the *sphaṭika liṅga*, made of pure quartz. While the *abhiṣeka* water is poured on it, the *liṅga* is hardly visible through it, its colourless form being completely lost in that of the water which flows over it. When coloured substances like sandal paste or vermilion or a coloured flower are placed on it, it takes on the colours of those substances though it has no colour of its own. Thus the *sphaṭikaliṅga* is taken as the best representation of the Nirguṇa Brahman of the *Upaniṣads*, the attributeless all-pervading Paramātman who, for our sake, takes on qualities and exhibits Himself as the Saguṇa Brahman.

[30]

Of the three, body, wealth, and mind, the second cannot be taken by us across the shores of death. We must leave it behind as an inheritance to our children. But the powers of our body and mind, what we have done with them, are ours to carry beyond death.

[31]

No one has done more good to Tamil Nadu than Avvaiyār. If, for thousand years, there has been righteousness as well as *bhakti* in this region, it is mainly because of Avvaiyār.

[32]

Many things are mentioned in the books as the salient features of Tamil Nadu. The excellent feature which I see here is the presence of temples for Pillaiyār everywhere.

[33]

Suppose we get a beautiful box which is full of precious stones. However, we do not have the key to open the box. Because of this reason, will we discard the box? Will we not keep it hoping to get the key sometime later? For, if we lose the box now, it will be of no use even if we get the key later on. Such a valuable box is the *Vināyakar Akaval*. In it are contained the teachings of the *Yoga-śāstra*, which are valuable like the precious stones. Though we do not at present have the intellect (key) for comprehending (opening) it, let us, from now on, recite it. As we go on reciting it, we will understand its meaning. Vināyakar himself will bless us with his grace for understanding it.

[34]

We need the tradition of *ācāryas* for the total illumination of the light of the Self and also for teaching us the means for overcoming suffering... The knowledge of the succession of *gurus* is necessary for those who are interested in the Self.

[35]

When we practice *bhakti*, neither God nor the *guru* is the beneficiary thereof. We alone are the beneficiaries.

[36]

Though we read a lot, our dense *ajñāna* does not become thin at all. Only when we go to the right place where it gets reduced, there will be the dawning of knowledge following the thinning of *ajñāna*. Such a place is the proximity of an *ācārya*.

[37]

Now-a-days vocational education useful for employment is imparted in schools and colleges. The same was the case in ancient times. However, without stopping with vocational education, spiritual education was also imparted then. So, unlike the present times, morality and spiritual development of the people were never neglected. Our ancestors helped the people to lead their life on the strong foundations of morality (*dharma*) conducive to the attainment of the goal of the other world.

[38]

Profit and loss are not really permanent in the world. They exist only for some time. They may be thought of at times. But without the calculation of profit and loss in one's relation with *guru*, one should surrender to him.

[39]

Body is the reward for the sin that we commit. The cause of sin is bad deed; and the cause of bad deed is desire. So, only when desire which is the root cause of all our suffering is removed, there will be final cessation of suffering.

[40]

In the absence of a second entity, there is no desire, no hatred, no fear. To help one realize the absence of a second entity is Advaita.

[41]

So long as we are not able to experience the truth of non-duality by stilling the mind, let us practise *bhakti* on the basis of Dvaita that "You (God) and I are different" and be satisfied in that state of happiness. Thereafter, let Him manifest Himself as the Self of the self in terms of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Or, let Him bring about the non-dual state.

[42]

There are *bījākṣaras* (the mystical letters) in the *mantras*. Just as a big tree is contained in a small seed, even so immeasurable potency is stored up in these *akṣaras*

[43]

An *ācārya* is one who not only teaches the principles of the tradition, but also in his own life, as an example to others, follows these principles of the tradition.

[44]

We speak of both precept and practice, both scripture and tradition. In Tamil we speak of three together: *paḷakka-vaḷakka-olukkam* (i.e. practice-tradition-precepts).

[45]

Sāstra is scripture; *sampradāya* is tradition. What is stated in scripture is common to all. But the tradition-in-practice may vary from region to region. The family practice, the regional practice — these may change among the families and regions.

[46]

The charity that we practise must produce in us qualities such as simplicity, humility, and absence of egoism. On the contrary, when we practise charity thinking that we are merciful to others, what we do produces in us pride and egoism. Instead of uplifting ourselves through the practice of charity, we are harming ourselves.

[47]

Our motto must be: "Service is our duty."

[48]

Wherever there is suffering, we must volunteer to do everything possible for its removal through money, body, and speech. This is our duty.

[49]

Only when our mind is pure, we can do real help to others; then only, what we do is fruitful.

[50]

Give to others, and this alone is *tyāga*. This is what the *Veda* teaches everywhere. At the conclusion of a religious action thinking, "Since I am the agent, the entire fruit of my action may accrue to me. But let me not be the sole beneficiary of the fruit of my action," one should, in a spirit of supreme renunciation, abandon the fruit of an action for the good of others by saying, "*na mama*" (not mine, not for me). This is what our *Veda* teaches us.

[51]

If a person performs various kinds of outward activities saying "I do social service" without dissolving the sense of "I", what he does helps him not. Nor does it benefit others. It may appear that it has produced some good result for the time being. But it does not stay for good.

[52]

Our *Dharma-śāstras* speak a lot about social service in the name of "*pūrta*".

[53]

The five sacrifices called "*Pañca-mahāyajñas*" are the essence of the Vedic *dharma*. Of these, "*Brahmayajña*" is the study and the teaching of the *Veda*; it is, indeed, the real gift of knowledge: it is a great help to others. "*Pitṛ-yajña*" is the offering of libations of water to the ancestors. "*Devayajña*" is the worship of God. It is the consummation of all offerings and religious practices. "*Bhūta-yajña*" is the offering to all *jīvas* such as dog and crow. "*Nṛ-yajña*" is the hospitality

shown to guests. It appears that, when we consider the “*Pañcamahāyajñas*” no other religion enjoins service to others as our Vedic religion. Service to all beings in the created world without exception is *Pañcamahāyajña*.

[54]

The great virtue of compassion (*dayā*) should be in the minds of all.

[55]

Bodily service is a good exercise to the body. When it is done for the good of others, it specially enthuses the mind. Finally, it leads to the purification of the mind.

[56]

Whatever evil accrues to us through bad deeds performed by each organ has to be removed through the performance of good deeds by the same organ. In order to purify the mind, which is a dust-bin, we are able to practise *dhyāna* (meditation) through the same mind. The tongue which indulges in all kinds of talks is made use of for uttering the names of God. For cleaning the intellect which is engaged in all kinds of perverse thinking, we use the same intellect for our philosophical investigation. In the same way, do we not perform many wrong deeds through our body — through our hands, feet, etc.? They have to be cleaned only through this body. The purification that is done through the activity of the body constitutes the core of social activities called *pūrta-dharmas*, i.e. social service. It also produces the purification of the mind through

bodily work, because there is the idea of helping others in our mind which is the basis of all these activities.

[57]

However great a person may be, he too by the sweat of his brow must perform *pūrta-dharma* along with others in a spirit of equality.

[58]

One has to begin with bodily service. But without restricting oneself to it, one should, from the beginning be engaged in doing things for the sake of God.

[59]

In the beginning there must be more of bodily work and less of spiritual thinking. Subsequently, they must be of equal proportion. Later on, there should be more of spiritual contemplation and less of bodily work. The point is that at no stage should one of these two be absent. Finally, one will realize that one is guided by God himself.

[60]

Our desire is like fire which, without any satisfaction, consumes everything that is offered to it.

[61]

The more the simple life, the better the spiritual welfare.

[62]

In those days there was no need for the establishment of "Old Age Home", "Home for the Widows", etc. Why? The relatives were taking care of them. In almost all homes, there were old persons such as an aged aunt, an aged uncle very distantly related to the family, and so on. Now-a-days, even those who are very rich lavishly spend money with a show of vanity on "parties" for dinner, etc. Or, they give donations in such a way that they are advertised in papers. But the practice of taking care of the poor relatives as members of one's own family with a feeling of relationship is almost disappearing.

[63]

The pomps and vanity of the marriage celebrations and the wilful waste during these occasions must be cut down. Now-a-days, we want to be economical only in our expenses on religious rites which are essential for a wedding. On the contrary, we lavishly spend on things which are not necessary for a wedding celebration such as musical concert, dance recital, band, procession, and so on.

[64]

Facilities must be provided for the proper performance of *uttara-kriyā*, obsequial rites, by the members of the different castes. Of these rites, the first one that occurs is *pretasaṁskāra*, i.e. the cremation or burial of the body of the deceased in accordance with one's family practice, which is a very important rite.

[65]

A person called "*jīvātman*" is said to possess sixteen parts. Fifteen of these parts constitute the soul of a person, while the body is the sixteenth part. So, the body possessing one part, remains after the departure of the soul from it. There is a view that there is the need for *preta-saṁskāra* in order to make an offering of it to Īsvara.

[66]

When we have to make our entire life a sacrifice, the fortieth sacrifice which is the last, *i.e.* *antyeṣṭi* is *preta-saṁskāra*. The body by means of which a person has performed the other sacrifices is itself consigned to the funeral fire (*citāgni*) as an oblation.

[67]

Just as the objects intended for *homa* are purified by ghee and then offered to the sacrificial fire, even so the *preta*, *i.e.* the body of the deceased, must be purified and then cremated. The body is given to God as an offering. Burial of the body in the earth is also an offering to God.

[68]

Even if a person used his body for performing evil deeds and even if he was not aware of the fact that his body was controlled by the power of God, since we know it, we have to respect it by performing the rites due to it at the time of the disposal of his body. "Even though he did not do anything good with his body as an offering to God, let us now, as a compensation, as an expiation, therefor, offer his body to God" — with this thought we have to do the *saṁskāra* for it.

[69]

The truth is that, according to our religion, the individual is more important than society. I am of the view that the life-blood of our religion is that every individual should, by the observance of the moral principles, purify himself.

[70]

Our mode of worship in the temple is in the form of "Community thanks-giving", "collective offering", to Lord. So, silence cannot be expected here (in the temple). Excitement and intense activity, the sound of the big bell and the beating of the drum, the noise of the gun-powder explosion will be there. However, there is worship room in everyone's home for silent meditation; there are also the banks of the river and the tank for this purpose.

[71]

The life-blood of Hinduism is that every individual, after purifying himself by the observance of the rules which he has to follow, has to guide others by the example of his own life. A good part of a person's life is led in this way observing the rules as a householder in the family, apart from his life in the *gurukula* when he is young and his life as a *sannyāsin* in a *maṭha* or *āśrama* in old age. That is why our *Dharma-sāstras* formulate his duties as a householder to others in the family and also the duties of his wife and children to him much more than what other religions do. Since spiritual development to a great extent has to take place in the family, a great deal of the *dharma* of a householder has been mentioned in our scriptures.

[72]

To go about doing social service, while leaving one's personal duties to others in the family, is mockery, fraud.

[73]

To do one's work is not derogatory. On the contrary, to make others do one's work is derogatory.

[74]

No one should have the wrong notion that the world survives only because of one's social service.

[75]

The world will be protected by the one who created it; we are only instruments in the hands of God. There will be restraint in what we do if we realize that we do social service only for removing our bad *karma* and that the service that we render to the world will be available to it even in our absence.

[76]

When a person has attained the knowledge of the supreme Self, when he has become one with the supreme Self through *bhakti* or *jñāna*, he will be rendering great service in the form of peace to all beings in the world involuntarily without any thought about it.

[77]

A single test is enough to find out whether we should have the old discipline or new reform. We have to find out whether indiscipline, corruption, theft,

cheating, murder, deviant life, etc. were more earlier when we were "superstitious" (and followed the old discipline) or whether they have increased in number after our "enlightenment" (through reform movements). If we can remain "reformed" only with this battalion of evils, it appears that it is better to be wedded to superstition than to reform.

[78]

The mind runs away when it is left alone; even when it is associated with speech through the recitation of divine names, *stotra*, etc., it runs away after some time. That is why, on the basis of the mind-speech-body discipline, we have religious acts in which the mind is associated not only with speech, but also with the body. Uttering the *mantras*, the act of *homa* has to be done; uttering the *Sahasranāma*, the act of *arcana* has to be performed — such is the discipline that has been set forth.

[79]

It is only through outward signs, overt acts, and external differences that we can reach a state in which signs, acts, and differences are absent.

[80]

The purification of the mind cannot take place without discipline. The inner discipline is not possible without outer discipline. The outer discipline is not possible without rules, formal procedure, overt acts, and many differences connected with the acts.

[81]

When relation with God is lost, relation with *dharma* too is lost.

[82]

We should not take the *mahāns*, the great ones, who transgressed the family tradition in their transcendent state as our models. They did it, not minding any opposition from others, on the basis of the authority of their uncommon inner experience. We should not be under the illusion that we have such an experience.

[83]

“*Ācāra*” can be directly translated into Tamil as “*oḷukkam*”. What is referred to as “more valuable than life” by Tiruvalluvar, what has, therefore, to be protected as greater than life, is the way of *dharma* called “*ācāra*”. Does not *dharma* cover both the inner and the outer aspects of life?

[84]

What is called “*ācāra*” or “*oḷukkam*” includes both character and conduct.

[85]

Though *ācāra* is generally understood as purification (*śauca*), a careful inquiry into, and study of, the *śāstras* will reveal to us that it covers all the five *dharma*s (*viz. ahimsā, satyam, asteyam, śaucam, and indriyanigraha*).

[86]

For the medicine of *dharma*, it is said, *ācāra* is the diet.

[87]

Just as *ācāra* includes all the common duties (*sādhāraṇadharmas*), it also includes many other things. Matters connected with health and hygiene, matters dealt with in medicine, psychology and science, matters relating to morality and love — all these fall within the scope of *ācāra*. The special excellence of the latter lies in the fact that all these are shown to be important by virtue of their connection with the Self.

[88]

It is wrong to think that what is taught in *śāstra* should be in agreement with our social ideology or with something else. The truth of *śāstra* is self-validated. It is supra-scientific, trans-scientific conveyed to us by the *ṛṣis* (sages). It is the *pramāṇa* for everything else. That it has to be accepted on the basis of other things is topsyturvy.

[89]

In addition to the “seen” (*dr̥ṣṭa*) known by us, there is also the “unseen” (*adr̥ṣṭa*) which is not known, or which cannot be known, by us. In the latter lies our perfection. By following the *śāstras* which speak about the “unseen”, our ancestors lived a glorious life saturated with *bhakti* and *jñāna*, a life appreciated by the whole world. However much our advancement

may be in science and economics, we roam about without a sense of fullness ever since the time when we discarded it. We have made ourselves a butt of ridicule.

[90]

The little discipline of self-cooking is good because of the following results it produces. First, it leads to *citta-suddhi* (purification) of the mind. Second, it is conducive to good health. Third, it helps one to be economical. Fourth, it will remove occasions for caste-quarrels. Fifth, it will help one to follow the scriptural injunction that one should not get married after the fiftieth year. Sixth, it will help the growth of the knowledge of the *Veda*, which is the root of our great *dharma*. Seventh, it will bring down violence to animals. Eighth, it will help to project the ideal of *sāttvika*-food to others. No deed is superior to the one which is conducive to the spread of peace in the world. In addition to all these good results, there is one more; the Lord will bestow His grace on such a person saying: "This person follows scripture. He has controlled his tongue." So everyone should follow the discipline of self-cooking in order to be the beneficiary of the Lord's grace and also to attain *śreyas* (the supreme good). With a view to make a beginning, let everyone, from now onwards when there is a holiday for office or school, or on a Sunday in a week, commence the habit of self-cooking.

[91]

Purāṇa is the lens through which we have to see the *Veda*. Does the lens not enlarge the size of what

is small and show it as big? Thus, the *Purāna* enlarges the principles of *Dharma*, which are stated very briefly by means of stories.

[92]

You have read in the history books the observation that Śāᅅkarabhagavatpāda drove away Buddhism. This is wrong. I myself, who bear his name, say that this is an exaggeration. Those who have read the commentaries of the Ācārya will agree with my view. Refutation of Buddhism is very meagre in them. Earlier, Kumāriᅅa Bhaᅅᅅa refuted the Buddhists. The Ācārya criticized a great deal two orthodox systems — the Karma-Mīmāᅅsā and the Sāᅅkhya. If we carefully read his commentaries, we will find that his refutation of Buddhism is just one-hundredth of his refutation of these two orthodox schools.

[93]

We who have accepted the philosophy of Adisāᅅkarabhagavatpāda are neither Śaivites nor Vaiᅅᅅnavites. We are called "*Smārtas*". *Smārtas* are those who follow the *Dharma-śāstras* called "*Smᅅrtis*". We hold the view that Śiva, Viᅅᅅᅅu, and other Gods are the different forms of one and the same *Paramātmān*. There is no hierarchy among these Gods.

[94]

Both pleasure and pain rock the mind. When the mind is still, there is real bliss.

[95]

Māyā can be destroyed only by controlling the desires. So long as there is mind (functioning in its own way), there will be desires. So the mind has to be controlled. It should not be thought that, when the mind is stilled, we will become insentient without any power as in the state of death. On the contrary, it is this quiet state of the mind that is the source of all power.

[96]

Just as there is the appearance of silver in a shell, even so there is the temporary appearance of the world in *Brahman* through *māyā*.

[97]

To a *jñānī*, *māyā* is zero alone. However, when a *jīva* is in the state of ignorance, he looks upon himself as a separate number and adds zero. Just as the zero which comes after a number makes it ten (10), twenty (20), one hundred thousand (1,00,000), and so on, even so to one who is ignorant, *māyā* becomes manifold and appears as the real objects of the world.

[98]

The objects of the world appear to us in the little light of *māyā*. However, to a *jñānī*, they disappear in the light of the Self. This is the meaning of the statement that what is day to a *jñānī* is night to us.

[99]

Religion is the means to the pursuit of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. These four are called *puruṣārthas* (values).

[100]

Even though we do not understand the ancient scriptures, we have to protect them in the hope that they will be understood by some in the future and that, therefore, they will be useful in the future.

MAHĀTMĀ, THE HIGH-SOULED ONE

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।

तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

To that high-souled one, who has supreme devotion for God, and for the preceptor as for God, shine in full the truths that are taught here.

THE SEMPITERNAL BEACONLIGHT

*R. Sankaranarayanan**

Whenever I stand before His Holiness, our Paramācārya of *Kāñcī*, I am choked from emotion and even now as I write these lines duly dedicating my humble self to Him, I feel as though I am enveloped by His spiritual aura, being ever enthroned in my heart. In the realm of the spirit, in that unchartered ocean of Bliss, His Holiness reigns supreme towering aloft as a glittering light of immense magnitude, shining in all its effulgence; what is hidden beneath this is of unfathomable depth!

Even the very view of what appears above the surface, or rather to have *darśan* of Him with due adoration is itself a rare privilege given to us in this age of rank materialism. And to listen to Him and to act according to the pearls of wisdom that fall from His holy lips off and on is a greater privilege indeed.

* Formerly Executive Editor, '*Kāmakoti Vāṇī*'

In his thought-provoking introduction to the biography of His Holiness in Tamil compiled by Brahmaśrī S. Sāmbamūrthi Śāstrigaḷ, Ramachandrapuram, Justice N. Chandrasekhara Iyer, (Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India) has said, *inter alia*, that "He is a beaconlight to all those travelling in ships and boats on the ocean of *samsāra* warning them off against hidden rocks and shoals so that they may reach the heaven with perfect safety."

His Role as Prince Arthur

While his father was at Tindivanam in South Arcot district, our young Swaminathan was admitted in the second form in the Arcot American Mission High School. He stood first in all the examinations and was awarded many first prizes during the annual prize distribution functions of each year. He won the first prize for his proficiency in the *Bible* as well. All the Christian teachers of the school became very fond of him. In 1906, while he was studying in the fourth form, the school management decided to stage *King John* of Shakespeare, and the Headmaster chose our 12 year old Swaminathan to play the key-role of Prince Arthur. Being a prodigy *par excellence* he enacted his role in the most marvellous manner, so much so that he was awarded the first prize for the brilliant display of his histrionic talent as well. The next day all the teachers trooped into his house, met his parents and expressed their immense pleasure and lauded their son sky-high for the role he played in the previous day winning laurels for the same. But his mother did such rituals as to protect her cherubic child from their evil eye and thus to ward off their *dr̥ṣṭi-doṣam*.

Tāṭaṅkapraṭiṣṭhā of Śrī Akhilāṇḍeśvarī

In April 1923, it was decided to have *Tāṭaṅkapraṭiṣṭhā* of Śrī Akhilāṇḍeśvarī at Tiruvānaikkā also known as Jambukesvaram. The previous *praṭiṣṭhā* was performed in 1846 by the 64th pontiff of the *pīṭha*, His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī Śrīpāda (5); and this most memorable event took place on April 29, 1923. A vivid description of that august ceremony was given in the 'Hindu Message' published at Śrīraṅgam under the editorship of Śrī. T. K. Balasubramania Iyer (which is reproduced below).

The *Tāṭaṅka Praṭiṣṭhā* of Śrī Akhilāṇḍeśvarī at Jambukesvaram was performed by His Holiness on 29 - 4 - 1923. The '*Hindu Message*' wrote in its editorial on May 10, 1923 as follows:

Never before in the annals of Trichinopoly have we witnessed the grandeur and enthusiasm that were displayed at the reception to His Holiness Śrī Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha who arrived at Trichinopoly on the 23rd *ult.* The mile-long procession headed by richly caparisoned elephants and surging crowds with His Holiness seated high on the ivory palanquin in the centre, surrounded by large concourse of brahmins chanting the *Vedas*, and followed by numerous Bhajana and *Tēvāram* parties, the rich and tasteful decorations all along the route which extended to nearly eight miles, the buoyant enthusiasm of the huge crowd that pressed on all sides just to have a glimpse of His Holiness' beaming countenance and that followed the procession right through to the end, the festive appearance

of the whole town and the eagerness of every one in that vast concourse of people to do some sort of service to His Holiness — were sights for Gods to see and they beggar all description. It showed in a clear and unmistakable way the strong-hold of religion and religious ideals still on the people of the country. No Viceroy or even the Emperor himself could have evoked such spontaneous and deeply-felt enthusiasm. It took nearly five hours for the procession to reach its destination. His Holiness had a smile or a word of cheer for every one of the assembled people and when he retired into the Mutt, His Holiness observed that the weariness of the journey was counteracted by the unprecedented enthusiasm of the people. The very next day commenced the preliminaries for the Tāṭaṅka Pratiṣṭhā for the Goddess Akhilāṇḍeśvarī at Jambukesvaram. As many of our readers may not quite understand what it means by Tāṭaṅka Pratiṣṭhā we will describe it a little in detail.

When Ādi Śaṅkarācārya incarnated in this holy land, he went round the whole of Bhārata-varsha several times and in the course of his *Vijaya Yātrā* established several *Yantras* in different big temples. Of such temples, Jambukesvaram is an important one. It appears the Goddess here was very fierce and with her *ugra kalā* used to burn everything before her. Even the *arcaka* who opened the temple doors early in the morning was reduced to ashes and the people, unable to put up with such fierceness, eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the presence in their midst

of the great Śaṅkarācārya who came to this *kṣetra* in the course of his tour and implored him to draw out the *ugrakalā* of the Goddess and thus appease her ferocity. Accordingly, he established a temple of Gaṇeśa just opposite to that of the Goddess so that when the temple doors were opened in the morning the first person to catch the eye of the Goddess may be her own favourite son. This in a way reduced the ferocity; but not satisfied with this, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya prepared two Śrī Cakras in the shape of two Tāṭaṅkas (Ear-ornaments) and drew forth all the *ugrakalā* of the Goddess into these two Tāṭaṅkas and fixed them on her two ears. Thenceforward the Goddess became *Saumya-mūrti* and ever since then this Tāṭaṅka has been worn by the Goddess always except during the nights. And whenever this ornament got into disrepair, it was repaired by the spiritual decendants of the Great World-teacher who adorned the Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha and put up again on the ears of the Goddess after due Pratiṣṭhā. In accordance with this time-honoured rule, the present occupant of Śrī Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham deemed it part of his duty to repair the Tāṭaṅka and perform the Pratiṣṭhā while fixing it up again on the ears of the Goddess. With this object in view, His Holiness started from Kumbhakonam more than four years ago and after touching through various parts of the country, teaching *dharma* to his numerous disciples reached Trichinopoly just two weeks ago. The preliminary ceremonies were performed on a grand scale with the help of thousands of brahmins and the ceremony proper took place on the 29th *ult.* Ever since a very early hour that

morning, people began to assemble in large numbers and by about 8 a.m. when His Holiness left the Mutt for the temple, the crowd had become so dense that the town could not hold it. The twin attractions of the Goddess Akhilāṇḍesvarī (Goddess of all the worlds) and the divine Jagadguru (the World-Teacher) were so great that it drew enormous crowds with boundless enthusiasm. The sight of this surging mass of people and the tremendous enthusiasm that swayed them was simply marvellous. The rush was so great that it became very difficult even for His Holiness to enter the temple. After all, when His Holiness got into the Sanctum Sanctorum and the Kumbham was brought in from the Yāgasālā and the Abhishekam was performed for the Goddess, there arose a thrill of reverence throughout that surging mass of humanity. Soon after, under the command of His Holiness and blessed by him, the Tāṭaṅkas were fixed up as usual on the ears of the Goddess and immediately there shone a brilliant divine lustre which it was the privilege of only those that were inside to witness. Thus ended this unique festival, eagerly awaited by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country. People were in tens of thousands, and a very large number of highly learned Vidvāns, who had graced the occasion delivered a number of public lectures under the command of His Holiness on various interesting topical subjects. They were all duly honoured by His Holiness with valuable presents according to their merits. Thus ended this unique ceremony not witnessed by any for two generations past.

His Compassion for the Poor

In 1924, He performed the *Vyāsapūjā* of that year at Thiruvaiyāru on the northern bank of the Cauvery near the Pushyamantapam ghat. Quite unusually, then, the river was in spate, inundating vast areas around, reaching almost the Coleroon, just about three miles to the north. Many huts were submerged rendering a large number of the poor homeless. The river waters even entered the Pūjā Maṅṭapam. In spite of the most solemn and repeated requests of the devotees, His Holiness refused to change his *pūjāgr̥ha* till his *Cāturmāsyaśaṅkalpa* was fulfilled. Slowly, the situation eased and within a fortnight the floods subsided, but it left behind a trail of destruction and untold sufferings to the poor. So His Holiness harnessed to the full the men and the materials at his command and made all possible efforts to help the poor affected by the floods by arranging for food and shelter for them. Later, the then Collector of Tanjore, Mr. H. M. Hood sought an audience with and met His Holiness at Vallam, and expressed the gratitude and thanks of the Government for the immense help He had rendered to the flood victims.

He performed the next year's (1925) Vyāsa Pūjā at Eḷaiyātraṅguḍi. Just then, His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Śrīpāda of Śṛṅgeri Pīṭha also did His Vyāsa Pūjā at Kuṅṅakkūḍi, just five miles away. The Devotees and many other Vedic scholars thronged to have *darśan* of both the Pontiffs and through them both Their Holinesses were kept informed of each other's welfare.

During His itinerary, His Holiness found time to do some research through Raphael's 'History of Java'

and through other authentic sources as to how our Hindu culture was and is still holding sway in the Far East, *i.e.* in Indonesia, in Bali, Java and in other countries of the Indian Ocean region, some thousands of years ago. This had found expression in his lectures as well. Quite fittingly therefore, the World Hindu Cultural and Philosophy Conference was held in Madras in March 1976 under the inspiration and guidance of His most illustrious disciple, His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī Śrīpāda which proved to be unique in all aspects.

His Catholicity of Outlook

It will be of interest to note here that in Valliam, there were a good number of both Muslims and Christians, and they, along with the other Hindu disciples, arranged for a grand reception to His Holiness, the like of which was never before witnessed. Moved by this spontaneous welcome, H. H. blessed one and all of them and advised them that they should continue to remain united and should in no way give room to petty village factions; whatever be their religion, they should adhere to their traditional modes of worship and in so doing, neither create enmity nor harbour any ill-feelings or rancour towards their other co-religionists. Many *harijans* were present whom His Holiness blessed with *vibhūti prasādam*.

His Holiness at Maṅalūrpeṭṭai

He performed the Vyāsapūjā on July 21, 1929 at Maṅalūrpeṭṭai, in Tirukoilur taluk of South Arcot district. During this period, His Holiness was indisposed and endured fever for nearly a month. Despite this, he went through his routine, bathing in the river

Dakṣiṇa Pinākinī (*Ten Penṇai*) thrice daily, performing *Pūjā* and blessing his devotees. But his close disciples, including some eminent physicians both Allopathic and Āyurvedic, and numerous other *bhaktas* as well were very anxious about his health, prayed and entreated him to get himself treated. But His Holiness politely declined to take any medicine and sustained himself on nothing but *Tuḷasi tīrtha* (Water soaked in sacred *Tuḷasi* leaves). Miraculously enough, much to the delight of all the devotees, His Holiness soon recovered from His illness and bloomed again into his ever divine picture of health, radiating his holy aura all-round.

His Ceremonial Entry to Kāñci, the City of Lights

For the first time since his ascension as the 68th pontiff of the Pīṭha, on January 25, 1931, people eagerly awaited this event and welcomed him with a magnificent reception. He stayed at his headquarters for nearly a month and used to visit the temples of Śrī Kāmākṣī, Śrī Ēkāmranātha and Śrī Varadarāja almost daily.

Śrī Kāmākṣī is the presiding deity of the Pīṭha and the temple is under the direct management of the Mutt. In 1840 Kumbhābhiṣekam was performed for this temple by the then reigning (64th) pontiff, His Holiness Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī Śrīpāda (5). There is an added sanctity for this temple because the *Pratiṣṭhā* of Śrī Cakra here was performed by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda himself and that he attained *siddhi* within the precincts of the temple itself. We find even today a '*Śilāvighraha*' dedicated to this great master, the size of a human being — installed inside this famous temple. Fittingly His Holiness too perform-

ed a Kumbhābhīṣekam for this temple after a lapse of nearly a century.

In April 1931, His Holiness camped at Uttiramerur. There he inspected the historic epigraphs and inscriptions of great archeological value found on the walls of the local temple and explained its contents to those assembled there as to how the democratic form of Government was functioning in those days.

His Presentiment!

'On June 14, 1932 while at Nagar, His Holiness was doing Vedānta Vicāra among several pundits well-versed in the Vedic lore. Just then, an official of the Mutt went to Him rather in an agitated mood with a telegram in his hand. Immediately on seeing him H. H. enquired as to whether the telegram had come from Kumbhakonam. On his replying in the affirmative, His Holiness directed him to go back. An eerie silence prevailed for some time. A little later, His Holiness asked the pundits as to what a sannyasi should do on hearing the news of the demise of his mother. Although they were adepts in Dharma Śāstras, still they kept mum and dared not utter any reply realising the fact that that melancholy message conveyed the death of Śrīmatī Mahālakṣmī Ammāḷ at Kumbhakonam. This pious lady, who gave birth to our Jagadguru, quite appropriately expired on an Ekādasi and was cremated on Dvādasi — a very rare distinction attained only by a chosen few. Silently then, His Holiness went to the waterfalls a couple of miles away accompanied by the pundits and also by a large number of devotees, men, women and children, who were dumbfounded to hear the sad news, chanting *Nāmasaṅkīrtan* all along.

His Sojourn at Madras

His Holiness made his ceremonial entry into Madras on September 28, 1932. The citizens of Madras in their thousands were awaiting this event with great expectation. So, they rose to a man in according him a grand and fitting reception the like of which was never before witnessed in the annals of the city of Madras. On reaching the Sanskrit College at Mylapore where elaborate arrangements were made for his stay, addresses of welcome were presented to him in Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. He replied suitably laying stress on the importance of *Śiva Bhakti* and on the greatness of Śrī Kapālīśvara, the presiding deity of Mylapore.

It would be of interest to note in this context that the Corporation of Madras resolved unanimously to present a civic address to him and this resolution was passed at the instance of the late Sir A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar who said that His Holiness was not only the reigning pontiff of the Kāmokoṭi Pīṭha but was also a great spiritual dignitary held in very high esteem by our other co-religionists as well. It was unique in the sense that the Corporation had not come forward to honour any other spiritual head in such a spontaneous manner hitherto. But, as it involved His going all the way to the Ripon Buildings to receive the address of welcome in person. His Holiness politely declined but conveyed his gratitude to the Corporation authorities through the Mutt officials. That year's Navarātri festival was celebrated in the most magnificent scale at his campus at the Sanskrit College. Śrī K. Balasubramanya Iyer made all arrangement for his convenient stay there, including the digging of a tank for his daily

bath, and also for the vast concourse of people who thronged in their thousands daily and left nothing to be desired.

In all, His Holiness stayed at Madras for more than four months during which he visited most of the parts of the city. Daily in the evenings, he gave illuminating lectures on the tenets of all that we hold sacred, verily the noble spiritual heritage of the hoary past of which we could feel legitimately proud.

Among the audience were to be found the celebrities of the day such as Śrī. T. R. Venkatarama Śāstri, Justice Kumaraswami Śāstri, Sir P. S. Sivasami Iyer to mention only a few. His profound lectures made his listeners spellbound and no wonder devotees attended the same from every part of the city not to speak of those who came from outside the city as well. These lectures had since been made available in book form in two parts by Śrī R. Narayanaswami Iyer of the M.L.J. Press, the first part consisting of 50 lectures in 610 pages, and the second one mainly dealing with *Śaṅkara Vijaya*. A third part consisting of 18 lectures was also published in 156 pages and all of them were, needless to say, encyclopaedic each in its contents. Subsequently these have been published by Kāmakoṭi Kośasthānam in five parts. Some of his precepts, particularly pertaining to our daily life, could quite well be mentioned here as it would be applicable to us even today. He exhorted us to lead a simple life eschewing all ostentations as far as possible. Among other things he listed mainly the following three items:

(1) The society ladies should make it a point to go in for ordinary cotton sarees only.

(2) Coffee drinking should be given up; instead Wheat (Kunjee) gruel or butter milk could be substituted which would not only be healthy but also be economical. He said that many middle class families were spending more than they could afford on coffee, thereby struggling to make both ends meet.

(3) The dowry system should be totally abolished and our marriage celebrations should avoid all the unnecessary expenditure based upon false prestige.

These exhortations, he made as long ago as 1932, hold good even today as most of our middle class families are on the brink of ruin monetarily on account of the above listed items, chiefly. His Holiness left Madras in the first week of February 1933 as he wanted to be at Kumbakonam for the Maha Makham festival occurring once in twelve years. So, before leaving Madras, he left a message to the citizens of Madras wherein he enjoined upon them on Vedic lines such as: "Speak the Truth. Perform *Dharma* and be devoted to your Mother, Father and *Ācārya*." He advised them not to swerve from the path of rectitude in their avocations and also adhere to their *ku'ācāra* under all circumstances.

His Śaṣṭyabdapūrṭi and the Kanakābhiṣekam

The *Śaṣṭyabdapūrṭi mahotsavam* of His Holiness was celebrated on the 18th of May 1954, at Kāñcī and at other places in a simple but solemn manner eschewing all kinds of fanfare at his behest. Likewise, *Kanakābhiṣekam* was performed to him at Kancheepuram to commemorate 50 years of his ascension.

He has always enjoined upon his devotees to adopt an attitude to plain living and high thinking and to avoid pomp and show.

Among the various reform movements initiated by Him, the *Tiruppāvai* — *Tiruvempāvai* *ṣaḷaṅga* conference may be cited as the foremost, as it gave ample impetus to the religious impulse of the people and to the solidarity of the *āstikas* at large, laying stress on Śiva-Vishnu *abheda*. Being versatile and a linguist his lectures are verily encyclopaedic forming a “Finger-Post to Mankind showing the right path to take to reach *Śānti* and Bliss.”

Moving with the times, he nominated an illustrious disciple to succeed him as the 69th Pontiff of the Pīṭha. This was a red letter day for the Mutt and this great event came to pass at Kancheepuram on the 22nd March 1954, witnessed by thousands of devotees. In His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī Śrī-pāda we are fortunate to have a worthy successor to the most holy master.

Atop of all his achievements, His Holiness has now become the very embodiment of asceticism and austerity. More often than not, he observes *mauna-vrata* and goes into retreat — a self-imposed seclusion. People from far and near, from all walks of life, resort to him daily to receive his blessings to get adequate solace and to quench their spiritual thirst.

On the 7th of July 1956, Ācārya Vinoba Bhave had an audience with His Holiness. A few Westerners too have his *darśan* off and on. On the 1st of July, 1954, Howard Conn, an American Priest after his meeting with His Holiness prayed for a message for the spiritual progress of the Americans; His Holiness complying with his request said: “God is watching all that you do. Whatever you do, be conscious of His presence.”

Verily, this is a message for the entire humanity and for all time to come.

A Living Force of Hinduism

In October 1955, Milton Singer — a Professor of Chicago University had an audience with His Holiness. About this event, he wrote to his friend as under:

“Before I went to India, I had heard and read much about the great ‘Soul Force’ of its holymen and saints; but I had assumed that this was, something in the ancient past. And it was not until I met Śaṅkarācārya that I realised it was still a part of the living force of Hinduism today.”

The Rājā Veda Pāṭhasālā

The Mission of His Holiness is to preserve our Vedic tradition in all its pristine purity despite our modern environmental changes. Towards this he is keen on maintaining the famous Rājā Veda Pāṭhasālā at Kumbhakonam.

The Rājā Veda Pāṭhasālā at Kumbhakonam is one of the few institutions where all the three *Vedas*, *R̥g*, *Yajur* and *Sāma* are taught under one roof and where all the three subsects *viz.* Smārthas, Mādhyas and Vaiṣṇavas — are freely admitted without any distinction.

The students undergo training for a period of seven years and are provided with free boarding, lodging, clothing, etc. The Pāṭhasālā has the unique distinction of prescribing a syllabus for study and following it scrupulously.

This Pāṭhasālā was founded in 1542 by Maharaja Sri Govinda Dikshitar, the Chief Minister of the Tañjāvūr Naick kings. His Holiness is an illustrious scion of this distinguished dignitary through his mother. This institution has been going on for nearly five centuries, despite adverse circumstances. The school is legitimately proud of the fact that Sri. Muthuswami Dikshitar, one of the musical Trinity, and the present Śrīmad Āṇḍavan Svāmigaḷ were its *vidyārthis*. This *Gurukula* got its home newly constructed and the Gṛhapravesam was held on the holy Mahāmakham day under the immediate and august presence of His Holiness. The then Chairman of the Municipal Council presented His Holiness with a welcome address. Speaking on that occasion, His Holiness said that even as buildings built on strong foundation lasted long, likewise that Gurukulam founded in the mid-sixteenth century by Mahan Sri Govinda Dikshitar is still reverberating with '*Veda Ghoṣa*' daily without let or hindrance. He added that although the governance of this country had changed substantially since then, this sacred light of learning is still shedding its *jyotis* uninterruptedly all around right from its inception. He concluded by saying that all the actions that spring from our innate sense of Dharma would last forever.

The learning of the *Vedas* requires exacting discipline, calling for retentive memory, concentration and a mastery of diction, grammar and scriptural texts. Besides, the *Vedas* have to be learnt by rote, being taught orally. It is well-nigh an uphill task to take to Vedic learning nowadays. It is being neglected and so some Vedic scholars are keen that *Veda Adhyayana* does not die with this generation and that steps should

be taken to promote the same by attracting the younger talents.

When, sometime ago, there was difficulty in getting rice for the Pāṭhasālā to feed the students, the '*Pidi Ariṣit Tiḷlam*' was introduced and the immediate trouble was got over. The system is still working well. Anyway, the donations from a few philanthropists and the annual grant from the Government of India are not sufficient enough to make both ends meet. In the circumstances the authorities of this institution had sought the guidance of H. H. and had introduced a scheme to get permanent funds. The average expenses for the boys come to Rs. 150/- a day and if 365 philanthropists could come forward to bear the expenses at the rate of one per day the Pāṭhasālā could be run without any interruption. At present there are 62 students. In spite of this, it is striving hard to maintain the noble tradition of teaching the *Vedas*. On a meagre scale, it costs around Rs. 50,000 per annum to maintain this institution. Otherwise, an endowment of Rs. 1500/- made in favour of the Pāṭhasālā could fetch an income, by way of interest, sufficient to meet the expenditure of a day. Recently there was a press note on these lines. Dr. V. R. L. Sarma, the President and Treasurer of the school, himself a Vedic scholar, has announced that donations in this regard are given exemption from income-tax.

A cause at once so laudable and so dear to our Jagadguru should not be left languishing in the doldrums. It is the bounden duty of all of us who are devoted to His Holiness to give our mite to this good cause without any further delay.

The Sanskrit Commission's Audience with His Holiness

He is also for resuscitating the study of Sanskrit. The Sanskrit Commission appointed by the Union Government sought his guidance in the matter. The Chairman of the Commission, the late Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the celebrated polygot scholar, along with his other colleagues, had an audience with His Holiness on February 7, 1957, at Kāñcī. He advised them to find out suitable ways and means to preserve and continue the study of Sanskrit throughout the country without let or hindrance, and that it should be duly dovetailed with modern education. He also added that Vedic scholars of repute should be given due recognition and should be encouraged, and that those of the I. A. S. should have a good grounding in Sanskrit.

He is extraordinarily erudite verily being 'one in a millennium'; his lectures are encyclopaedic and they are available in book form for our guidance.

Being 'fiercely austere' no hardship mental or physical, is too much for him to carry on his life's work. His message, to put it in a nutshell has been the synthesis of all religions and the need for profound and unswerving faith in the benevolence of God. He has striven unceasingly in bringing together classes and creeds into one group of believers, notwithstanding outward differences in forms of worship and habits and manners. There is no gainsaying the fact that he has tremendously "succeeded in his sacred mission in making people feel that they belong to the same brotherhood and are the children of one and the same God."

May the Almighty at once Immanent and Transcendental, vouchsafe unto us the precious, proud privilege of His Holiness's guidance for many more years to come, and may His Holiness's blessings be showered upon us, poor erring mortals, groping in the dark and yearning for 'Light and Still More Light'. So let us pray duly adapting Cardinal Newman — as Gandhiji also did:

'Lead Kindly Light, Lead Thou Us on, Amidst the Encircling Gloom, Lead Thou Us on.'

“THE STILL POINT OF THE TURNING WORLD”

R. Balasubramanian

FRIEND, PHILOSOPHER, AND GUIDE

It is impossible to narrate the cultural history of South India from the beginning of this century without giving an account of the life and activities of Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, the sixty-eighth Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāñcī *Kāmakoti-piṭha*. Referring to the impact of the Sage on the people, William Cenkner writes: “(Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī’s) ministry, his administrative acumen and his influence upon the people of Tamil Nadu as head of a religious institution remain unparalleled by any figure of this century.” The Śaṅkarācāryas who have come in the lineage of Ādi Śaṅkara are looked upon as *Jagadgurus*, that is, world-teachers, since their teachings are meant for all sections of society, for the entire humanity. “Even when they are addressed to the Hindus, they are applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the followers of other faiths.” The interest of the Sage of Kāñcī is not narrowly restricted to religion and philosophy. On

the contrary, the entire spectrum of the creative work which brings out the higher aspects of life and reveals the greatness of man and the glory of God receives his careful attention even to the minutest details. History and archaeology, music and mathematics, politics and public administration, temple worship and architecture — none is outside his scope. He combines in himself an ecclesiastical administrator, a worshipping saint, a mystical seer, a profound philosopher, a perceptive historian, and a marvellous linguist. It is no wonder, therefore, that he is interested in the creative activities of all sections of people. His memory is prodigious. He remembers men and matters. He can easily recall the salient features of the places he has seen; he can identify persons and families even after a long time. As Paul Brunton puts it, "there is behind him such an unusual concentration and such a rare intensity of spiritual force" that his impact on the people is both extensive and deep.' He is a friend to the poor, a philosopher to the learned, and a guide to the religious flock of vast dimensions.

TWO PERSPECTIVES

Advaita teaches that there is only one reality called Brahman or Ātman and that the world of plurality is no other than Brahman or Ātman. It conveys this teaching by drawing a distinction between two standpoints, the absolute and the relative. The former is called *pāramārthika* standpoint, and the latter, *vyāvahārika* standpoint. The two standpoints are also referred to as the standpoint of knowledge and the standpoint of ignorance respectively. The Sage of Kāñcī drives home this simple but profound truth by inviting our attention to the example of a doll-elephant made of

wood available in the writings of Tirumūlar, the great mystic-saint of the Tamil tradition, and Ādi Śaṅkara. From the perspective of the child who is engaged in play, the doll, the given object, is the elephant; but from the perspective of a carpenter who knows the truth, the doll is wood and nothing else. It means that, when the given object is viewed as an elephant, it is not perceived as wood; and when it is seen as wood, it is no more the elephant. What is true of the illustration — the wood and the elephant — is also true of the illustrated — Brahman and the world. The world is made up of five elements — earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Brahman, the sole reality, which is the source of the world, remains concealed when there is the perception of earth and other elements which constitute the world, and when Brahman is seen, the world disappears.

Complicated metaphysical and epistemological issues are involved both in the illustration and the illustrated. However, the most important question here is whether a person can gain the vision of the non-dual reality. Scriptural texts repeatedly declare that it is possible; and following the lead of scripture the Sage of Kāñcī assures us on the basis of his authentic experience that the vision of the non-dual reality can be gained by everyone, provided there is the right approach to the problem. So long as a person does not realize the truth of non-duality, he functions in the *vyāvahārika* realm as the subject of knowledge, agent of action, and the enjoyer of the consequences of his action.⁴

In his own characteristic way, the Sage of Kāñcī shows the relevance of the teaching of scripture to the problems of humanity. It should not be thought that

the philosophy of Advaita is high and dry ideally suited for the intellectuals who are off their feet. On the contrary, its teaching is realistic and is extremely relevant to all of us who suffer in empirical existence. When we think that there is a second entity different from us, we develop a desire for or an aversion to it. It is the very nature of desire and aversion to throw us into the wheel of action. A person gets himself involved in action, good or bad, to fulfill his desire and aversion. Through his deeds, good and bad, he acquires merit and demerit, which, in their turn, lead to birth; and embodiment is suffering. It means that the thought of the existence of a second entity leads to suffering through a series of causal nexuses. Why, then, is there the thought of a second entity? It is because of ignorance. When a person is ignorant of the Self, which alone exists, which is one and non-dual, he thinks of plurality and is caught in the whirlpool of suffering. It is, therefore, necessary for us to detect the root cause and remove it. Unless this is done, there is no cure at all for the disease we suffer from. The Sage of Kāñcī drives home this point through an illustration. He says:

Take the case of a mound of soft-earth thrown by the white-ants on the (bamboo) roof. We remove that soft earth once in ten days. Once again it will be there thrown by the white-ants. Even though we try to remove it many times, it appears again and again. What shall we do to remove it? Only when we destroy the queen ant which is inside the bamboo, the termites will not build the mound. What is the use of removing the soft-earth many times so long as the queen ant is inside the bamboo?

Ignorance (*avidyā*) is the queen ant, and it functions through desire and aversion. It can be destroyed only through the knowledge of the non-dual Self.

PRESERVATION OF THE VEDIC SPIRIT

As a spiritual leader of the Hindus, the Sage of Kāñcī has impressed upon his followers the need for the preservation of their religion and also the way to do it by explaining the antiquity of their religion and the conditions under which other religions must have taken their birth. According to the Sage of Kāñcī, the religion of the Hindus was the earliest religion of humanity. While every other religion has a name, the religion of the Hindus has no name. The name "Hinduism" was given to the religion of the people of India by foreigners in recent times. This name was unknown to our ancestors and is also unknown to the common man among us. There was no need for a name for this religion, which was universal. A name is required for the purpose of distinguishing one thing from another when there are more than one thing of the same kind. But when there is only one thing, there is no need to give it a name. The same is the case with the religion of the Hindus, which was the only religion that was prevalent throughout the world. The argument of the Sage of Kāñcī deserves serious consideration by the historians of religions:

Other religions did not exist before the time of their founders. Ours is a religion which existed long before the founded religions. Obviously, it was the only religion in the world ministering to the spiritual needs of mankind as a whole. There was no second religion from which it was required

to be distinguished. Hence, there was no need for a name for it. It was, and even now continues to be, nameless.⁶

He supports this view on the basis of the fragments of faith, custom, names, and religious practices similar to those of Hinduism discovered in other parts of the world by explorers, researchers, and anthropologists. When the doctrines and practices of this basic, universal religion declined in other parts of the world and when people became unethical, there took place the advent of great prophets who founded *new* religions. The Ācārya draws our attention to the fact that the fundamental moral principles taught by these religious leaders are not different from those of the basic universal religion.

It is not possible to say when this basic religion began. We cannot determine its beginning in time. The truth it stands for is eternal. It is, therefore, said to be *sanātana* (perennial). "The nearest Sanskrit word for religion is *dharma*, though *dharma* signifies much more than religion."⁷ If any name is required for this basic, universal religion, which is followed by the people identified as Hindus, then we have the name *sanātana-dharma*, i.e. eternal religion. Since the basic authority for this eternal religion is the *Veda*, it has come to be called "Vedic religion." The *Vedas*, which are the source for the different religious sects of Hinduism such as Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, are in Sanskrit. The language of the *Vedas* today, declares the Ācārya, is the same in form and feature as it was in time immemorial "as the Vedic chanting has been so carefully guarded as not to allow any possibility of change from its pristine form."⁸

There are many definitions of religion. The explanation of religion which the Ācārya gives is simple and forceful. Religion, he says, is the way to inward peace.⁹ There is peace in unity; what leads to unity is religion; and so religion is the means to peace. Also, religion may be explained, according to him, as *dharma*. What sustains man and society is *dharma*. The Ācārya points out that *dharma* is the means to wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (*kāma*) on the one hand, and liberation (*mokṣa*) on the other. *Dharma* is the means to economic well-being, which, in its turn, is the means to pleasure. But if *dharma* is practised without any selfish desire, it leads to *mokṣa*. Inasmuch as economic prosperity and pleasure are not permanent, the Ācārya exhorts the people to practise *dharma* disinterestedly as a dedication to God; such a practice is true *dharma* or religion.¹⁰ This advice is intended for all people, Hindus as well as the non-Hindus. Every effort should, therefore, be made to preserve our religion, as it is the means to peace, as it is the way to our freedom which is peace.

A religion can be preserved only if those who profess it follow its tenets and practices. The basic, universal religion which still flourishes in India declined and disappeared elsewhere. When people in those places did not practise its teachings, new religions came into existence in all those places to fill up the vacuum due to the efforts of great spiritual leaders like Jesus, Muhammad, and others. The Vedic religion, the Ācārya says, has survived in India as a result of the practice of *bhakti* and *dhyāna* — that is, devotion and meditation — which leads to the purification of the mind.¹¹ Since the basic teachings of all religions are the same, there is no antagonism between one

religion and another. The Ācārya declares that there is no danger to one religion from another. He says: "If our religion is in danger, it is not because of other religions. On the contrary, it is due to the lack of religious practices on our side. One gets disease when one is weak. Our weakness is the cause of disease."¹² The Sage is aware of the problem of proselytism that is prevalent in India and other places. However, he makes it clear that the Vedic religion cannot be preserved and spread by following what other religionists do. The Vedic religion did not come into existence through force and propaganda. Bees of their own accord swarm a tree which is full of flowers; there is no compulsion on them by any outside agency. The same is the case with religion, which may be compared to the florescence of a tree. The Ācārya suggests that, if we scrupulously adhere to the religious practices, someone among us will become perfect and that the presence of one perfect human is strength and solace to others who live with him or her, and religion will be taken care of. If we are weak, we cannot propagate our religion: and if we are perfect, there is no need to propagate our religion. The way to strength, which is long and hard, lies through moral and spiritual practices (*anuṣṭhāna*).¹³

Also, the Vedic religion can be preserved only by protecting Sanskrit, which is the language of the *Veda*. The Ācārya says that Sanskrit has to be preserved and protected not for the sake of language, but for the sake of the *Veda* which constitutes the basic scripture of the Hindus. In view of the difficulty of translation and also of the danger of distortion of meaning in the process of translation, the Ācārya warns us against

any attempt to preserve the contents of the *Veda* by translating them from Sanskrit to other languages. On the contrary, there is advantage in preserving the *Veda* in the original language itself. Consider, for example, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, the two major sects of Hinduism. Both of them owe their allegiance to the *Veda*. Both of them, despite some minor differences, are *vaidika-mata*; that is, their doctrines are embedded in the *Veda*. They are not two different religions; however, they have come into existence and function as two different sects, following the lead of certain preceptors who have interpreted the texts of the *Veda* in two different ways. There is scope for other interpretations as well. This has been and will be possible since the source-book is preserved in the original language.”

INTRA-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-RELIGIOUS HARMONY

The Vedic religion is both monistic and polytheistic. To the Hindu there is no difficulty in combining these two positions, as they are not mutually exclusive. The one Reality which is unborn manifests itself in many forms (*Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* 3.133). Since all the gods and goddesses of the pantheon are manifestations of the one Reality, there is no question of superiority and inferiority among them and no hierarchy among them. This, however, does not prevent a person from choosing and being devoted to his “personal god” (*iṣṭa-devatā*). He may even consider his *iṣṭa-devatā* as the highest. The Ācārya says that this approach is both intelligible and useful. He elucidates this point by means of an example.

A bridge across a river has a number of arches. To a man standing under one arch, all other arches will appear smaller than the one he stands under. This arch will appear biggest to his eyes. Even so, to a votary of a particular deity all other deities will appear inferior. But the truth is that all deities are manifestations of the one God. All arches are similarly constructed and have the same dimension.¹⁵

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, who constitute the Hindu trinity, are entrusted with the work of creation, protection, and destruction respectively. The Ācārya shows that there is no hierarchy among these three functions by correlating them with the triple states of experience which everyone undergoes. Deep sleep is comparable to *pralaya*, as there is dissolution of everything in that state. There is *sṛṣṭi* in dream. The state of wakefulness is *sthiti*. Śiva, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu, characterised by the *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* respectively, are associated with the triple states of experience — sleep, dreaming, and waking — in the same order. The points to be noted here are that all the three functions alternate like the three states of experience and that there is no hierarchy among the divinities associated with them. There is no justification for quarrel between one denomination and another within the fold of Hinduism.

It is necessary to extend the logic which holds good between one sect and another within Hinduism to the relation between one religion and another. The God of Hinduism and the God of Christianity are not different. However, the mode of worship of the same God may be different between Hinduism and Chris-

tianity. The Ācārya draws our attention to the prevalence of tradition (*sampradāya*) in each family in the matter and manner of worship within the Hindu fold. In the same way, each religion has its own tradition in respect of the worship of God. An oft-repeated verse which the Ācārya quotes in this connection says: "He whom the Śaivas worship as Śiva, the Vedāntins as Brahman, who is worshipped as Buddha by the Buddhists, as the Creator by the Naiyāyikas, as Arhat by the Jains, and as Karma by the Mīmāṃsakas, may that Hari give you the fruits that you desire." The logic which justifies intra-religious harmony equally validates inter-religious harmony.

The Sage of Kāñcī exhorts the people to realize the implication of the idea that the God of all religions and of all religious denominations is the same. First of all, it implies at the denominational level that there is no need to give up one form of worship or worship of one God and adopt another. It is wrong for a Śaivite to become a Vaiṣṇavite, and for a Vaiṣṇavite to become a Śaivite. Second, it implies that there is no need for a person to change his religion. What is available in one religion is equally available in another religion. Third, the convert to another religion scorns the God whom he was worshipping the previous day. This one thing, says the Sage, is enough for his ruin. Fourth, "invitation to a new religion implies that all who lived before the birth of that religion did not attain salvation and also that salvation is denied to all those who do not belong to that religion. Obviously this is absurd."¹⁶

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

The purpose of moral and spiritual discipline is to help man attain God-realization or Self-realization and thereby to overcome transmigratory existence. Everyone, advises the Ācārya, should endeavour to make the present life the last one by taking full advantage of the opportunities available in this life for moral and spiritual development. Fortunately for us, we are not left in the lurch in this regard. It is usually claimed that moral development has taken place from customary morality to legal morality, and from legal morality to reflective morality, in which the conscience of the individual is invested with the highest moral authority. That conscience is not always a safe guide as to what is right and wrong is well known. We speak of a good conscience as well as a bad conscience. The deliverances of conscience differ from place to place and from person to person. As Richard III mournfully admits, conscience has "a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brings in a several tale" (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, V, III, 194). The Ācārya points out that scripture, which is the embodiment of the highest wisdom of the knowers of truth, is our authority about what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. He quotes a text of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.23) which says that a person who, ignoring the injunction of scripture, acts impulsively can never attain the ends of life; that is to say, he attains neither happiness here nor liberation. It means that the authority of scripture can never be superseded by any other authority, much less by conscience. Working out a hierarchy of moral standards, the Ācārya says that the *Vedas*, which are the primary source of *dharma*, should be considered to be the highest authority. Next to the

Vedas comes *smṛti*. It means that in the absence of guidance from the *Vedas* one should be guided by what is taught in *smṛti*. The authorities to be accepted in the descending order after *smṛti* are the conduct of those who are well-versed in *smṛti*, conduct of good people, and finally one's own conscience. Resort to conscience should be the last, if guidance from the other authorities starting from the *Vedas* is not available in a particular moral situation. The Ācārya deplors the modern attitude of turning upside down the hierarchy of moral standards.

Nowadays, however, the fashion is to make it all topsyturvy, to give the first place to what is called one's conscience relegating all the other prescribed guidances to a secondary place, or as is often done, to condemn them as meaningless and irrational. The ancient view, however, about the *pramāṇas* or criteria of *dharma* has stood the test of time.¹⁷

According to Ādi Śaṅkara, man had been accorded a special place among all beings by virtue of his competence for scripture-enjoined action (*karma*) and knowledge (*jñāna*).¹⁸ Taking advantage of the scriptural teaching, a spiritual aspirant has to abstain from prohibited acts, but has to perform those which are obligatory in a spirit of dedication to God. One who performs action disinterestedly as an offering to God is said to practice *karmayoga*. In all his discourses the Ācārya refers to the importance of *karmayoga*. The practice of *karmayoga* calls for the cultivation of basic virtues such as non-injury, truth-speaking, non-stealing, purity, and control of the senses, which are conducive to the purification of the mind.

The purpose of human birth is to put an end to future birth; and it can be achieved, says the Ācārya by making proper use of the body. To make effective use of the body one has to lead a disciplined life. Of the "eight limbs" of the Yoga discipline, the first two, called *yama* (self-restraint) and *niyama* (observance), are intended to provide a moral foundation for spiritual training. The Ācārya reiterates the fact that it is impossible to reach the top of Yoga discipline by ignoring the first two steps, which are designed to help a person overcome the egoistic impulses. He exhorts the people to realize the significance of *aparigraha*, which is one of the five restraints coming under *yama*. *Parigraha* means owning possessions; *aparigraha* means giving up or disowning of possessions. To make effective use of the body for spiritual progress, the minimum needs of food, water, clothing, and shelter have to be taken care of by everyone. However, to own anything more than what is required for the fulfilment of basic needs amounts to theft. According to the Ācārya, a person who does not self-impose this restraint when he lives as a member of society commits theft. Improving the standard of living should not be confused with improving the quality of life. The Ācārya points out that the former, in which the government and other agencies of planning are interested, leads to increasing the needs one after another beyond the minimum requirement, compelling us to face the insoluble problems of scarcity, price increase, wage increase, inflation, social hierarchy, competition, poverty, and so on. The solution to all these socio-economic problems lies in the scrupulous adherence to the virtue of *aparigraha* by everyone in society. How a man governs himself from within is as important as how he is governed

from without. The greatest slave is he who is controlled by his own rank selfishness. Therefore the Ācārya suggests a simple living which will ennoble the quality of life on the basis of *aparigraha*. One who does not care for *aparigraha* is anti-social and cannot, therefore, be the beneficiary of the grace of God.¹¹

As an important part of basic education, the Ācārya recommends "self-help" both for the young and the old in all aspects of life, private as well as public, in the home as well as outside the home — in all such simple things as cooking, washing, purchasing, as it promotes self-culture and self-control, which are indispensable for spiritual development.

According to the Sage of Kāñcī, *karmayoga* includes social service, for which there is scope for everyone. The poor can render social service through physical help and the rich through their wealth. The Sage recommends *free* service to the people by the professionals for some time every day or every week depending on the kind of work they are engaged in. The most important aspect of social service is the protection of the temples where worship is conducted for the benefit of the entire community. The work of public and private institutions engaged in social service will be fruitful only when they take care of the temples also. If they do everything except service to the temples, their efforts will be no better than those of Sisyphus.

The moral discipline must be followed by spiritual discipline comprising *bhaktiyoga* and *jñānayoga*. *Bhakti* or devotion to God is absolutely necessary for man's spiritual upliftment. *Bhakti* is attachment to God to

free ourselves from all other attachments. Through it, the mind, which is drawn to, and anchored at, the Lord, is made pure and still such that it captures the love and grace, peace and bliss of the Lord who is worshipped. While there is happiness in union, there is unhappiness in separation. Devotion is the link between the devotee and the Deity. Through devotion, the devotee attains union with the Deity. The goal of *bhakti*, says the Ācārya, is the annulment of duality (*dvaitabhāva*) and the attainment of oneness (*advaita-bhāva*), which has been beautifully brought out by Ādi Śaṅkara when he addresses the Mother of the universe expressing his longing, "May I become one with You" (*bhavāni tvam*).¹⁹

When the mind has been made pure and still by the practice of *karmayoga* and *bhaktiyoga*, the scriptural instruction imparted by the *guru*, followed by reflection and contemplation thereon, enables the seeker of liberation to realize Brahman and remain as Brahman, ever free and never bound. Such a person becomes the liberated-in-life.

A JIVANMUKTA

A spiritual leader of exceptional qualities, the Sage of Kāñcī is a charismatic personality. Personality is an axiological category and is, therefore, the opposite of individuality, which is a naturalistic and biological category. It is the spiritual principle that constitutes personality. His personality is such that it has a tremendous impact on others who come into contact with him. The peace and tranquillity which he enjoys are shared by others, though for a little while when they remain in his presence. After meeting the Sage of Kāñcī, Seyyed Hossein Nasr said:

To behold the presence of His Holiness the Jagadguru and to be blessed by the privilege of receiving the refreshing breeze which flows from him and which extinguishes the very fire of existence separating man from God is to realize that the Divine Freedom manifests itself where... it wills... In the eyes of the Jagadguru, the silence of Eternity of India which is immutable and eternal like the peaks of the Himalayas shines and penetrates into the very centre of the heart where presides the "Throne of God." Through his glance the heart becomes suddenly transmuted alchemically from a piece of flesh into a jewel that reflects the inner light and illuminates the whole from within.²¹

It is very difficult for us even to imagine how Ādi Śaṅkara, the embodiment of scriptural lore and wisdom, led an active life moving from place to place and guiding the people through precept and practice, when travel from one corner of India to another would have been extremely difficult. As Mahadevan says, "Anyone who comes into the august presence of His Holiness cannot but recall to his mind the image of Ādi Śaṅkara, the immaculate sage who was divine and yet human, whose saving grace was universal in its sweep, and whose concern was for all — even for the lowliest and the last."²² Self-realization is the overcoming of finitude and embodiment. Though outwardly embodied as we see him, the Sage of Kāñcī who is *Brahma-niṣṭha* is free from the limitations of embodiment. He is the liberated-in-life. Though he acts, he is really inactive. He acts for the sake of others without the sense of "I" and "mine". Rooted as he is in the Self

without body-consciousness, he is really inactive. He is "the still point of the turning world" exemplifying the life of a *jīvanmukta*.

NOTES

1. William Cenkner, *A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), p. 123.

2. *Spiritual Perspectives*, ed. T. M. P. Mahadevan (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1975), p. 15.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

4. See *The Discourses of the Ācārya* (in Tamil) 1957-59, Part IV (1st ed.; Madras: Kalaimagal Office, 1980), pp. 100-106. See *The Voice of Śaṅkara* 6/4 (Madras: Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre), pp. 309-21, for the English version of this lecture.

5. See *The Discourses of the Ācārya* (in Tamil) 1957-59, Part IV, pp. 100-106; also *The Voice of Śaṅkara*, 6/4: pp. 309-21.

6. Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, *Aspects of Our Religion* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), pp. 1-2,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

9. Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, *Hindu Dharma* (Kanchipuram: Hindu Samaya Manram, 1976), p. 40.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

11. See *The Discourses of the Ācārya* (in Tamil) 1957-58, Part I (5th ed.; Madras: Kalaimagal Office), p. 8.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 80

13. Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, *Aspects of Our Religion*, p. 47.

14. *The Discourses of the Ācārya* (in Tamil) 1957-58, Part I, pp. 15-16.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

17. *Aspects of Our Religion*, p. 20.

18. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2. 1. 1.

19. See *The Discourses of the Ācārya* (in Tamil) 1957-59, Part III (1st ed.; Madras: Kalaimagal Office), pp. 146-51.

20. *Aspects of Our Religion*, pp. 26-27.

21. T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Spiritual Perspectives*, p.17.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

THE SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARAMĀCĀRYA

*T.N. Ganapathy**

When one goes through the lectures of the Paramācārya,¹ one can discern that there are two levels of interaction between a society and its religion. One level of interaction is explicit, and it is between religious institutions such as temples and churches on one side, and secular institutions such as government, economy, politics, and so on, on the other. We may call this the level of explicit ontology, the peripheral relation between religion and society. Another level of interaction is between the views of reality and the values that characterize a culture on the one hand, and typical social institutions on the other. This we may call the level of implicit ontology, the central core of the relation between religion and society. According to the Paramācārya a society maintains itself as a system because of its implicit ontology, *i.e.* because of a fundamental consensus about value and reality among

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its members. The social *milieu* involves a common system of ultimate value attitudes. An implicit ontology, then, is the major premise on which social institutions are founded. And social action begins with man's inner attitudes, and works outward to the environment, into his family, his community, etc. It works from centre to the periphery.

Implicit ontology is concerned with God as a principle and value and understands religion as a state of being grasped by an "ultimate concern", to borrow a phrase from Paul Tillich. Ultimate concern is directed towards what is of final value, the supreme value that has top priority in the hierarchy of life interests. It is the one thing for which a man would renounce all his other interests. It is the standard by which he judges every other value and places each of them in the scheme of things. Such a key value is always presupposed in everything human — his attitudes and his society. In implicit ontology, value becomes the objective counterpart of concern, and in this sense religion is the conservation of the highest value. The highest value may be called freedom or liberation or *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*. This value enables man towards self-realization. When freedom becomes the objective counterpart of concern, it becomes a responsible freedom, that is, one's responsibility to the ultimate Reality becomes also a responsibility to all men. Thus, freedom is inextricably bound up with society or community at the empirical level.

What has been described so far as implicit ontology is the ontology of Advaita Vedānta. Advaita, as religion in a wider sense, as an ideal theology, is a programme for the realization of values. According to it,

values are not extraneities grafted by man on the world; they are the ingredients of reality. Liberation or freedom is an intrinsic, universal value and is the presupposition for actualizing all other values. It is the very basis of ethical action and social life. Advaita seeks to uncover and unfold this universal value embedded in each individual. According to Advaita, God or Brahman is not a separate entity existing outside the Self of man. The Ātman in man is Brahman. Because of ignorance, there is false identification, *adhyāsa*, of the Self and the body, of the Self with the non-Self; and man does not know that he is Brahman. *Adhyāsa* imposes on the true Self of man the egoistic feeling, with its implication of the contrast of "I" and "Thou", leading to selfishness.⁴ One who desires to free oneself from this false identification should renounce all selfish interests in society.⁵ If man is liberated from this ignorance, he knows that he is none other than Brahman; and he recognizes the sublime dignity of every human person. This liberation from ignorance is *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is not a place;⁶ it is the removal of ignorance or spiritual blindness.

Critics are not wanting who point out that, since liberation of the Self has become the major concern of an individual, there is little scope for social ethics or social development in the Advaita system. According to the Paramācārya, this criticism is untenable, for our social life from the Vedic period till this day has been Atman- and God-oriented.⁷ In the Hindu thought, that which conduces to true welfare, *śreyas*, has two levels, namely, *dharma*, the good life and *amṛta*, the divine immortal life. *Dharma* gives *abhyudaya*, social welfare, through the efficient control and manipulation of the physical, politico-economic and

social development of the individual, while *amṛta* ensures *nīḥśreyasa*, spiritual freedom, self-realization, through an equally efficient control of the world of inner life. Religion, as understood in Advaita, comprehends both *dharma* and *amṛta*. One who has realized this is said to be in "the living contact of the Infinite," *Brahma-sain̄sparṣa* as the *Gītā* calls it.⁹

The burden of the song of the Paramācārya in all his lectures is that the Advaita doctrine of the essential spirituality of man, its doctrine of *tat tvam asi*, and the concept of *adhyāsa* have significant social consequences which are of permanent importance for the well-being of man here and hereafter. The spirituality of inwardness, which is predominant in the Advaita tradition, achieves its complement and fulfilment in the external life of man. Nowhere has the Paramācārya said that one should not enjoy social life. He has asked us to employ a technique to have a proper judicious enjoyment of them so that we may not be lost in them. He refers to the first stanza of the *Īśa Upaniṣad* where the technique is summed up: "Enjoy with a feeling of renunciation." The essence of the social philosophy of Advaita, as brought out by the Paramācārya in his various lectures, is that one should live in the world and yet remain untouched by it; one should work, but do so in a spirit of detachment; one should dip in the water and keep one's Self undrenched like a lotus leaf. Renunciation is an eternal maxim in the ethics and social philosophy of Advaita. In our daily life, and in inter-personal relationships we achieve the greatest joy not when we affirm, but when we deny, ourselves. Kālidāsa says that the ideal of renunciation consists in owning the whole world, while disowning one's own narrow, limited ego. Through renunciation

and detachment we become identified with the immortal and divine Brahman which is the Self in each one of us and the Self of all. The call to renunciation is the pervading social consequence and the ethical implication of the Advaitic ideal of Brahman-Ātman equation. The *Bhagavadgītā* has made this as the fulcrum of its teaching of *karma-yoga*. To live in the world, act in it, and enjoy it in all its fulness, and yet to do all this in a spirit of renunciation appear to be both confusing and self-contradictory to many. The reconciliation of this apparent contradiction has been called a secret, a *yoga*, a method traditionally revealed by the teacher to his disciple. And *niṣkāma-karma*, the doctrine of disinterested action, is the secret of *karma-yoga* taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *guru*, through his *śiṣya*, the disciple, Arjuna, to all men in the world irrespective of their outward distinctions. Renunciation, as the Paramācārya interprets it, means the constant movement of an individual from the gross to the subtle, from the material to the mental, and from the mental to the spiritual. At the level of implicit ontology, renunciation, as society's value-premise, provides the basic ground-plan for the society as a whole. According to the Paramācārya, this value, *viz.*, *tyāga* or renunciation, permeates and articulates itself throughout the major social institutions of India such as *varṇa-dharma* and *āśrama-dharma*.

The Paramācārya is of the firm view that *varṇāśrama-dharma* is the social foundation of Hinduism.⁸ He refers to Mahatma Gandhi's essay on "My *Varṇāśrama Dharma*".⁹ The term "*dharma*" is derived from the root "*dhṛ*", which means to sustain, uphold, to hold together. The terms "*ṛta*" and "*satya*" are closely

connected with *dharma*. The term "*ṛta*" used profusely in the *Vedas* indicates an impersonal order. When extended to the social order, it denotes conduct based on truth, *satya*. It is an inner awareness of what is true. When this awareness is expressed through words and actions, it becomes *satya*. *Dharma* is the necessary support of social or community life. At the social level, the concept "*dharma*" comprises two principal ideas, *viz.* the organization of social life through well-defined and well-regulated propensities (*varṇas*) and the organization of an individual's life within these "classes" into definite stages (*āśramas*). Thus *varṇāśrama-dharma* stands for the ordained duties of the four "classes" and the four stages of one's life.

The *varṇa* system is the original conception of the Vedic ṛṣis based on a spiritual outlook. The term "*varṇa*" is derived from the root "*vr*" to choose or select. Hence, *varṇa* system is a matter of choice as it originated depending on the propensities, temperaments, and innate nature of the individual. *Varṇa* is a process of selection by the individual for the development of his soul; it indicates a particular spiritual and psychological frame, bent, and direction of the mind. Thus, the four *varṇas*, comprising *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* are the four propensities (*pravṛttis*) of life and do not stand for the professions (*vṛttis*) of life. The Vedic psychology speaks of three primary qualities of mind, *sāttvika*, *rājasika*, and *tāmasika*. Those in whom *sāttvika* quality dominates are called *brāhmaṇas*; those in whom the *sāttvika-cum-rājasika* quality is powerful are the *kṣatriyas*; those in whom the *rājasika-cum-tāmasika* quality is abundant are called *vaiśyas*; and those in whom the *tāmasika* quality is abundant are called *śūdras*. A man belongs to one

of these categories according to his propensities. The the term “*dharma*” in one of its senses means the essential nature of a thing. The *dharma* of fire is to burn. Thus, a man’s *varṇa* depends on his essential quality or *svadharmā*. Apart from the common qualities possessed by all human beings known as *sādhāraṇa-* or *mānava-dharma*, each individual possesses special propensities, that is *varṇa-dharma*. According to the Paramācārya, if this distinction between *varṇa-dharma* (which is one’s *viśeṣa-dharma*) and *sāmānya-dharma* (i.e. *sādhāraṇa-dharma*) were not maintained, our Hindu *dharma* would have been lost.¹⁰ He vehemently criticizes the present-day brahmins and is very much sore about them for having forsaken their *svadharmā*.¹¹ He is of the firm view that the distinctive feature of our Hindu way of life is *varṇa-dharma*.¹² Let us see the implication of this view.

The aim of *varṇa* system is to help the individual to move towards the attainment of self-realization or perfection or ātmic development by following one’s *varṇa-dharma*. The *Gītā* concept of “*svadharmā*” refers to this aspect of *varṇa-dharma* so that the individual can develop the potential nature within him (*svabhāva-vihito dharma*), by fulfilling the duties pertaining to his station disinterestedly in a spirit of renunciation. The concept of *svadharmā* does not refer to *jāti-dharma* (*dharma* based on caste), but *varṇa-dharma* (*dharma* based on one’s propensities). When Arjuna had forgotten his propensities of *rājasika* qualities and falsely thought that he possessed only *sāttvika* qualities, he suffered from a delusion; and Śrī Kṛṣṇa pointed out Arjuna’s essential nature and guided him to act, to discharge his duties, according to his true propensities of a *kṣatriya* in a spirit of renunciation and disinterested-

ness so that he may evolve to his Selfhood by following his *svadharma*. According to the Paramācārya, the surer way to progress is to do one's duty according to the state of one's growth rather than that of taking up other man's ideals which are unsuited to one's temperament, and which can never be fully realized.¹³ Viewed in this perspective *varṇa* system is not a class division of society; it is not a *jāti* system.¹⁴ The *jāti* system is a post-Vedic phenomenon due to a gross misunderstanding of the Vedic spiritual classification of human beings; it is a superimposition on the *varṇa* system due to ignorance of men. The *jāti* or caste system is based on the principle of privileges. In Advaita there is no special privilege for any one; hence there is no place for *jāti-dharma* in it. The aim of the Vedic ṛṣis is not to create a society with a class system, but to create a classless society; and as such *varṇa-dharma* is not a division of society on the basis of the four classes; it is a basic psycho-spiritual insight of human nature on the basis of certain specific attitudes exhibited by individuals in society.

If Brahman-Ātman equation is the basic idea of the implicit ontology of Advaita, then its necessary corollary at the social level is a classless society based on the principle of sacrifice and renunciation leading to the awakening of the egoless Self. In such a society asceticism becomes the ideal. The division of life into the four *āśramas* or stages is in accordance with this ideal at the background. The *āśramas* help one to realize one's inner spirit; they are stages of mortification of the ego. They form a series of gradually intensifying ascetic stages through which a man, more and more purified from all earthly attachment, realizes the true nature of his Self. As a *brahmacārin*, the first

stage of life, one has to live the life of willing abstinence, based on self-control and austerity or *tapas*. The life of a *gṛhastha*, householder, which marks the second stage, is full of sacrifices in that he has to perform five kinds of sacrifices everyday. The next, third stage, *vānaprastha* is a gradual withdrawal from the things of the earth; it is a voluntary withdrawal and a virtue of choice by the individual. The last stage is *sannyāsa* — a stage of complete renunciation. A *sannyāsin* is an individual who has transcended all distinctions and diversities of class, race, and colour. He is a *vairāgi*, an individual who belongs to no order. As Ananda Coomarswamy has put it, he belongs to the “order of nobodies”. He is truly a classless individual. According to Hindu social ethics, a “classless society” can be brought about only through “classless individuals”. The test of a classless society is whether it has created classless individuals. The Paramācārya asserts that the life-line of Hinduism consists in the exemplary behaviour of those individuals who follow their *varṇa*- and *āśrama-dharmas* meticulously.¹³ *Varṇāśrama-dharma*, on the Vedāntic interpretation, is diversity based on function and attitude. If the diversity on *varṇāśrama-dharma* were to come into being in its real significance, then the social order that comes into being would be a classless society based on classless individuals. Indeed, Advaita has conceived a classless society long before the present-day thinkers.

One of the greatest contributions of the Paramācārya to the religious world is that he has provided a basis for a sincere inter-religious dialogue by stating that the spirit of acceptance is the perspective of Advaita Vedānta.¹⁴ Acceptance implies equal rights. All religions have equal rights and shares in truth.

Acceptance is a passionately disinterested inquiry into all religions and an understanding which is intimate appreciation. The Hindu idea of *samanvaya* contains the notion of acceptance. Speaking about the unity of religions, the Paramācārya says that there is no need for conversion from one religion to another, and advances arguments against conversion.¹⁷ He also narrates an incident of how Ādi Śaṅkarācārya had prevented Amarasimha from burning the *Amarakośa* thereby exhibiting the spirit of acceptance (not tolerance)¹⁸ which is a perspective of Advaita Vedānta.¹⁹ The spirit of acceptance is best exhibited by the Paramācārya when he says that one need not doubt the motive of the religious leaders who advocate proselytization, since they genuinely feel that their religions alone contain the key to salvation for all.²⁰ To the Paramācārya, acceptance is radical openness leading to an attitude of *sarva-dharma-sama-bhāva*, meaning equal treatment of all religions, and the co-existence and co-presence of all religions.²¹ By an opening of the door for an inter-religious dialogue based on the principles of assent and acceptance, Advaita becomes a re-discovery of an enlightened religiosity. Advaita aims at liberation for all by lifting the lid of ignorance and tearing off the mark of *adhyāsa*. Its notion of Brahman is not a God or this or that religion, but a universal principle. Since the Self in all is the same, Advaita views the whole world — nay the entire universe — as a family, *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*.

NOTES

1. Rā. Ganapathy, ed., *Daivattin Kural*, 5 Vols., (Madras: Vanathi Pathippagam, 1976-1989). The references to the Paramācārya in this essay are from these volumes.

2. Because of *adhyāsa* man identifies the roles he plays in society as the nature of his true Self. This role-identification leads to role-pluralism leading to privilege claims for each role that a man plays.

3. The Paramācārya says that our actions become sinful only when we perform them for our selfish interests. Vol. I, p. 69.

4. Vol. I, p. 72.

5. Vol. I, p. 383; Vol. III, p. 258.

6. *The Bhagavad-gītā*, VI. 28.

7. Vol. III, p. 134.

8. Vol. I, p. 189.

9. Vol. I, pp. 295-296.

10. Vol. I, pp. 196-197.

11. Vol. I, pp. 225-230, 266-267.

12. Vol. I, p. 201.

13. On this interpretation of *varṇa-dharma*, which is another name for *svadharmā*, I cannot be a member of the Faculty of Science in MIT because I do not possess the innate propensities, qualities, and qualifications to be a member of it. So far as MIT is concerned I possess *tāmasika* qualities, qualities unsuited for it, hence I am a *śūdra* to it, even though I can enjoy the fruits of the researches conducted in it in the form of radio, TV, aeroplane, etc. It is in the same sense one should understand the statement in the *Brahma Sūtras* (I, iii, 34-38) that *śūdras* are altogether disqualified for *Brahmavidyā*, though they are not deprived of the fruits of Vedic knowledge. A *śūdra* is eligible for the fruits of Vedic knowledge through secondary scriptures like the *Purāṇas* and through *kāvya*s.

14. Vol. I, p. 190.
15. Vol. III, p. 269.
16. Vol. V, p. 1074.
17. Vol. I, pp. 149-151.

18. According to Swami Vivekananda, tolerance is an insult and blasphemy. A careful analysis of the position of tolerance will show that it is a disguised form of fanaticism. Tolerance may be taken as a policy of patient forbearance in the presence of something which is disliked or disapproved of. To tolerate is first to condemn and then to put up with. To put up with is itself to condemn. Tolerance in the field of religion would suggest just to allow other religions to exist.

19. Vol. I, p. 614.
20. Vol. I, p. 186.
21. Vol. I, p. 710.

THE VEDIC EXEGESIS*

*N. Jayashanmukham***

1. *The Veda*

The Sage of Kāñcī, following in the foot-steps of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, is devoted to the work of preserving and propagating the *Veda*. From time to time he goes back to the subject of the *Veda* in his discourses. A glance at his discourses is enough to show that he has gone into all aspects of the *Veda* with a clarity and a mastery that is characteristic of him. While setting forth the teachings of the *Veda*, he draws freely upon the traditional writings of the great masters and the interpretations they have put on it. Apart from this, his presentation is replete with original insights and interpretations of the Vedic texts a fact which considerably enhances the merit of his discourses. On account of this unique feature his discourses must be considered as scholarly contributions useful for a deeper study of the *Veda*.

* Based on the Discourses of the Sage of Kāñcī — “*Daivattin Kural*” (compiled and edited by Rā. Gaṇapati), II, 1978.

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2. *The Apauruṣeya Theory*

It is said that the *Veda* is impersonal, *apauruṣeya*. For it is not composed by man or God. It is eternal and beginningless. It is for this reason that it is considered to be infallible and trustworthy. But if we carefully go through the hymns of the *Veda*, we find that they do not seem to support the *apauruṣeya* theory. The hymns themselves assert that they have been composed by the poets with whom they are associated, as also that among these poets some are old and some new. Look at the following verses:

1. This hymn is composed for Indra, the wielder of Vajra - *brahmendrāya vajriṇe akāri* (*Ṛv.*, 7-97-9).
2. These men have made the hymn — *mantram ye vāram naryā atakṣan* (*Ṛv.*, 7-7-6).
3. Those old and new poets who composed their hymns for you, O Indra — *ye ca pūrva ṛṣayo ye ca nūtnāḥ indra brahmāṇi janayanta viprāḥ* (*Ṛv.*, 7-22-9)

All these clearly point to the fact that the hymns have been composed by the poets, both old and new. Apart from these hymns, the *Puruṣasūkta* emphasises the divine origin of the *Veda*. It says that the *Veda* was born from the supreme Puruṣa, "*tasmādajāyata*" (10-90-9). Either way, it is difficult to subscribe to the *apauruṣeya* view, for we have to concede that the *Veda* was made by the Vedic poets or originated from the divine Puruṣa.

We shall now see how the Sage of Kāñcī substantiates the *apauruṣeya* theory. He agrees that on the basis of these hymns we believe that the poets are the authors of the Vedic *mantras*. For we have not known any works not authored by men, modern or ancient.

He goes on to say that though the hymns suggest human authorship to the *Veda*, the poets do not call themselves the composers of the *mantras*. On the contrary, they say that they are the seers of the *mantras*, “*r̥ṣayo mantra-draṣṭārah.*” In other words, the poets are associated with the *mantras* as those who first saw them. But then, how to understand the application of *kr̥* or *takṣa* or *jan* (to do or to make or to generate) to the *mantras*? The Sage of Kāñcī answers that the *mantras* are made in the sense that they are made known to the world by the poets. When we say that Columbus discovered America, we mean that he was the first to see it and make it known to the world. This is true of the *mantras* also. They exist without a beginning, *anādi*; they exist like that whether they are unseen or seen by men. When the Vedic poets saw them, they made them accessible to the world. This is what is meant by making the *mantras*.

If the poets are the seers of the *mantras*, then where do the *mantras* exist? Can we say that they exist in some invisible part of the world to which only the Vedic poets had access? No, for in that case the *mantras* have to be treated as having a beginning, because the world in which they exist has a beginning. Further, it implies that they owe their existence, even as the world in which they exist, to the creator of the world, *Īsvara*. This goes against the view that the *mantras* are eternal and beginningless. If they exist as beginningless as *Īsvara*, then the *apauruṣeya* view ends in the admission of two beginningless principles. But this too does not agree with the *śruti* text that *Īsvara* is the ultimate source of all, “*eṣa yoniḥ sarvasya*” (*Māṇḍūkya*, 6). How to reconcile the two without at

the same time doing violence to the essential nature of the *Veda* or *Īsvara*? If we take the clue given by the Vedic text itself, we may reconcile them by considering the *Veda* as a principle lodged in the all-containing *Īsvara*. The Sage of *Kāñcī* invites our attention to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text which says that the *Veda* is the breath of the Lord, *niḥśvasitam* (2-4-10). The text clearly tells us through the image of breath, that, though the *Veda* is distinct and beginningless like the Lord, it is not independent but established within the heart of the Lord. This gives the answer to the question where the *Veda* exists – it exists in the Lord. But how to understand the *Puruṣasūkta* text which says that the *Veda* arose from the divine *Puruṣa*? It must be understood as referring to the rising of the *Veda* from the non-perceived to the perceived state without ceasing to be eternal. In other words, it signifies the manifestation of the *mantras* to the inner eye of a fit person like the Vedic poet. As the *Vedas* are not different (*ananya*) from the Self, “*ime vedāḥ.....ayam-ātmā*” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4-5-7), they manifest themselves to the Vedic poet when the divine person is manifest to him.

3. *Works and Knowledge*

The *Veda* is broadly divided into two portions *karma* and *jñāna*. While the *mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa* fall into the first, the *Āraṇyaka* and the *Upaniṣad* come under the second. The two are respectively referred to as the *Karmakāṇḍa* and the *Jñānakāṇḍa*. The division is made with a view to show that the goal of human life as set forth in the *Veda* is twofold, performance of works and attainment of knowledge. Though originally the division was introduced with a view to

lay emphasis on the two major aspects of the *Veda*, it hardened into a rigid distinction as if the two portions of *karma* and *jñāna* are opposed to each other. The Paramācārya analysed this issue in great detail and established that there is really no contradiction between the two.

The issue may be considered from two different points of view: one, the result that accrues to the soul respectively from works and knowledge; two, the texts that bear on the two portions. A reconciliation of the two portions of *karma* and *jñāna* is effected in reference to both the result and the text.

Works and knowledge lead to two different results: while the first results in the possession and enjoyment of good things of the world, the second in the attainment of liberation; one binds the soul and the other dissolves the bonds and delivers the soul. From this one may conclude that *karma* and *jñāna* are opposed to each other.

If the performance of works necessarily binds, then works are certainly a barrier to knowledge. But the Paramācārya points out that works bind only when they are done for one's own welfare and not when they are done for the sake of the world. The *Veda* itself insists on doing good to the world. It says:

त्वं विष्णो सुमतिं विश्वजन्यामप्रयुतामेवयावो मतिं दाः

(*Rv.* 7-100 2)

It is a prayer for granting a mind free from egoistic limitations (*aprayutām matim*) and a will to serve the world (*sumatim viśvajanyām*)*. When works are thus

* See Sāyaṇa's *Rgveda-bhāṣya*.

done with the good of mankind in view, they cease to bind. On the contrary, they turn into a means of self-purification (*ātmasuddhi*) conducive to final liberation, *svarājyam* (*Rv.*, 5-8-22). On account of this those who do works for the world or for self-purification are called the doers of good works *sukṛtaḥ* (*Rv.*, 5-4-11). If works do not necessarily bind, then they are not opposed to knowledge, rather they serve as an indirect means to knowledge. Therefore it is wrong to believe that the *Karmakāṇḍa* and the *Jñānakāṇḍa* set forth two mutually opposite aims of life.

The Paramācārya does not approve of the view that one can try to get knowledge without having to do works. It is obviously an outcome of the mistaken view that works bind and do not help one who is desirous of liberation. Such a step, the Paramācārya warns, will be inconsequential. It is like trying to reap the fruits without waiting for the tree to produce the flowers. If without self-purification no one can attain liberation, then works are indispensable and without them the eligibility for knowledge does not arise.

4. *The Conflicting Texts*

Now, we shall come to the texts which set forth contradictory views about works and knowledge, and see how they are reconciled.

The poets of the *Veda* describe themselves as the doers of works (*kāraṇaḥ*, *Rv.*, 3-6-1), whose aim is to be masters of wealth (*rāyaḥ*, *Rv.*, 1-173-9) through sacrifices (*yajñaiḥ*, *Rv.*, 5-17-1) offered to the gods. But in the *Upaniṣad* one comes across several texts which seem to speak about the *Veda* in adverse terms.

To mention a few, we shall refer to three texts, two from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and one from the *Muṇḍaka*. First, the *Upaniṣad* affirms in clear terms that a worshipper of the gods is like an animal living and working for its master, *paśuḥ* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 1-4-10). Secondly, it holds that the *Veda* is inferior and does not lead to the knowledge of the Imperishable, *aparā* (*Muṇḍaka*, 1-1-5). Thirdly, it declares that for one who is identified with the Self the *Vedas* cease to be the *Vedas*, “*vedā avedāḥ*” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4-3-22). From these texts we find that the *karma* and the *jñāna* portions do not agree with each other, one affirming the necessity of works and the other denying it totally. But the Paramācārya points out that no such opposition exists between the two. He is at great pains to demonstrate that the two portions are only complementary and not contradictory as is indicated by the apparently adverse texts of the *Upaniṣad*.

Before we try to resolve the conflict between the Vedic and the Vedāntic texts, we must remember how the *Veda* itself views the performance of works. Though works may be performed for one’s own good, the *Veda*, as indicated above, is in favour of doing them for the good of the world. Therefore, the *Veda* itself speaks disparagingly about works done in the wrong way. He is a deluded person, says the *Veda*, who does works wrongly, *mūḍhaḥ*.* Works done not according to the rule, “*avidhipūrvakam*” (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 16-17), obscure the soul instead of purifying it. Done in the right spirit, they purify the soul and are conducive to the attainment of knowledge. The passage from self-

* *Taittirīya Kūṭhakaṁ*, quoted in the “Discourses of the Sage of Kāñcī” — *Daivattin Kural*, II. p. 324

purity (*aprayutām matim*) to self-knowledge is referred to by the *Veda* as a journey to the mastery of the Self, *svarājya* (*Rv.*, 5-6-66). It is in this context that we have to understand the Vedāntic texts.

We have found that works done in the wrong spirit obstruct the soul. By doing so they obstruct the realisation of the Self. In other words, they keep the soul ignorant of the true Self and therefore dependent on the gods. This is implied in the Vedic view of works. The Vedāntic text is merely an enlarged view of the original Vedic idea. This is evident from what the text itself says: first of all, it says that the worshipper of the gods knows neither his Self nor the Self of the gods, “*na sa veda;*” secondly, it says that on account of this ignorance he is like an animal to the gods, “*paśurevaṁ sa devānām,*” i.e. he is entirely dependent on them.

The other Vedāntic texts also can be explained in the same way. Works performed in the wrong way put a thick veil over the soul and enslave it in the lower life of ignorance. On the contrary, when performed in the right way, they conduce to a higher life of knowledge. They help the soul to walk on the path towards immortality, “*amṛtatvāya gātum*” (*Rv.*, 1-72-9). Thus there are two aspects to the *Veda*, one lower and the other higher. In the *Muṇḍaka* text (1-1-4) these are referred to as *aparā* and *parā*. It (1-1-5) puts the *Veda* in the category of *aparā* because as long as works are done in the wrong way, we believe that the object of the *Veda* is the realisation of personal good. If we learn to perform them for the sake of self-purification conducive to immortality, we surrender that belief. Hence the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text

(4-3-22) says that the *Vedas* are not the *Vedas*. Thus neither the *Muṇḍaka* nor the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* states anything which is not intended by the *Veda*.

5. *The Complementary Texts*

That the *karma* and the *jñāna* portions are not opposed to each other is now established on the basis of the complementary texts in the *Veda* and the *Vedānta*, the Paramācārya invites our attention to the Vedic text that deals with knowledge and the Vedāntic texts that bear on works.

The famous *Tryambaka-mantra* is a clear instance that the *Veda* does not stop with works, but insists on knowledge also. Here the Vedic poet is praying for freedom from the cycle of death that separates him from immortality. उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् (*Rv.*, 7-59-12) (Like a cucumber may I be separated from death, but not from immortality.) In the same way the *Īśā* and *Kaṭha* may be mentioned as two important *Upaniṣads* that consider works not as an impediment to knowledge. The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* teaches that by giving up all works to the Lord (*tyaktena*) one is not bound by them. It says: न कर्म लिप्यते नरे (2) (Work does not bind the soul in man.) The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* tells us that by sacrificing the momentary things into the Nāciketa fire one achieves the Eternal. In other words, it points out that works are conducive to the attainment of the Eternal. It says: मया नाचिकेतश्चितोऽग्निः अनित्यैर्द्रव्यैः प्राप्तवानसि नित्यम् (1-2-10) (By me is the Nāciketa fire laid and by means of the momentary things have I reached the Eternal.) This shows how illfounded is the view that the *Veda* does

not go beyond works or that the Vedānta is concerned only with knowledge.

6. *The Vedic Exegesis*

In conclusion we shall note how the Kāñcī Paramācārya understands the method of interpreting the words of the *Upaniṣads*. To construe all words of the *Upaniṣads*, even those which appear to censure the *Veda*, as words faithfully bringing into open expression the hidden teachings of the *Veda* — this is his Vedic exegesis. And this is also the teaching of the *Upaniṣads*. For they repeatedly claim that what they set forth is the hidden teaching of the *Veda*, “*eṣa upadeśaḥ eṣā vedopaniṣat*” (*Taittirīya*, 1-11-6).

SOME TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT GURU

A. Kuppuswami

I. "Giving of food to the hungry is a great charitable act."

About the middle of September 1932, Pūjyasrī Mahā Swamiji was camping at Bugga, a small village near Nagari, in the Chittoor District (of the present Andhra Pradesh) for the *Cāturmāsya* period. The camp was made up mostly of thatched sheds. One night, at about ten o'clock, a middle-aged person of Nellore reached the camp, with his aged mother, his wife, and three children. The visitor enquired the watchman on duty whether he could have darshan of Swamiji. The watchman replied that His Holiness was resting and *darshan* could be had only the next morning.

The Ācārya was lying inside a palanquin, placed in the open air. He had not gone to sleep, but was reading some book with the help of a torch-light. Having heard the conversation that had gone on between the visitor and the watchman, the Great Guru

opened the door of the palanquin and woke up the attendant, sleeping on the ground beside the palanquin, by clapping the hands. The roused attendant stood up. The Guru Deva asked the attendant to go to the shed in the front and find out whether any one had come just then. Accordingly, the attendant paced towards the shed. He found a middle-aged man spreading a cloth for lying down, and enquired him as to wherefrom he had come. The visitor answered that he had come from Nellore, desiring to have *darshan* of Swamiji. The attendant told the visitor that he could sleep for the night, and have *darshan* the next morning.

Then, the attendant walked back towards the palanquin and reported to Swamiji, "A middle-aged man has arrived from Nellore seeking Sri Periyaval's *darshan*. I told him that he could have *darshan* in the morning." After a gentle pause for a minute or two, the Great One observed: "What you have uttered now is only a repetition of the *pārākkāran's* (watchman's) reply to the stranger's question, which I have already heard. You say that the caller has come over here with his family from Nellore. Go again and find out if they had taken food for the night, and, if not, get enough fruits from the *ugrāṇam* (stores) and give them, and then let them go to sleep." The attendant left, and after having carried out the instructions, came back after some quarter of an hour, and told His Holiness that enough fruits and some buttermilk had been provided to the visitor and his family. Said Guru Deva, "*You must know that there is no greater dāna (charitable gift) than that of providing food to hungry people.*"

II. "*Ahiṃsā is the greatest dharma.*"

Feeding the hungry and quenching the thirst of the thirsty are the greatest among charitable gifts."

It was the 11th of May 1969. The Sage of Kāñcī and the successor Ācārya, Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī Sāmī, were returning from Tirumalai (Tirupati), after a prolonged camp at the Seven Hills for about twelve days. From the foot of the Hills, the Ācārya Deva proceeded to the small native village (near Chandragiri) of the Executive Officer of the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams, in response to the Officer's prayer. The successor Ācārya went straight to Tiruchānūr.

A little before noon, His Holiness reached the village, followed by only six attendants. The Executive Officer himself could not be present at the village, because he had to leave unexpectedly for Hyderabad the previous night on urgent official duty. The Officer's brother and the people of the village welcomed the Ācārya, who was then conducted to the newly constructed temple in the village. His Holiness had his mid-day bath with the scanty water obtainable from the well inside the temple. Then, he began to perform *anuṣṭhāna* (noon ablutions), sitting under a tree, at the back of the sanctum of the temple. It was a rather very hot day. During the course of the *anuṣṭhāna*, the water, used for the purpose, gently flowed down the slope behind the Ācārya's wooden seat. A dog, evidently, standing below the foot of the tree, tried to quench its thirst by licking the drops of water running down at intervals, from the foot of the tree. One of the devoted attendants, standing at a

little distance, noticed the dog. Fearing that the dog might pollute by drawing near the Ācārya's seat, picked up a small stone and aimed it at the dog. Having been mildly hit, the dog moved a little further down and began to bark. In a few minutes, the *anuṣṭhāna* was over. On getting up, His Holiness enquired whether any one had hit the dog with a stone, although His Holiness should have known the person. The one who had committed the act slipped away, while the other devoted attendants kept silent. Guru Deva spoke in a grim voice "*Ahimsā is the greatest dharma (virtue). There is no greater dāna (charitable gift) than offering of food to the hungry and giving water to the thirsty. Hunger and thirst are passions common to all living beings. It will be good if the one who caused to drive away the creature does take a little water from the well, pour the water in my anuṣṭhāna basin, find out the dog and coax it to quench its thirst.*" Of course, it was done at once.

III. "*The purpose for which hands are given to man*"

After the *Navarātri* celebrations of the year 1939, the Great Ācārya left Kumbakonam for a village called Kallūr, some miles north of the town. A pet devotee walking by the side of the Ācārya's palanquin noticed some tiny pimple-like eruptions on the tip of the thumb and one of the fingers on the right palm of the Great Guru. He knew that the eruptions were due to profuse hour-long *arcanas* performed with *kuṅkuma* (vermilion) to Devī Tripurasundarī, both day and night, during the *Navarātri*. As the devotee was intently gazing at the palm, His Holiness turned to the right and asked him, "What are you looking at so keenly?" He replied: "Some drops of cocoanut oil may

be applied to Periyavāl's palm, when taking rest in the afternoon, and the pressure given by the thumb on the kuṅkumam while performing *arcana* should be lessened a little for some days." The Great One smiled and began singing in a low, melodious, tune "Cetularā-Śṛṅgāra-rasamu." After finishing the song, the Ācārya looked at the palm, and the devotee's face alternately for a few moments and then asked, "Do you know the meaning of the words 'Cetularā-Śṛṅgāra-Rasamu,' and who has composed the song just now sung by me?" The youth pleaded ignorance. The Great One himself gave the answer: "Saint Tyāgarāja has sung that hands are given only for adoring the image of Śrī Rāma. *To what better use can these hands be put than for adoring Devī, and performing worship to Her with arcana?* Think well. For your satisfaction you can get some cocoanut oil after we reach Kallūr."

IV. "To disturb one who is sleeping is a sin."

In the last week of the *Kārtika* month (middle of December 1939), His Holiness was camping at the Manali Mudaliar Choultry, in the village of Puthūr, about six miles north of Sīrkāzhi, in Thanjavur District. On the last Sunday of *Kārtika* month the Ācārya left Puthūr for Tiruveṅgāḍu, to have *darshan* of the *mokṣa-dīpārādhana* performed to Śrī Aghora Veerabhadrasvāmi, inside the Śvetāraṇyesvara temple at Tiruveṅgāḍu. Only a few devoted attendants followed (on foot) the Ācārya, who was travelling by a palanquin. A wealthy, orthodox, brahmin landlord of Sīrkāzhi followed, seated in his large bullock cart. The whole night, His Holiness and party were inside the temple. After *darshan* of the *dīpārādhana*, the

return journey to the camp at Puthūr commenced. For nearly two hours it was raining. The attendants, walking along by the side of the slow-moving palanquin, were totally drenched and they were put to much difficulty while treading the slippery mud road till they reached Sīrkāzhi. All the time, the landlord and two of his attendants were seated in the cart.

It was about 8 a.m. when the choultry at Puthūr was reached. The weary attendants changed into dry clothes and had some breakfast. As they had not had even a little of sleep during the previous night, they repaired to a wing of the choultry, adjacent to the Math office, and lied down. May be, about an hour later, the landlord of Sīrkāzhi, and some others coming from different places, had gathered in the main hall of the choultry and were engaged in a discussion on the steps that might have to be taken for protesting against the Provincial Government's taking over the choultries founded and richly endowed with landed properties by the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur. The discussions took place in the presence of His Holiness. At one stage the Ācārya asked the landlord of Sīrkāzhi to get some sheets of paper and a pen from the Math Office for jotting down the points discussed. Finding none in the office, he peeped into the adjacent wing, where he found among those sleeping, one whom the landlord had known well for years. He woke up that young man and informed him that Śrī Periyavāḷ wanted some paper and a pen to be brought, and left. The young man got up, hastily picked up some sheets of paper, a pad and a pen and rushed to the presence of His Holiness. The Gure Deva, on seeing him, observed: "Have you been sleeping? Why did you

come here breaking your well-earned sleep?" Having understood that, the landlord must have felt for having disturbed the youth while sleeping. Turning to the landlord, the Ācārya said: "You are performing Vaisvadeva daily, you are leading a sāstraic life. Don't you know that *it is a sin to wake up one who is sleeping?*"

V. *A Few Words to Teachers*

"Teachers, as a class, utilize what they have learnt, for earning their livelihood, while most people, after completing their education, are engaged in such professions as have no link with their education. Teachers should study before hand and properly the lessons that they are to impart to their students. Only then teachers can impress their students and command respect from the taught."

THE PARAMĀCĀRYA: THE EXEMPLAR OF THE VEDIC TRADITION

V. Kutumba Sastry*

Every person who comes into contact with the Paramācārya, Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī feels that he is fortunate enough to have been born as a contemporary of a realized soul. The epithet “*Paramācārya*” with which he is referred to with reference by all people brings out the characteristics of his personality. The definition of the term “*ācārya*” is given in the *śāstras* as follows:

“आचिनोति च शास्त्राणि आचारे स्थापयत्यपि ।
स्वयमाचरते यस्मात् तस्मादाचार्य उच्यते ॥”¹

An *ācārya* is one who has studied the *śāstras* deeply, who establishes others in a disciplined life in accordance with the teachings of the *śāstras*, and also follows the teachings of the *śāstras* in his own life. Our *Ācārya* is reverentially called Paramācārya

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because he is supreme among the *ācāryas*, the *ācārya* of *ācāryas*. He is one in whom all the excellences of an *ācārya* are exemplified.

The Paramācārya, has not only studied the *Vedas* and other *śāstras*, but also has an authentic experience of what is taught in them. Therefore, what he knows and what he says have an unquestionable authority. That is why eminent scholars are extremely careful when they are engaged in *sāstraic* discussions in the presence of the Paramācārya. Many a time they find it difficult to answer the questions put to them by the Paramācārya. This only shows the difference between wisdom and learning. The Paramācārya is the embodiment of wisdom before which the learning of scholars becomes weak and incomplete.

The observations made by the Paramācārya about the *Vedas* and other *śāstras* throw light on many aspects which, though simple, go unnoticed. The clarifications that he makes cannot be found in any text or commentary. While camping at Machilipatnam, in Andhra Pradesh in 1969, the Paramācārya brought out the significance of the *Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda* in one of his discourses. He pointed out that the *Śiva-pañcākṣarī*, i.e. "*Namaḥ Śivāya*", is the central point of the *Kṛṣṇayajurveda* and that all other *mantras* are arranged around it, following some methods of *samputīkaraṇa*. Sometimes the way in which the Ācārya explains the nature of the supreme reality is illuminating. Once he brought out the difference between Brahman and Ātman by employing pun on the Tamil word "*tān*". He explained the difference between *sāmbār* and *rasam* saying that *sāmbār* is mixed with "*tān*", i.e. vegetable pieces, and that *rasam* is without

“*tān*”. If “*tān*”, i.e. *ahaṅkāra*, is mixed with the pure *cit*, it becomes *Ātman*; and if the same is removed, it becomes Brahman. The *Upaniṣad* speaks of Brahman as *rasa*.²

For more than eight decades his mission was to preserve the Vedic tradition. In one of his discourses he has made it clear that his work is to see that the *Vedas* are studied and that the teachings of the *Vedas* are practised.³ According to the Paramācārya, the *Vedas* are the root of the Indian culture and the latter has been preserved only because of the *Vedas*. Once the *paramparā* of *Veda-adhyayana* and Vedic *anuṣṭhāna* decays, no effort will succeed in preserving the cultural heritage. The greatness of our religion, according to the Paramācārya lies in the fact that from a single common source and authority many *sampradāyas* could come into existence, diverse philosophical systems could be developed. If the root from which these off-shoots developed gets destroyed, everything derived from, and dependent on, it will die. So he has been exhorting the people to take care of the *Veda* and other *sāstras*. The only way by which they can be protected is by following their teachings.

The Ācārya, on several occasions, made it clear that he did not like to visit and stay in the cities because of the indulgence of the city-based people in *navanāgarikam*, in the modern ways of living. His repeated remarks echo the words of Kālidāsa, “*जनाकीर्णं मन्ये हुतवहपरीतं गृहमिव*”⁴ (The overcrowded cities look like houses on flames). And, yet he strained himself to tour many a time and stay for longer periods in the cities for the only purpose of reminding the large gatherings of people about their duty to preserve the

continuation of the unbroken oral tradition of *adhyayana*, which has been transmitted to us from time immemorial.

The untiring efforts of the Paramācārya, coupled with his spiritual force, have resulted in establishing a number of trusts and *vedapāṭhaśālās* throughout India, through the help of philanthropists, businessmen, political leaders, administrators, and laymen. If, today, *i.e.* at the end of the present century, we are able to have a general awareness of, and a positive response to, the Vedic learning and practice practically in every section of the society, it is because of the eight-decades-long campaigning of the *Paramācūrya* in this regard.

The Ācārya insists on the performance of *Pañca-mahāyajñas*, *i.e.* five great rituals'. He characterizes them as the quintessence of our *sanātana-dharma*, *i.e.* religion without a beginning. The first one called "*Brahma-yajña*" refers to the learning and the teaching of the *Vedas*. The Paramācārya points out that the teaching of the *Vedas* is *vidyā-dāna* and that it should, therefore, be treated as social service of the highest order. The second one called "*Pitr-yajña*" is the performance of *śrāddha*, *tarpaṇa*, etc. for one's forefathers. *Deva-yajña*, which is the third one, refers to the worship of one's *iṣṭa-devatā*, which, according to the Paramācārya, is the culmination of all other *yajñas*. The fourth one called *Bhūta-yajna* consists in offering food to all living beings such as dog, crow, and so on. The fifth one, *viz. Nṛ-yajña*, is concerned with the entertainment of guests. The Paramācārya observes that, when we consider the nature of these five *yajñas*, it will be obvious that the Vedic religion

which has made them obligatory on the part of every householder excels and other religions in enjoining social service (*paropakāra*).

While the *Pañca-mahāyajñas* are performed individually, there are activities to be performed collectively as enjoined by *śāstra*. They are called *Pūrtakarmas*.⁶ *Pūrtam* is a social activity performed by a large number of people as a group for the benefit of the community, e.g. digging a public well or a tank. The Ācārya refers to a Tamil usage, “*avaṅ aṅgē enna vetṭik-konḍirukkiranō*,” i.e. it is not known what he is digging there. Such a statement is made when some one who is expected at a particular time does not turn up. The Ācārya explains that a person may not respond to our calls when he is engaged in *pūrtam*, which is an important duty. There is a saying:

“न हि जानपदं दुःखं एकशोचितुमर्हति।”⁷

which means: “There is no use if one person thinks about the difficulties faced by all the people of a village.” The idea that is sought to be conveyed here is that individuals must join together and be engaged in activities for the benefit of the entire community. Activities of this type constitute “community service”. If the goal of social service is the upliftment of the members of the community, what, then, is the goal of the people who are uplifted? “It is certainly realization of God,” says the Ācārya. Hence, the cooperative effort of the people should not leave out *deva-kārya*, i.e. service to God as well as to temples, the holy abodes of God. If social service leads to the well-being of the people in society, such well-being becomes fruitless if service to God is ignored or forgotten. Here

is a constructive and spiritually elevating teaching to the social workers and social reformers who are inclined to think that there is nothing else to be achieved than social service.

The Acārya has expressed his contempt for exhibitionism in the practice of social service. He opines that the service rendered by the right hand should not be known by the left hand. Exhibitionism increases egoism which, in turn, turns us away from God. He is equally forceful in deprecating the tendency to ape the alien culture and way of living.*

The Ācārya offers a fine suggestion to the professionals to gain the benefit of spiritualism by offering their services to the needy free of cost just for an hour a day. He suggests to them that they should not concentrate only on their *vṛtti*, but also in (*Ātma-*) *vṛddhi*.¹⁰ (*Vṛtti* and *Vṛddhi* are written in the same way in Tamil script.) The Ācārya redefines *vānaprasthāśrama* so as to suit the needs of modern society. Irrespective of whether one is a professional, or a bureaucrat, or a teacher, or one engaged in any kind of work, after crossing the age of superannuation, one should offer one's expertise to the voluntary organisations and to the needy people free of cost. The Ācārya exhorts them not to cling to the family affairs after their retirement. As they should show their concern to the family up to the time of retirement, they should show greater concern to the *larger family*, i.e. the society, thereafter. This purifies them from the sin they have acquired during their service, directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or under compulsion. Not only that, such involvement in free service makes them preoccupied with some sort

of activity which relieves them from mental agony and physical weakness. In contrast to other religious leaders, the Paramācārya, a practical philosopher as he is, extends his call to the superannuated persons in addition to the youth. Once they are accustomed to this way of living, he affirms, they will have immense energy and strength in them to undertake any responsibility."

All the above teachings and suggestions of the Ācārya fall within the scope of *karma* only. The Ācārya is of the view that *karma* is the foundation over which the edifice of *dhyāna* (meditation) or *jñāna* (spiritual realization) can be built. This is a corrective which the Ācārya offers to those who believe that *dhyāna*, or meditation for a few minutes in the morning and evening will suffice to realise the ultimate reality. The so-called meditation which is done now-a-days is only relaxation, which is often mistaken for spiritualism. In this connection the Ācārya cites Patañjali, who has prescribed *yama* and *niyama* as the first two steps of the *yoga* discipline prior to *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, and *samādhi*. These is no use in practising the last six "limbs" of the discipline ignoring the first two." By these teachings and suggestions the Paramācārya has once again established the teachings of the *Vedas* into practice and has effectively turned many a person into the *anuṣṭhāna* fold.

To preach is easy. To practise what one preaches is very difficult. The greatness of Paramācārya lies in the fact that he shows to every one his teachings more in practice than in speech: this is it which has made the Paramācārya what he is today. *Anuṣṭhāna-śakti* is the *ātmaśakti* to the Paramācārya. Throughout his

life he is performing very consistently the *anuṣṭhāna* prescribed to him meticulously without compromise.

I would like to recall only a single incident to show his uncompromising spirit of *anuṣṭhāna*. While I was a student, studying *Alaṅkāra* texts, somewhere in the preliminary books, I read a *śloka*, the expression of which left a deep impression in my mind. It is:

“अहो पुणं सरो यत्र लुठन्तः स्नान्ति मानवाः।”

It means: “Oh wonderful! How full is this pond wherein people are taking bath by rolling in it!” I appreciated the poet for his skill in conveying the idea of the shallowness of the pond very effectively. But I never thought at that time that I would get a chance to witness a situation narrated by the poet. It happened in July 1983. After the initiation of His Holiness Śaṅkaravijayendra Sarasvatī, the first *Vyāsa-pūjā* was performed in the outskirts of Kurnool town in Andhra Pradesh. Having travelled from Tirupati for more than eight hours by bus, I along with my other colleagues wanted to have a bath in the morning. I learnt that there was a river by the side of the camp-site. When I went to the riverside, I literally experienced what has been stated by the poet. I had to wet my body by rolling myself from the front to the back, from one side to the other. In spite of all this kind of exercise, it appeared to be more of a sand bath than water bath.

That was *pūrnimā*; and *avagāhana-snāna* has to be performed by the Paramācārya. In such circumstances the performance of *avagāhana-snāna* can be compromised. But it was not to the liking of the Paramācārya. A pit was dug in the middle of the river to

draw the water into it; and the Paramācārya took a long time to complete his *avagāhana-snāna* in the proper way. After the bath was over, the Paramācārya tried to climb up the pit, which was nearly 5 feet deep. He had great difficulty as the steps made in the pit gave way. For about twenty minutes he struggled to come out of the pit in various ways. No one could help him physically; nor was he willing to put down the *daṇḍa* and the *kamaṇḍala*, and then climb up. The other two Ācāryas were far away from the spot. At last he succeeded and came out of the pit. Such is the perseverance of the Paramācārya in the observance of the *anuṣṭhāna*. He was almost ninety years old at that time.

After the *Vyāsa pūjā* was over, there was a heavy downpour in the afternoon. It was raining throughout the night. Such a downpour was unimaginable in the mid-summer of the ever-drought Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The next morning the young and the strong in the camp had to do voluntary service on the banks of the river cautioning the people about the heavy current. I returned to Tirupati being convinced that the mighty Varuṇa was certainly weak before the spiritual power of our Paramācārya; *ātmaśakti* of the Paramācārya made Varuṇa come down and flood the river. The Sage of Kāñcī is, indeed, the *Parama-Ācārya*, supreme and so secondless, revealing the full significance of the term "*paramācārya*".

The following passage in which Dr R. Balasubramanian compares Sri Ramana Maharshi and His Holiness Sri Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī summarizes what I have stated above:"

As God-realized persons, both of them act, and yet are inactive. They act for the sake of others without the sense of agency; and so whatever they do does not affect them. They exemplify in their lives the combination of the highest wisdom and unselfish work which sanctify mankind and confer on it the blessings that are lasting. The truth, however, is that they are inactive, for they remain as the Self without body-consciousness. They are the personification of love. Whatever they say and whatever they do are acts of bestowal of grace on others. As benefactors of humanity, they do social service in the true sense of the term. Their spiritual awakening contributes to the transformation of the world. Pleasure and pain and "that unrest which men miscall delight" do not touch them. Remaining as "the still point of the turning world," to those who are in the dark they are the beacons of light; to those who are weak, they are the source of strength; and to those who are afflicted, they are the fountain of joy.

NOTES

1. Yāska, *Nirukta*, ed. Mukund Jha Baksi, Meherchand Lachman Das, Delhi 1982, p. 15.
2. "Raso vai sah"- *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II, 7.
3. *Daivattin Kural*, Vanathi Padippagam, Madras, 1983, Vol. I, pp. 233-245.
4. Kālidāsa, *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1965, p. 79.

5. *Daivattin Kural, op. cit.*, Vol. III, 1982, p. 140.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-147.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 324-327.

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 179.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 80

12. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 458-464.

13. R. Balasubramanian, "Two Contemporary Exemplars of the Hindu Tradition: Ramana Maharshi and Sri Candrasekharendra Sarasvati," in Krishna Sivaraman (Ed.), *Hindu Spirituality: Vedas through Vedānta* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 389.

ON TEMPLE WORSHIP*

C.L. Ramakrishnan**

*Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām hyddeśe' rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmāyan sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā.*

(18-61)

The above cited verse, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, says that the Lord, residing in the heart of all beings, makes them revolve (move about), as if mounted on a contrivance.

Some persons, quoting this verse, ask why one should go to the temple, as God is immanent in every being.

The answer to this query can be given through an illustrative example. Water is present underneath the ground and the source of water is subterranean. But when one feels thirsty, one goes to a place where water has been kept, made potable and ready for consumption. One does not start digging the earth, when thirsty, in the hope of striking water, drinking it and

* Based on the *anugrahabhāṣanam* of the Paramācārya of Kāñcī, collected and published as "*Daiyattin Kural*"

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quenching the thirst. In the same way, in the temples, because of the observance of the *pūjā-vidhis*, according to the *Āgamas* and congregation of the pious and the holy, Divinity is kept readymade — as it were — for the devotee to experience and draw the benefit therefrom. The *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* says that a book, a place of pilgrimage and an act — all become good and beneficial to others because good and pious people have had contact with them.

*“sat-karṇi-kurvanti karmāṇi
sat-śāstrī-kurvanti śāstrāṇi
satīrthi-kurvanti tīrthāṇi.”*

This has been exemplified by the great poet Kālidāsa, in the opening verse of his immortal poem, the *Meghadūta*. While describing the sanctity of the waters of Rāmagiri, the poet attributes this holy quality to the waters as having been obtained because *Śrī Śītā* took her purificatory ablutions in them.

*“yakṣaścakre janakatanayā-
snāna punyodakeṣu,
snigdhaçhāyātaruṣu vasatim
rāmagiryāśrameṣu.*

Thus, by going to a temple, the devotee is able to gain the spiritual vibrations, without any special effort, as they are available there in plenty, due to the compassionate visits of pious and holy men to these precincts.

That there should be a Lord of all the creations we see, is a matter accepted by all theologians and philosophers in their own way of perception. The

logicians, who argue out each and everything, apply the means of knowledge, known as "inference" (*anumāna*) and conclude that there must be a cause (creator or God) for the effect (creation).

We see a beautiful building. We conclude that there must be an intelligent person who should have built this fine structure. We see a vehicle and conclude that an intelligent engineer or workman should have designed and constructed it. These effects (building, vehicle etc.) could not have come into existence accidentally or on their own. Many things following a logic or process should have gone into the production of these. Similarly, the Universe should have been brought into existence by an all-knowing power whom we call God. Just like a thief is identified from the finger- and foot-prints left behind by him, God — the "thief" of the hearts of devotees — has left behind many such foot-prints on the sands of time. Just like the thief conceals himself from public gaze, God also conceals Himself. The devotee should find out this hiding place and then the God. For this purpose, the only means is *bhakti* or devotion towards God. One of the means to generate *bhakti* is temple worship.

Here again, some may argue that "Let there be a creator or God, but why should we take note of that entity?" They also go a step forward and question the need for prayers, as God is all-knowing and therefore, does not need anyone to tell Him anything. Further, as He is the bestower of the fruits of action of the beings, of what avail can prayers be? For, He cannot change the effect brought about by one's actions.

In the *Ānandasāgarastava*, the great poet and philosopher Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita says, addressing Goddess Mīnākṣī, that though She is all-knowing, by the outpourings of his miseries, the devotee feels unburdened in mind; and if not for anything — for this reason alone, there is need to plead before the deity.

*abhūtapūrvam mama bhāvi kim vā
sarvam sahe me sahaḥam hi duḥkham
kintu tvadagre śaraṇāgatānām
parābhavo nātha na te' nurūpaḥ.*

(yāmuna, *stotraratna*, 25)

In his immortal drama, *Uttararāmacarita*, Bhavabhūti says that excess of feeling should never be kept bottled up within one's heart or mind. They should be let out, as is the case with a tank brimful of water and threatening to breach its bunds is to be treated by cutting the bund and letting water out. Failure to do so will break the bund (heart) itself.

*pūrotpīḍe taḷākasya parivāhaḥ pratikriyā
śokaśobhe ca hṛdayam pralāpaireva dhāryate. (3.29)*

Even in the unburdening of one's mind and emptying one's heart, the person before whom these are done is important. Instead of doing it before all and sundry or to persons who will have no sympathy or compassion, one may as well digest these, oneself. God is an ocean of compassion and hence, the temple is the right place for such supplication. Even in this fleeting world, we see difference from person to person, and we choose the person to be approached — even for gaining triflings. Then, what is there to say about the miseries of *samsāra* and who can be the better refuge than God Himself?

Bhartṛhari, in his *Nīṭisataka* advises on these lines, making the rain-bird (*cātaka*), as the excuse. He says that there are clouds and clouds in this world, but the *cātaka* bird is advised not to beg for water whenever it sees a cloud. This is due to the reason that all clouds are not alike — some thunder and sail away and yet others, deluge the earth with downpour. Therefore, there is a need to differentiate one from the other.

re re cātaka sāvadhānamanasā mitra kṣaṇam
śrūyatām,
ambhodā bahavo bhavanti gagane
sarve'pi naikādrśāḥ
kecidorṣṭibhirārdrayanti dharanīm
garjanti kecidorṥhā
yam yam paśayasi tasya tasya purato
mā brūhi dinam vacaḥ.

The *Tirukkural* says this in a beautiful couplet:

“அறவாழி அந்தணன் தாள் சேர்ந்தார்க்கல்லால்
 பிறவாழி நீந்தல் அரிது.”

(8)

But the devotee is not to see the idol as God but he should fancy the existence of God in the idol, in the temple. If one were to say that a bunch of plantain fruits — which is really yellow in colour — as having red colour, it would be disputed. But, if the same yellow fruits are told to be fancied as red in colour, the response will be different. The listener will try to visualise the fruits as red in colour. That is the concept in worshipping an idol, bringing one to think that God is immanent in the idol and not the idol is God. Even the *śruti* speaks of this concept as:

“*antarbahīśca tatsarvaṃ
vyāpya nārūyaṇaḥ sthitaḥ*”

Just as the plantain fruits are yellow in colour — the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* — God is really beyond significative form or attribute. But, for our understanding, we attribute form and qualities to the attributeless reality.

Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, while commenting on the *Brahmasūtra* (1.1.11) says:

*dvirūpaṃ hi brahma avagamyate, nāmarūpa-
vikārabhedopādihivisiṣṭaṃ tad-viparītaṃ ca
sarvopādhi-vivarjitaṃ, evaṃ, ekamapi brahma,
apekṣitopādhisambandhaṃ nirastopādhi-samban-
dhaṃ, upāsyatvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣu
e.*

Elsewhere, in captivating poetry, Bhagavatpāda says that he has committed three errors — in meditating on the form (of the formless reality) of God, in bringing God within the fold of the words in his *stutis* or poems extolling the greatness of God (an entity beyond the conception of mind and words — as declared by the *śruti* — “*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*” and as described by Puṣpadanta in his *Śivamahimna-stotra* — “*atītaḥ paṇṭhānam tava ca mahimā vānmanasayoḥ, atadvyāvṛtyā cakītamabhidhatte śrutirapi*) and in confining God (the inconfineable in space or time) in temples and places of pilgrimage — all these arising out of ignorance (of the real nature of the Reality) and seeks pardon.

*rūpaṃ rūpavivarjitasya bhavato dhyānena yat-
kalpitaṃ,
stutyā' nirvacanīyātā' khilaguro dūrīkṛtā yanmayā
vyāpītvam ca nirākṛtam bhagavato yattīrthayātrādīnā
kṣantavyam jagadīśa tadvikalatā doṣatrayam matkṛtam.*

But, this state is for a *jīvanmukta* — like the Ācārya, who has gone through the stages of *sarūpōpāsana*, earlier. This only emphasises the need for *sarūpōpāsana*, which in due course will lead the *sādhaka* to *arūpōpāsana*, in the higher reaches of meditative enquiry.

The need for such a large number of gods in the Hindu pantheon is a point for argument with some. The *śruti* declares that there is only one Reality which is said to manifest differently. (cf., “*ekam sad-viprā bahudhā vadanti*” and “*ajāyamano bahudhā vijāyate, tasya dhīrāḥ parijānanti yonim.*” This makes for the varied tastes of persons, as the world is of diverse taste — *loko bhinnaruciḥ*. This is similar to a photographer taking photos of an object from different angles, to highlight different aspects of the same object. Lord Kṛṣṇa promises to meet his *bhakta*, whatever path he follows:

*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham/
mama vartmānuvartante manusyāḥ pārtha sarvaśah||*

(4. 11)

In his *Śivamahimnastotra*, the poet Puṣpadanta says that people follow different paths of devotion to different deities but the one refuge for all is Lord Śiva, as is the case with the many rivers, which ultimately enter the ocean, for their resting place —

*trayī sāmkyam yogaḥ paśupati-matām vaiṣṇavamiti
prabhinne prasthāne tadīdamadaḥ pathyamiti ca/
rucinām vaicitrayādrju-kuṭīlanānāpathajusām
nrnāmeko gamyastvamasi payasāmarnava iva||*

The aim of beings being realisation of the true nature of the individual soul (*i.e.*) its non-difference from the ultimate Reality (the Brahman), temple worship helps in concentration of mind, *satsaṅgha* and receiving the vibrations from the realised souls.

Thus, "temple worship" is an important step on the path of the *sādhaka* for attaining his goal — *i.e.*, *mokṣa* or liberation.

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TO THE LORD

APPEAL

अभूतपूर्वं मम भावि किं वा

सर्वं महे मे सहजं हि दुःखम् ।

किन्तु त्वदग्रे शरणागतानां

पराभवो नाथ न तेऽनुरूपः ॥

Oh Lord! what misery can possibly happen to me that has not already befallen? I have been bearing everything; for misery and I have been born together. But, O Master! it is not becoming of you that one who has taken shelter at your feet should get frustrated in his attempt to overcome the miseries of transmigratory existence.

ŚRĪ PARAMĀCĀRYA ON THE RELEVANCE OF VEDIC STUDIES TO MODERN TIMES

S. Sankaranarayanan*

Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya the Sa
śekharendra Sarasvatī Svāmī cācārya
of Śrī Kāñcī Kāmakoṭipīṭha is popularly and reveren-
tially known as *Paramācārya*, *Periyavūl* and 'Sage of
Kāñcī.' He is wellknown for his missionary spirit and
zeal in reviving the Vedic studies. Nowadays, however,
persons who are under the strong spell of modern
Western education and material culture, are very likely
to fail to appreciate the wisdom of Śrī Paramācārya in
this respect. No doubt, many of these persons do hold
him in high esteem and even consider him an incarna-
tion of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya and a
manifestation of Lord Śiva Himself. Yet, they enter-
tain doubts about the relevance of the Vedic studies to
the present day world. Hence in this present paper
an attempt is being made to give these persons an idea
of what Śrī Paramācārya thinks in this regard. Almost
all the points dealt with in this paper are taken from

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Śrī Paramācārya's thought-provoking lectures,** delivered in Tamil on different occasions, to large gatherings of men and women of various walks of life and also from his long and short dialogues with individuals or with small groups of devotees, in the course of about sixty years past.

As a Hindu Saṁnyāsin given to a vigorous ascetic practices, Śrī Paramācārya is personally devoted to the study of the Upaniṣads and their philosophy alone. Yet, he is fully conscious that besides being a Saṁnyāsin, he is also the Maṭhādhipati, the pontif, heading the illustrious Kāñcī Kāmakoṭipīṭha, established by Ś. Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, specially for propagating *nātana Vaidika Dharma*, 'The Perennial Law of the *Vedas* of the Bharata' — a Dharma that came to be labelled, through foreign influence, as Hinduism in the course of centuries. Therefore, he strongly feels that he has the first and foremost additional responsibility to work for the propagation of the Vaidika Dharma and also, therefore, of the study of the *Veda*, which is the original source book of the Dharma of the land. "*vedo'khilo dharmamūlam*" 'The entire *Veda* is the source of Law.' Moreover, as Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda himself has shown in his famous *Sopānapañcaka*, the sincere daily study of the *Veda* (*vedo nityam adhiyatām*) constitutes the very first step in the long ladder (*sopāna*) leading to the Liberation, the final goal of being one with the Supreme (*brahmātmanā sthiyatām*). That is why Śrī Paramācārya

** Hundreds of these lectures of Śrī Paramācārya have been collected, carefully classified and published with all devotion by Rā. Ganapati in five bulky volumes bearing the appropriate title *Daivatin Kural* 'The Voice Divine.' The present paper elaborates a little certain points of Śrī Paramācārya, summarises some and leaves out many, for obvious reasons.

has taken *Veda-pracāra*, 'Propagation of the Vedic Study' as his life mission and advocates it with every force at his disposal.

In many of his speeches delivered in this connection, Śrī Paramācārya has dealt with many interesting points by way of giving a prelude to his main topic. He recounts: The great sages and thinkers of ancient Bharat offered mutually conflicting theories regarding the origin of the *Veda*. This fact itself suggests that it is not an easy job to know its origin exactly. Yet, the modern scholars of the West, followed by their counterparts in India, worked out some apparently logical, but really defective theories in this regard. The Vedic studies, in ancient times were centring mainly around the Gurukula system and it flourished throughout Bharat. In ancient Tamil country too, since the time of the Saṅgam age at least, the Vedic studies and the Vedic Dharma, had been lauded by the great Saṅgam poets and others like Tiruvaḷḷuvar, Avvaiyār, Ativīrarāma, the Āḷvārs and Nāyaṅmārs, Kamban, Śēkkiḷār and others. And none raised voice against. In ancient India, education, particularly the Vedic education, had been a social subject only, and it was never a State subject, even though emperors, kings and chieftains donated rich grants by way of encouraging the Vedic studies, and though some kings themselves founded centres of Vedic learning under the name *Ghaṭikā* and organised them successfully. The *Ghaṭikās* had their own fool-proof examination system. One such *Ghaṭikā*, huge in size, was at Kāñcī, attracting to itself thousands of brilliant students from different regions of India. Even when Islam invaded and conquered India and gave it a rude

shock, the Hindu culture and religion, unlike many other cultures and religions in other parts of the ancient world, could survive the Islamic onslaught. It was so because the brahmins to whom our culture had entrusted the arduous task of Vedic learning are bidden by the law to do this job expecting no remuneration whatsoever (*brāhmaṇena niṣkāraṇena vedāḥ sa-śaḍaṅgaḥ adhyetavyo jñeyaśca*). These brāhmins were continuing this job of theirs even in the midst of all hardships, and were serving as a strong core of Hinduism uncut by the axe and unbitten by the moth of the invaders. However, with the advent of the Britishers the very same brahmins most unfortunately, forgot this millenia-old pious responsibility, abandoned their Vedic studies, had Western modern education readily, and became clerks and officers of the British raj, simply for earning some fixed monthly salary. Maybe there were historical and economical factors that led the brahmins to this new path. Yet, the lapse on their part was not easily forgivable. (Śrī Paramācārya minced no words in criticising the brahmin community for this lapse on their part. For, this resulted in corruption and in degradation of the moral values upheld by Hinduism, throughout its lone history.) Now arose a band of prejudiced Western scholars who, had no proper background to appreciate the Hindu culture and religion. They wrote, on their own fanciful theories of Aryan - Dravidian conflict, and of Aryan domination. And some modern Indian scholars too accepted the above theories without proper investigation. All these paved way for the present anti-brahmin movement, for the sharp decline in Vedic studies, and for dishonouring the moral and culture values of the Hindus.

To write on these points — no doubt they are interesting and vouch for Śrī Paramācārya's originality and critical acumen — is sure to cause the present paper to swell beyond proportion. Hence it is proposed to concentrate only on Śrī Paramācārya's message on the topic main, namely, how the Vedic studies can be immensely beneficial to man now in the modern atomic age, so that we may follow his teaching, start studying the *Vedas* and reap the benefits.

Śrī Paramācārya does not stop with simply insisting time and again that the Vedic education must be revived. But, being a person with rare intellect and critical acumen he, in his own way drives home to us the relevance of the Vedic study to modern times. He says — By the *Veda* we mean both the *vaidika śabdās* and their *arthas*. In other words, the term *Veda* first connotes certain long series of sounds in the form of letters, words, sentences etc., and it again signifies the different ideas, laws etc., conveyed by these sounds. Of these two, the sounds, according to the tradition of our culture are as important as, and in a way more important than, their ideas. *Vedapārāyaṇa*, 'the perfect recitation of the *Vedas*,' is viewed as most pious and essential for the welfare of the humanity. Why should we attach so much importance to the sounds of the *Veda*? Is it not enough that one understands, through some translation or so, the meanings of the Vedic text, grasps their purport and follows what are taught by them? Are there special benefits the *vaidika-śabda* are capable of begetting for us? Śrī Paramācārya answers in the following line.

The modern science has established well that every vibration, motion or movement is invariably

accompanied by sounds. The clarity and audibility vary from sound to sound. It is also known that the sounds that are not audible to us can be distinctly heard by certain other persons and also by animals like dog, cat and rat etc. There are also methods, in science, by which the clearly audible sounds are converted into inaudible electronic waves and the latter are reconverted into audible sounds. The modern physicists also tell us whatever we see and hear as well as we too, *viz.*, the seers and hearers, are nothing but electronic waves. Therefore, it would appear that all are with or in the form of sounds: *sarvam śabdamayam*.

Further, in the universe we observe astonishingly large variety of inanimate objects like rivers, mountains, the sun, the moon, the stars etc., and also living beings, gigantic and microscopic. Some philosophers believe that all these must have been created by one immutable Reality of its own self, by undergoing varying vibrations and movements. Other philosophers infer that the Reality, *viz.*, God, created all these by joining atoms (*paramāṇus*) by generating movement in them. A third set of thinkers who call themselves atheists and non-believers in God, argue that the creative movements are born but on their own accord and not due to some external agent, like God. At any rate, all these do agree in that these creations, varied in nature, are the results of varying favourable movements. Because every movement is inevitably associated with sounds in some form or other, it is now to be accepted that favourable sounds preceded and were closely associated with the creation of the universe even.

It is also true, as science, logic and philosophies tell us in one voice, that every thing, from the biggest

to the tiniest, in the universe is supporting and is receiving support from, and is reacting to, and is being reacted upon by, every other being. Therefore it stands to reason to accept that even at the time of their existence, the universe and all the things, it contains, exist in the form of vibrations, movements and their close associates, *viz.* the sounds favourable for maintenance. The destruction or dissolution of each and every thing is possible provided its parts and material causes fall apart due to some unfavourable and destructive forces, vibrations and movements, together with their corresponding sounds.

These vibrations and sounds, either favourable or unfavourable, need not necessarily be visible and audible. They can also be very subtle, falling far beyond the reach of our eyes and ears. As the Scientists say, even the process of our mental thought is a sort of electronic wave or vibration. So, every thought of ours must have necessarily a sound, too subtle to be heard. Thus, vibrations and sounds are jointly responsible for the birth, existence and destruction of all the gross matters and of all our subtle thoughts.

Let us now go a step further. We, ordinary persons are likely to think that the favourable and the negative vibrations produce their respective sounds. But, men who are capable of subtle scientific analysis enlighten us that the favourable and unfavourable sounds exist already, even before their corresponding vibrations take place, in the immutable Space (*ākāśa*) and they are caused only to manifest by their respective vibrations. To be more exact, one may have to say that the sound exists always as neutral one in the Space. It manifests as favourable or positive sound

and as unfavourable or negative sound due to the association (*npādhi*) of the favourable vibrations and unfavourable ones and brings forth results in the form of creation on the one hand, or in the form of destruction and annihilation on the other, as the case may be. As stated above the manifested sounds and their corresponding vibrations are also responsible for our perception and reaction to these creations and destructions. Thus, in a way, the modern science seems to concur very much with the ancient Indian theory that all creations, their maintenance and destruction are the result sound (*sabdabrahman*).

So, when people think well, act in a positive way and create good things, then on the basis of what we have so far seen, we can logically conclude that all these must be due to their respective causes, *viz.*, the favourable and auspicious sounds and their corresponding vibrations in Space. Now all intelligent men should agree in this: Everyone interested in the welfare of humanity should act and behave in such a way as to cause the favourable positive auspicious sounds to manifest in the Space by generating favourable positive vibrations. For, these are bound to galvanize people to think positively and virtuously and to act intelligently. When the peoples act in such a manner, that act itself must be conducive to all prosperity and welfare of the peoples of the nations and the world. Now it must be clearly understood that the sounds of the Vedic hymns are of such nature as to generate only positive vibrations in Space and as to cause positive sounds to manifest there and positive and creative thinking in the minds of the people.

Besides, it is wellknown that food is the most essential commodity for creatures to live and that it is the timely and proportionate rains that constitute the basic factor in food production. It is also known that the rains depend on the clouds, their formation and movement in the atmosphere. The science has now shown to us that if we could create favourable conditions in the atmosphere, clouds are likely to form and bring rains. This they call artificial rains. The sounds of the Vedic hymns have such a potency as to create a favourable atmospheric condition and to attract rains. Hence, the old Tamil adage - *Vēdam ēdum vēdiyaṛku oru maḷai*, 'A rain for the sake of brahmins who recite the *Veda*.' The *Varuṇajapa* 'the prayer to the Rain God', for attracting rains is a wellknown Vedic ceremony.

Now it would also follow that if we, on the other hand, generate destructive sounds, unfavourable vibration in Space, then they would certainly produce, a negative thinking in the minds of the people and whip them up to act destructively to the detriment of the welfare of the nation. Hence the words of wisdom go 'Good begets good; bad begets bad.' But the auspicious sounds of the Vedic hymns are also meant to counteract against the rise of the negative sound and vibration in Space and destructive thought in the minds of the people.

No doubt, an atheist could argue that the said favourable vibrations and sounds can arise in Space on their own accord and hence we need not have recourse to the *Veda* and its recitation by an intelligent agent. However, in that case all the above conditions would have no mutual relations and hence they would arise in a very haphazard way having no

harmony at all. But they do not appear to be so. On the other hand, they arise very methodically, have a very close mutual relation such as the relation of the cause-and-effect and so on. Hence the wise men of the world observe that all that are born and all their movements and happenings in the universe are according to set patterns and irrevocable laws. Who set up these patterns and created these laws? All great men of yore, all over the world, unequivocally have declared that these are the waves and creations of the mind of one omniscient, omnipotent supreme Being. In our country our ancestors tell us that the same waves of that mind is responsible for the birth or manifestation of the most auspicious creative sounds of the *Veda* that are meant to maintain the universe intact, in perfect equilibrium, in the manner in which He created and desired it. They are meant by Him only for the welfare of the entire universe. Therefore today it is the bounden duty of man to preserve the *Veda* and its study and to conduct *Vedapārāyaṇa* 'the recitation of the *Veda*' regularly and properly by himself and through qualified persons for the benefit and welfare of all the people, and all the creatures, not only of Bharat, but of the whole world, the entire universe.

Yet, some modern men, guided by the Western writers in understanding India's past and in evaluating the Vedic literature, would again assert: The *Vedas* and their sounds are not the creation of the mind of God; they were in fact composed only by the *ṛṣis* or sages of the Vedic age, like Atri, Bharadvāja etc. Their authorship of the Vedic hymns is being acknowledged down the centuries till now by the

Vedists themselves by calling the hymns and books after their names and by recalling their names every time they commence recitation of their respective hymns.

To these men the answer is: Some astronomers, by their keen observations, have discovered certain stars and these stars are called after their discoverers. For example, E. E. Barnard discovered a star and the astronomers all over the world do call that star as Barnard Star. But, Barnard did not create the star. Again, we know for certain that Newton's Law of Motion and Albert Einstein's Principles of Relativity were already in the Nature ever since the universe was born, and Newton and Einstein simply discovered and pronounced them to the world and hence the Law and the Principles are known after their names throughout the world. So, whenever we refer to the Law of Motion and the Principles of Relativity we do, even now, recall the names of Newton and Einstein. Such examples can be multiplied. Similarly, the *Vedas*, as we saw above, had been in the Space long before the sages Atri etc. These sages discovered them by means of their concentration and meditations, and gave them to the world for the welfare of all beings and hence these Vedic hymns are known after their names. This is what the *Veda* itself tells us about how it came to the mankind. Today the Vedists recall their names at the time of reciting the Vedic hymns by way of showing their gratitude for the seers' divine revelations. Thus, the association of the hymns and the sages is that of the discovered and the discoverer only, neither more nor less.

But, we should not miss a notable difference too. Newton, Einstein etc., discovered the dumb silent laws

of the nature and hence they had to take the trouble of explaining those laws to us in their respective mother tongues. On the other hand the Vedic sages, thanks to their supernatural power could hear the subtle sound-waves, existing in Space since the time of the birth of the world, and they could reproduce them as they are now, for our benefit. The case is just like that of the radio that attracts the subtle electronic sound waves in space and reproduces them as audible sounds for our sake.

No doubt, the Semitic religions too have their own sacred scriptures like the Bible, Koran etc., and they, or at least certain parts of them, like the Ten Commandments etc., are said to be God's own words, given to highly inspired teachers like Moses, Isaiah, Mohammed etc. Yet, it is to be particularly noted that these religions attach importance to only the meanings and ideas of their scriptures and not to their sounds. That is why the Bible, originally composed in Hebrew came to be translated centuries after into Latin. This later Latin Bible threw the Hebrew original practically into oblivion. But the Latin version too lost much of its popularity as and when it was subsequently rendered into English, French etc. The Authorised English version of the *Bible* has also been recently further translated into Modern English. All these versions, because the Biblical ideas alone have been held as important, are considered as good and auspicious as the Hebrew original and can be very well used during all prayers and religious functions. Even the Roman Catholic clergymen who preferred till recently the Latin version during the celebration of the mass etc., have now switched over to the versions

in local languages. However, not long ago, researches had been conducted to prove that the Latin version and their off-shoots, do deviate on certain vital points, from the Hebrew original.

But in India, the *Vedas*, with their original sounds have been preserved very carefully. And our ancestors, by their ingenuity and their own time-tested methods have preserved the *Vedas* and their sounds and accents in their original pristine purity for five millennia and more. The Vedic words like *Agni*, *Aja* etc., are not allowed to be substituted even with their respective synonyms like *Vahni*, *Chāga*, etc. Hence, the modern English translations of the *Vedas*, can be translations only and not the *Vedas*. This is so because we have scrupulously maintained that sounds of the *Vedas* are as vital and important as, in fact more important and vital than, their meanings and ideas. About a decade ago some Nobel-laureate-physicists met in Germany, and after necessary scientific investigations they found out that each letter-sound of the *Veda*, in association with other such sounds, preceding and succeeding, has got its own unique potency which is missing when that sound is substituted with other sounds. Thus the Vedic texts have been preserved with their unique sequence of sounds for the welfare of the mankind all over the world. We have inherited this most valuable treasure, unique in the world. It is now the bounden duty of one and all to preserve them and pass them on to the posterity for the welfare of the entire universe.

III

So far we have seen how Vedic studies could be beneficial to us even today because of the unique

sound contents of the *Veda*. Now, let us try to understand a little what Śrī Paramācārya says as to how the Vedic studies could be also of inestimable help to modern man on account of its rare thought-contents.

(A) The *Veda* is undoubtedly the first to teach man that the human self, bereft of all adjuncts, is identical with the Supreme (*Jīva-Brahmaikya*). Again it is the *Veda* that was first to enlighten us that from the supreme Self, Ether arose; from Ether, Air; from Air, Fire; from Fire, Water; from Water, the Earth; from the Earth, vegetations; from vegetations, food; and from food, the embodied human being (*Puruṣa*) came to be. From this it would follow that with the help of his body, made of elements, every man should undertake spiritual practices in order to realise *Jīva-Brahmaikya*. From this it would also follow that being a product of these elements, man should, even in his secular life, respect the elements, and should not at all pollute any one of them. Being a product of mud, how can a pot afford to pollute its material cause, *viz.*, the mud, and yet remain unaffected by the pollution?

The Industrial Revolution in the West contributed to the world many great astonishing discoveries in the field of science and technology. Francis Bacon, acclaimed as the father of modern scientific thought, declared, 'Knowledge is Power.' This concept had led the modern man of science and technology to the assumption that he had got all the power over the elements, whose laws he had known, and hence he could tamper with the Nature, pollute the elements, and cause damage to ecology. The result it that now the problem of atmospheric pollution has become most formidable and is threatening the entire humanity with the imminent total annihilation.

Another equally formidable problem, now the humanity is facing, is that of terrorism, drugs and AIDS. For, man as the *Veda* tells us is the product of elements, and the pollution, effected on them by short-sighted man, is boomeranging on himself now. Maybe the polluted elements have started producing polluted men in the form of the cruel terrorists, pitiable drug addicts, unhealable victims of AIDS and so on, who heavily contribute to miseries of mankind today. The scientists have woken up to these perils only recently and are now raising loud voices of alarm. But, the *Veda* has been teaching us the above doctrine since the time immemorial and showing the humanity a right safe path of life, free from these dangers. But man because of his audacity, had had neither ears to hear nor eyes to see. So, let us at least now start studying the *Veda*, develop and propagate the Vedic spirit in the world, stop polluting the mother atmosphere and save humanity from misery and doom.

(B) Nowadays, the intellectuals, politicians, administrators and others in India and all over the world speak a lot, quite often in despair, on problems connected with the national integrity, communal harmony, international understanding and undisturbed world peace. The *Veda*, the most ancient among the literatures of the world, offers a sure solution to all these problems. The Vedic hymn, *Puruṣasūkta* presents the concept of God as *Puruṣa*, 'the Embodied Spirit,' and *Virāṭpuruṣa*, 'the Universal Man', who is the original source of the entire universe, who has all the natural elements, the moon, the sun, the stars, the directions (*diśaḥ*), the divisions of Time (*kālah*), all the castes and communities and so on, for his different limbs, and whom the gods had made use of as sacri-

ficial offerings in their first imagery sacrifices (*dharmāṇi prathamāni*). The message conveyed by this hymn is this:

The entire universe must be viewed as a single well-integrated individual. Just as different limbs of a man do, different castes and communities, not only in India, but in the entire world and in all the countries on the globe should live in a total harmony with each other. Men should be friendly with every creature and with every natural element. Just as the limbs in the human body do, all men should be happily and positively complimenting and supporting each other; and each should always have the spirit of sacrifice for the common good and welfare of the human society of the world. For conceptuality the entire universe is nothing but a sacred sacrifice.

This is the most essential and fundamental doctrine of the *Veda*. That is why the Vedists insist time and again that even if a person is unable to study the entire Vedic lore, he must at least learn the *Puruṣasūkta* methodically under a qualified teacher and everyone (particularly the salaried one) should recite the hymn, daily once, twice, or thrice, with a sense of dedication. Indeed, the recitation of this hymn constitutes usually an integral part of the agenda of the congregation of the Vedists.

If all the individuals, communities, countries and nations of the world could imbibe this sublime spirit of the *Puruṣasūkta*, it would certainly go a long way in solving happily all the problems mentioned above. In this doctrine of hymn there is no tinge of any sectarianism or idolatry of any sort. It could be as

much Jaina, Bauddha, Christian, Mohammedan or Judaic as it is Hindu. So let us cultivate this true Vedic spirit by studying the Vedic literature properly.

(C) The modern science known as Comparative Philology tells us that many Vedic words have their cognates in the European Classical languages such as Greek, Latin, Old German etc. Those who have specialised in the study of comparative religion and philosophy show us that many of the Vedic and Upaniṣadic ideas have their striking parallels in the literatures of other world-religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Taoism, Confucianism and the religion of Egypt, Greece and Rome of the pre-Christian era. The excavations at the pre-historic chalcolithic sites of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa etc., vouch for the prevalence of Vedic religion in the western and north-western parts of the undivided India in the third millennium B.C. The Indus culture was predominantly Vedic. The theory of the so-called invasion of India by the Vedic Aryans from outside, and of the destruction of the Indus civilization by them is a mere concoction of the prejudiced imperialistic archaeologists and historians of the West with ulterior motives, a concoction, readily accepted as total truth by many Indian writers too, out of ignorance. The Boghaz-koi inscription of the fifteenth century B.C., invokes the Vedic gods and thus stands witness to the popularity of the Vedic religion among different communities and tribes in the regions of Asia Minor (the regions of Turkey and its adjacent countries) in those days. The Vedic Hinduism was the religion in the East also, *i.e.* the Java-Sumatra region, before the advent of Islam there. Even today Hinduism lives there in disguise. These and many more evidences from other areas of

the globe show clearly that the Vedic religion and culture were widespread over a greater part of the world in the most ancient times, before the birth of the historical religions. Hence, we may not be certainly illogical if we conclude that the differences now we find in the religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc., followed by the peoples of these religions must be only later local developments in the Vedic religion itself, due to different historical factors that arose in the course of long centuries. Now, because almost all the communities of the world were originally followers of the Vedic religion, it should not be very difficult at all for them to appreciate and follow the Vedic spirit, provided they are properly enlightened on these facts and they all also free themselves of their petty parochial prejudices. Therefore, we, Indians should start a vigorous campaign for regenerating and revitalizing the Vedic studies in India so that all in the world may live harmoniously and enjoy peace and prosperity. Indeed the daily prayers of the Vedists are:

आब्रह्म स्रम्ब पर्यन्तं जगत् तृप्यतु ।

‘May the world, from (the creator) Brahmā down to the tuft of grass be satisfied.’

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

May there be peace (in man’s mind), peace (in the country) and peace (in the world.)’

Indeed one may easily cite many more such instances of strikingly sublime Vedic ideas. Let us sincerely follow the Vedic path.

IV

Doubt still lingers on in the mind of the modern Indian. He would ask: Will not the revival of Vedic studies push India centuries back? Will it not hamper the nation's progress in technological advancement towards our economic prosperity? Śrī Paramācārya's answer to this person would be: By all means let all the people unitedly and sincerely work hard for the technological advancement and for the economic and material prosperity of the country. Yet, let the brahmin economists and technologists allot at least an hour or two, everyday for the study of the *Veda*. And let all others encourage them to do this duty of theirs. For, as stated above, it is to the brahmins that the most ancient culture of the world, *viz.*, the Indian culture has assigned this arduous, but pious duty of Vedic study for the welfare of one and all. Let there be at least a few persons taking the Vedic studies as their total life mission. Those who have retired from service should also, depending on their health conditions, join this group. The rest of the people should happily recognise the importance of these Vedic missionaries, and respect them in the society on a par with doctors, engineers etc. For, these Vedic missionaries also, like the others, serve the humanity and contribute much for the welfare of all beings. It is immaterial whether you give them financial help or not.

Thus if the people have the will, there would be one hundred and one ways to revive the Vedic study, without affecting the scientific and technological advancement of India. In fact the revival is sure to quicken that advancement, more gracefully.

No doubt the material and economic prosperity is very essential for every individual and for every nation. But, if that material prosperity is not commensurate with spiritual advancement and mental peace, it would not fetch happiness and welfare. Rather it would lead the individuals and nations only to misery, despair and doom. For this, there are umpteen striking instances in the history of the world. Even in the very recent history we have pathetic illustrations. Indeed, as Śrī Paramācārya points out, we are witnessing (i) modern Indians having an exodus to the opulent countries to earn money, and (ii) the rich men and women of those very countries coming to India in large number in search of mental peace and happiness.

अशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम्?

'How can there be happiness for the unpeaceful one?' — the *Bhagavadgītā* rightly points out.

Further, Śrī Paramācārya stoutly refutes the contention that the Vedic study would stand in the way of our achieving technological and scientific progress and economical and material prosperity. For, that view is due to the lack of correct understanding of India's past on her real spirit. An impartial student of our history is sure to appreciate how far the Vedic study had contributed to the foundation of the mighty Mauryan empire; to the astonishingly allround achievements of the Golden Age of the Imperial Guptas; and to the foundation, growth and multi-dimensional success of the Vijayanagar empire. Again it is the Vedic culture that has allowed the rise and progress of the thoughts of the *Upaniṣads*, the conflicting *Darśanas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the

Smṛtis, the *Purāṇas*, the *Āgamas*, their commentators, the authors of the wonderful works on grammar, politics, economics, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine, surgery, music, dance, art, architecture, the saints and mystics of the medieval times and many others. All their thoughts do appear as mutually contradictory. Yet, all of them, with no serious exception, are heavily drawing upon the Vedic thoughts and culture. And all these authors invariably quote the *Veda* as their most trusted authority. Thus the *Veda* and its study and the India's spirit nurtured by them have allowed much freedom to all these thoughts to develop in their own ways, and yet it holds them all together happily in one Vedic cultural blend. Now, if the Vedic study could allow so much of liberty to all these divergent thoughts and schools to flourish, how is it that it would stand in the way only of science, technology and economics?

No doubt, the scientific and technological discoveries happened very late only in the West. But, history would show that they could not happen in India because of the domination of the foreign hostile cultures that were perpetrating atrocities continuously for centuries against the indigenous Vedic spirit and culture. So, let us stop deceiving ourselves by the wrong assumption that a revival of Vedic study will be detrimental to our progress in science and technology. In fact as our experience show it is the science and technology that stand in the way of the advancement of Vedic studies in India. We can easily charge the science and technology with this offence.

Finally we shall take note of an important fact. All writers, including the prejudiced Indologists of the

West are unanimous in declaring 'Unity-in-diversity' as the hallmark of Indian culture. We saw above that the *Veda* alone is the factor, unifying all the other diverse details. Hence, if we were to continue disregarding the *Veda* and its study, then we would be worshipping diversity alone. And consequently our nation will surely remain disunited and fall pitifully asunder into tiny pieces. Already the danger signal is getting louder and louder, by each day passing, because we have been thoughtlessly neglecting the Vedic studies continuously for about a century past. As stated above it is the *Veda* that, in ancient times, forged a remarkable cultural alliance and unity and emotional integration among all the divergent communities from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Gujarat to Arunchal Pradesh, even though the rulers of the different regions within the Indian subcontinent were always politically disunited, cutting each other's throat. No doubt, we have now thrown off the foreign imperialistic yoke and have achieved a political unity. But that unity is bound to disappear soon if it is not supported and strengthened by cultural and emotional unity. Therefore, it is high time that we Indians cast off also the yoke of domination of the imperialistic Western Historian's prejudiced view of our *Veda*. Let us start studying it in right earnestness and due reverence, so that we may achieve a strong national and emotional integration, attain multi-dimensional progress in India, and achieve international peace and welfare of the humanity.

Śrī Paramācārya does not stop with mere haranguing people on Vedic studies. In the course of half a century past he has actually taken some concrete

measures in that direction: He has established numerous Veda Pāṭhasālās and instituted various trusts and through them propagates Vedic studies in proper way, encourages private Vedic teachers and their pupils, and offers financial help to them all and to those who recite the *Vedas* (*Vedapārāyaṇakāras*). We refrain from giving an account of them for want of space: Śrī Paramācārya feels that what he has done so far is very little. His wish is that the Vedic study must become a popular and broad based-movement throughout India. I conclude —

विप्रान् वेदविदः कर्तुं सर्वदा यः समुद्यतः ।
चन्दे त परमाचार्यं चन्द्रशेखरशङ्करम् ॥

श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्राष्टकम्

ŚRĪ CANDRAŚĒKARAYATĪNDRĀṢṬAKAM*

Bhāṣyabhāvaḥṅga V. R. Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī

चन्द्रशेखरसरस्वतीति योऽभिख्यया महितया स्वलङ्कृतः ।
तं प्रणम्य गुरुवर्यमादरादप्यर्चतेऽस्य पदयोरिदं मया ॥

After prostrating at the holy feet of the glorious Jagadguru (the world-teacher) — wellknown and honoured by the appropriate name of Śrī Candrasekhara Sarasvatī, let me offer this psalm of praise, *Śrī Candrasekharayatindra-aṣṭakam* at his benign lotus-feet.

[1]

श्रीकाञ्चिकापुरलसत्कमनीय काम-
कोट्याख्यपीठसमवस्थित लोकबन्धो ।
श्रीचन्द्रमौलिपदपूजन पुण्यशील
श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

*Free rendering: V. K. S. N. Raghavan.

May you live long Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! You are adorning the great pontifical seat of Śrī Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha; you do belong to the whole world; you are performing the worship of Lord Śrī Candramaulīsvara forever; and, you are always adhering to the strict path of ascetic life. Prithee, may you live long for the sake of us.

[2]

श्रीकाञ्चिकानगरवास गुणाधिवास
 श्रीशङ्करार्य गुरुवर्य महानुभाव ।
 कल्युत्थदोषशमनाय कृतावतार
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long, Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra — dwelling in the holy city of Kāñcī which is your prime abode, being the repository of all benign virtues, being a new descent of Lord Śrī Śaṅkara, being the scion of the lineage of preceptors, possessing superhuman and divine power, and one who has made this advent for the sake of warding off all the ills of Kaliyuga.

[3]

सन्मार्गरक्षण विचक्षण तोषणज्ञ
 शिष्योपदेशकृतदीक्ष कृपासमुद्र ।
 भक्तौघपापनिचयक्षपण प्रवीण
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra — one who has protected the Vedic religion in several ways, being the most erudite and well-versed scholar, being capable of pleasing one and all, being extraordinarily intelligent, being steadfast in correcting and grooming the disciples to the right path, being the ocean of compassion, and the one who wards off the sins of devotees.

[4]

त्यक्तेषणात्रय विशुद्ध शुभान्तरङ्ग
 संचाग्पावितसमस्तदिगन्त साधो ।
 भक्तौघपुण्यधृतदेह कलाविलास
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long, Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! You have destroyed fully the three *eṣaṇās* (desire to beget children, desire to earn money, and attachment to all worldly objects); you are completely pure and ever kind-hearted; you are the great saint who has sanctified all the regions of this land going on foot everywhere; you are still holding on to this embodied state for the sake of redeeming your devotees; you are keenly interested in developing all the 64 auspicious arts; O Great Ācārya! may you live long and protect us.

[5]

कर्माध्वपालनपराहतदिव्यदण्ड
 काषायवस्त्रपरिकर्मित दिव्यदेह ।

भाष्यार्थभावनधुरीण विशुद्धबुद्धे
श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! You are ever intent on safe-guarding the path of action (*karmamārga*) which readily enables your self to pass on to the path of knowledge (*jñānamārga*); you are ever holding on to the sure path of knowledge (in the form of *jñānadaṇḍa*); your divine body is ever adorned with the holy saffron robes; you are adept in delivering lectures on the great *Bhāṣyas* of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara; and, you have pleasant mind and serene thought. May you live long and protect us.

[6]

विद्वज्जनादरण सज्जनसङ्घतुष्टा-
म्नायैकरक्षणकृतोद्यम साधुवृत्ता ।
शिष्यौघशङ्कर शुभेक्षण भिक्षुसेव्य
श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long, Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! You are supporting the great wise men always; you are very much happy to see the groups of good people; you are very much interested in the support and propagation of the *Vedas* and the Vedic path; you stick on to the righteous conduct; you are always dear towards all disciples; you do always possess a graceful and auspicious look (vision); and you are always served by great ascetics. May you live long and protect us.

[7]

सन्मार्गबोधक बुधेडय जयेन्द्रवन्द्य
 सम्भाषणैकचतुर स्मितवश्यलोक ।
 भक्तार्तिभञ्जनचणामितबोध मान्य
 श्रोचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! You are always guiding us all to follow the right and virtuous path; all the great and learned people adore you; Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī, your foremost disciple offers his obeisance unto you everyday; you are the most skilful in oration and you attract everyone by your charming smile alone; you are able to eradicate all the grievances of your devotees, and as you are immensely wise, you are supremely honoured by all people; may you live long, Oh great Ācārya! for the sake of protecting us.

[8]

स्वात्मानुसंस्मृतिबलक्षपिताघसङ्घ
 कारुण्यपूरपरिवाहिसुशीतदृष्टे ।
 माधुर्यपूरपरिवाहिसुवाग्विलास
 श्रीचन्द्रशेखरयतीन्द्र चिराय जीव ॥

May you live long O great Ācārya! You have thoroughly destroyed all *karma* (demerits and merits) through the attainment of the sacred and the subtle knowledge of truth from the *Upaniṣads*; your great

virtue of unbounded compassion floods, as it were, from your cool and serene glances; and, you are, indeed, endowed with the great and unparalleled art of amicable speech. May you live long Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra, for the sake of protecting us at all times!

बराहपुरजातेन गुरावासक्तचेतसा ।
कल्याणसुन्दरेणेदं बद्धं पद्यकदम्बकम् ॥

This garland of hymn in praise of Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra has been composed by Varahūr Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī whose mind is ever devoted to the great Master Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra.

श्रीचन्द्रशेखरतोटकाष्टकम्

ŚRĪ CANDRAŚEKHARA TOṬAKĀṢṬAKAM*

*Bhāṣyabhāvajña Brahmaśrī
Varahūr V.R. Kalyāṇasundaraśāstrī*

[1]

विदिताखिलशास्त्रसुधाजलधे मुदिताखिलसञ्जनदेशिक ते ।
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव चन्द्रशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī! You have known the true import of all the Śāstras which are unfathomable like the deep nectarine milky ocean. You are making all the great preceptors ever joyous. I do always contemplate in my heart your pure feet. May you be the sole refuge of me, Oh Ācārya!

[2]

विचितागमतत्त्व विबुद्धमते रचिताखिलकर्मविशुद्धगते ।
सतताभजितामितदेवतते भव चन्द्रशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

* Free rendering in English: V.K.S.N. Raghavan.

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīśvara! You have thoroughly understood the true purport of the Āgamas. You possess a clear knowledge of everything. Having performed all Vedic rituals, you have resorted to the pure path of knowledge. You are incessantly adored by the host of numerous celestial beings. May you be ever my sole refuge, Oh *Guru*!

[3]

अटिताखिलमध्यमलोक गुरो त्रुटिताखिलदोष गुणाकर ते ।
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव चन्द्रिशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekhara Sarasvatī! You have trod on the whole Bhāratadeśa. O Great *Guru*! you are bereft of all blemishes, and endowed with all auspicious virtues. I do ever meditate on your pristinely pure lotus feet, in my heart. O *Guru*! may you be my refuge forever!

[4]

भवरोगविदूनजनावन भो भवपूजनपावनमानस ते ।
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव चन्द्रिशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekhara Yatīśvara! You are the effective cure for the disease of *samsāra* (cycle of birth and death). O *Guru*! you are protecting all the people. O Ācārya! you have made your mind thoroughly pure by doing *pūjā* to Śrī Candramaulīśvara regularly. I do contemplate on your pure feet, in my heart always. Oh Master! may you be my sole refuge forever!

[5]

कलिदोषनिराकरणार्हमते करुणावितसञ्जनलोकतते ।

कुरु मां भवदुःखविहीनहृदं भव चन्द्रिशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatāndra! by your sublime thoughts, you are removing the evil effects of *kaliyuga*; through your ineffable compassion, you have protected all great men and people of the world; Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatāndra! may you make me bereft of any sorrow of *samsāra* lurking in my heart, and may you be the sole refuge for me forever!

[6]

भवपापदवानलखेदमिता भवता जनता सुखिता भविता ।

शरणागतरक्षणदक्ष गुरो भव चन्द्रिशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatāndra! you have destroyed the sinful forest fire of *samsāra*; and it is sure that because of your presence the whole society will get all good and comforts; you are the most skilful in protecting all those who fall at your feet, Oh great Preceptor! may you be my sole refuge forever!

[7]

वृषपुङ्गवकेतननामक ते तुलनामयतां इह को नु सुधीः?

शरणागतवत्सल तत्त्वनिधे भव चन्द्रिशेखर मे शरणम् ॥

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatāndra! you have the name of Lord Śiva - the Lord of Bull-banner; there is no great scholar of wisdom who can be a parallel to you; you are very dear towards those who seek shelter under your feet; you are the repository of the great truth (knowledge); may you be my sole refuge forever!

[8]

भगवद्गुरुशङ्कर एव भवान् अनिताखिलतद्गुणजाल विभो ।
भवतापक मे प्रतिभाति गुरो भव चन्द्रशेखर मे शरणम् ।

Oh Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra! you are, indeed, the great Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda himself; all his great virtues have taken the embodiment in the form of yourself — thus, indeed, do I understand. O great Preceptor, supreme Lord, one who wards off all ills of *samsarā*! may you be my sole refuge forever.

[9]

जगतामवने विहितादरणाः कति नो विचरन्ति महामहसः ।
अहिमांशुशिवात्र भवानिति मे धिषणा नियताऽजनि लोकगुरो ॥

Oh great *Guru*, Śrī Candrasekharayatīsvara! Oh World-preceptor! how many persons, indeed, are there, treading on this earth, with so much earnest interest to protect the world? (There is only yourself and no one else.) You alone shine as the great sun in this regard — thus, indeed, I have come to this conclusion, O great *Guru*!

[10]

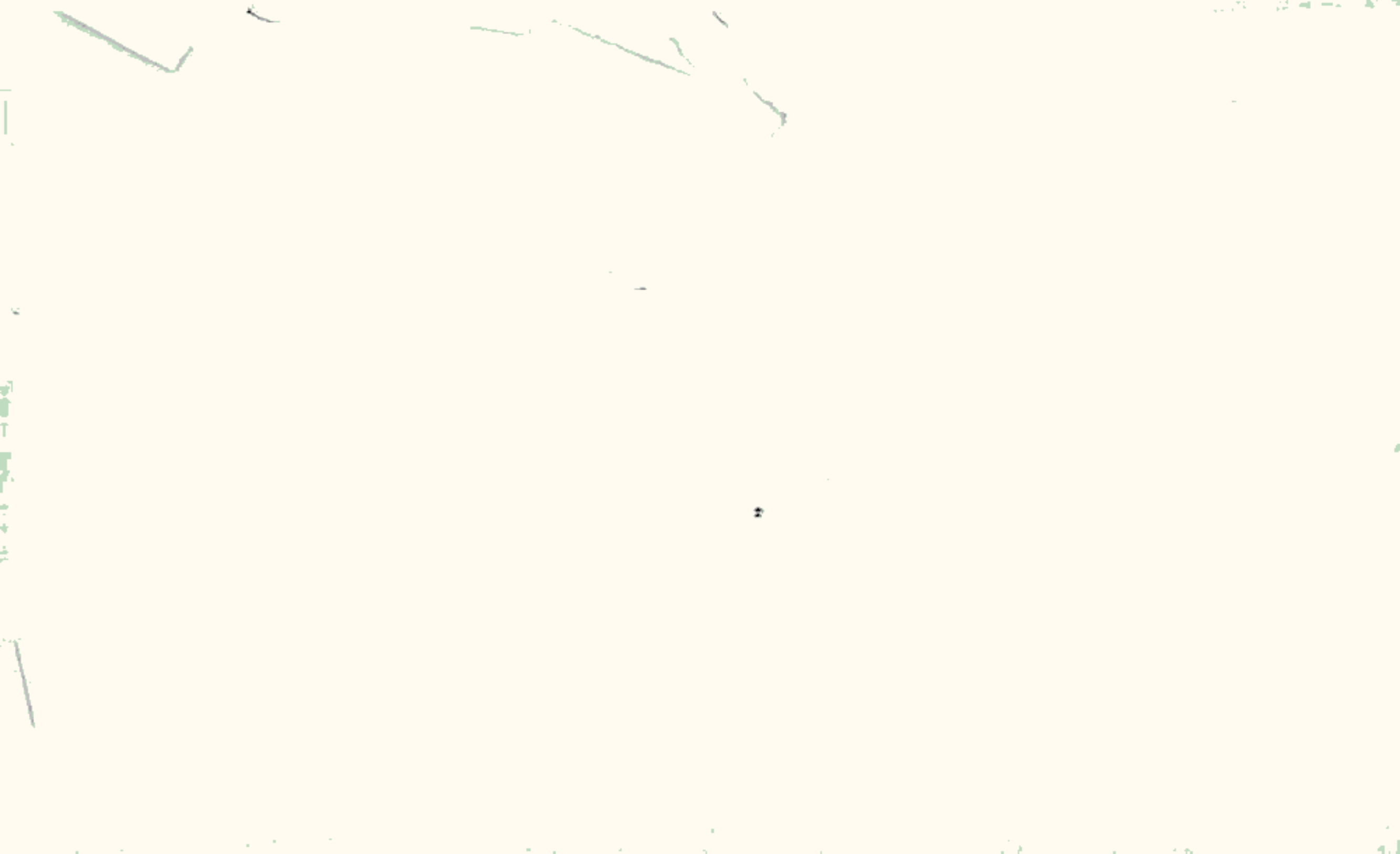
कल्याणसुन्दरेणोदं विहितं तोटकाष्टकम् ।
श्रीचन्द्रशेखरगुरोः पदयोर्निहितं हितम् ॥

This *Jotakāṣṭaka* in praise of Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra has been composed by Varahūr Kalyāṇasundaram, and it is offered at the holy feet of Śrī Candrasekharayatīndra.

Dr. N. C. KRISHNAN

Dr. N. C. Krishnan, the editor of the *Voice of Śaṅkara*, is no more with us. Apart from being the Secretary of the Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre, he was also the editor of the *Voice of Śaṅkara* for a number of years. The present issue of the journal is the last one to come out under the editorship of Dr. N. C. Krishnan.

After a brilliant academic career, N. C. Krishnan joined Messrs S. Viswanathan as a partner and distinguished himself for more than 36 years as a professional accountant and taxation expert. He entered the accounting profession when he was hardly 22 years of age, and by dint of special training in U.K. he emerged as a specialist in a highly intellectual profession. He was the President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India during 1974-75. He extended his professional interests beyond the country with his membership and participation in American National Tax Association and in the International Congress of Accountants. He attended a number of national and international conferences on taxation. He was associated as Director in a number of commercial and industrial establishments. He was the Under Sheriff of Madras during 1967-68. He was the District Governor of Lions Club International (324 A-1). He was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi National Unity Award for 1991. In recognition of his professional excellence and social service, Annamalai University conferred on him the Degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa).



ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

The Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre was established in 1975 under the guidance and with the blessings of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha. The main objectives of the Centre, among other things, are:

- (1) to undertake the carrying on of scientific research for the extension of knowledge in the fields of Natural and Applied Sciences generally, and in particular in the fields of Physics and Metaphysics.
- (2) to undertake and carry on scientific study and analysis of the Advaita system of thought as expounded by Ādi Śaṅkara and to conduct research as regards the relevance of his teaching in solving present day ills of mankind.
- (3) to undertake, promote, and encourage the study of ancient philosophical systems of India.
- (4) to undertake research for the purposes of establishing norms necessary for realising the divinity in man through moral, spiritual and cultural infra-structure.

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-
 खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।
 अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-
 त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūtadāhavyathā-
 khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā
 paribhrāmyatām
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakarain brahmādvayain
 darśayaty-
 eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.*

To those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain given rise to by the scorching sun-shafts of misery, and who through delusion wander about in the desert (of worldliness) seeking water — showing the felicitous ocean of nectar, which is very near, the non-dual *Brahman*, this — the Voice of Śaṅkara — is victorious, leading, as it does, to liberation.