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TEMPLE TALKS

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INTRODUCTION

These talks were delivered by Krishnaji during the winter of 1925-26, in the Hindu Temple at Adyar, Madras, India, in connection with the reformed Puja instituted by the Bharata Samaj. Krishnaji endeavours in these talks to express the spirit which should underlie every form of religious worship, the ideal which both priest and congregation should keep before themselves if religion is to be a living force and not merely a dead form. He speaks of the new dawn which is breaking over the world and is eager that India shall take her rightful place among the nations that are working for the coming day.

India has ever been the spiritual mother of the world, and if she is once again to play her part in the spiritual regeneration of mankind, she must cease to be satisfied with a past which, however great, is of little value unless it leads on to the creation of a still more glorious future.

Will India rise to the measure of her opportunity? is the question which underlies these Temple Talks.

TEMPLE TALKS

I

If you have travelled a great deal and have had the privilege of observing a great many things, you will find that people all over the world ask: "Why has India lasted through all these centuries; why has its civilisation not crumbled like that of other nations; why have its people not succumbed to the pressure of the Western world?" — and the only reply you can give is that Indian civilisation has been founded on religion.

In India, religion is like a vast tree with its roots and branches spreading all over, giving protection from the burning sun, giving shade and shelter and comfort. But that great tree has begun to shed its leaves and it no longer affords us the same protection; the rays of the sun penetrate through the branches and scorch us. The Tree of Life no longer gives us the same shade as of old; the fruits of religion no longer satisfy the intelligence or the emotions.

The Tree has suffered and is dying through lack of nourishment. We have to give it new life. We have to realise religion in its purest form.

It is only through religion that we can maintain a high standard of living, that we can have a noble attitude of mind towards every question. The greatness of religion, the greatness of the Teacher, the greatness of those who follow zealously, intensely, depends on how far we can translate religion to the physical plane. It is essential that religion should once more play a definite rôle in life. It must no longer be the Priest alone who is thought of as great

and noble. The congregation, the people, must equally live up to the noble standards set for the Priest in the olden days. Worship must not become a mere outer form, the Temple must not merely be a building of bricks and mortar, the ceremonies must not merely be chanting in a particular tone. We must set a new standard of desires and emotions. We have to bring about a new way of life and it must be started by all those who have the revival of Hinduism at heart, who desire to see India return to her former greatness and culture.

The old Tree is beginning to put forth new roots and tender leaves and soon it will become once more a protection from the blazing sun. In each of us a new life is beginning to awaken. It is vital that we should have new standards of thought and carry these new standards into every action of our lives. It is not enough merely to feel sentimental devotion, merely to go into ecstasies of worship during the Puja.* We must carry our devotion, our worship, into daily life. Religion carried out in daily life matters far more than religion in the Temple.

In the rays of the morning sun everything becomes more beautiful, every flower has a sweeter scent than in the evening. Most of us have reached the evening time, and the cool dews and the soft breezes of the night will enable us to become as new buds on the Tree of Life, giving scent to all the world. We must feel the new life springing forth within us, producing new leaves, new roots, new beauty, so that the old Tree may live again and give fresh shade and protection to the world.

* Ceremonial worship.

Religion only achieves its purpose when it becomes a reality in our thoughts, in our emotions, and in our actions.

Religion and adoration are not intended to be for one moment only; they should be the result of constant pressure from the higher worlds, and if we do not respond willingly to that urge, we shall have to respond to it through suffering and misery. It is of little use to worship, to feel the flow of adoration merely in the Temple. You must carry it with you wherever you go; you must feel that you are part of the Temple, its Priest in the outer world, and you must act the part of a Priest wherever you go and not merely act the part of a worshipper. It is the primary duty of all religion to teach us how to remain all day long at the high standard of thought and feeling that we experience at the time of worship. Religion is the greatest support we can have in life. It is the moral crutch of those who are lame. Religion upholds us whether we be happy or depressed, whether we be ignorant or full of knowledge. Religion always gives and never takes. Religion embellishes the noblest of characters; therefore it should be an essential element in our daily life, the fundamental basis of our being. Whatever we think, whatever we do, it should have the benediction of religion.

All over the world, but especially in India, although people may attend Church or Puja every day, the worship, the devotion they feel then, is not applied with intelligence and common sense to the things of daily life.

Civilisation does not consist of big actions done just once; it consists in continuous effort day after day in little things perfectly done which produce the flower of civilisation. We, in India, who have known a little more, studied and thought a little more, must make tremendous efforts to produce this flower, to create a magnificent morality, to have once again a great and mighty civilisation.

To achieve this, we ought to look upon religion, especially in India, as a unifying force. There are here so many different castes, so many different races, so many different temperaments and religious ceremonies; religion should have the definite object of unifying them all.

Whenever we worship we should have in mind the thought of India as a whole, and its people as one, in spite of all the differences that exist. Through India we ought to send out spiritual force to the whole world, because India always has been and always will be the spiritual centre of the world. Go back to the great Rishis as They sat in meditation on the banks of the Ganges, They thought of India as one: its rivers, its trees, its holy places. If in our worship each person is merely thinking of his own evolution, we shall fail. We must regard ourselves as creative forces making for unity. As in the time of your forefathers, meditate on the unity of India and the One Life which pervades it. Then it will become real and wonderful to you. You, who are Theosophists or who belong to other movements which all have the same tendency towards unity, must realise what that unity really means. You must feel yourselves one with everything and everybody.

We can all feel one with our Guru or with the altar

where we worship most of our life. But we have to realise that it is the same life, that there are the same feelings in the pariah, in the coolie, in the servant.

I am very proud of being a Brahmin because I believe that it does carry with it a certain refinement, a certain culture; but that pride does not make me want to dominate. It only makes me more eager to spread those qualities, that all may share them.

Every pariah, every scavenger, should have a part in the beauty and the happiness of life. That is the spiritual idea of aristocracy which Manu laid down for us. We must find unity through division and only through religion can we worship truly the One Life.

What we, in India, must particularly keep in mind is that the reformation we want to bring about must not, as in Europe and in Western countries, be based upon political or social principles. The reformation we want to bring about in India must have a spiritual and a religious ideal as its foundation. It must be based on the ethics and principles of Hinduism.

We cannot here in India, as they do in other countries, carry out our reforms on purely economic or social lines. We cannot afford to indulge in reforms which are brought about by suffering, which are brought about by pain and the torture of individuals. We have to find another way, and bring about reforms by different means, by another course, born through religion, and based upon ideals. And whatever we try to bring about, whether in religion or philosophy, should all be based upon the idea of harmlessness.

If reforms are to stand they must be based upon an ideal. Revolution must begin from the top and not from below. Only in that way shall we avoid bloodshed and misery. If revolution comes through the spontaneous sacrifice of those on the top, then happiness will follow and the reforms will be of the true type.

A devotional attitude alone is not enough in this period of the world's history. New ideas are being put forward, new plans are being developed, and we who want to mould, who want to change, who want to bring about a new condition, must have intelligence. If we have the fundamental desire to have the present conditions of India changed, or rather to try to bring back the old ideals, we must first of all develop a very keen mind, for without a mind, without intelligence, we can do nothing. We must learn to distinguish; we must learn to sift; we must learn to choose. In other words, we must learn to discriminate. Through religion and religious thought, we must develop a keen mind; we must be real builders; we must cultivate understanding. Emotions are the driving power, likewise devotion is the driving force which gives energy, but it is the mind which plans, which thinks out, which foresees, which comes to a definite conclusion. We must have that mind, that intelligence, that genius.

I do not think there is a greater quality in the world than that which we have in India — the capacity to follow. To follow is a wonderful thing. It can be noble and magnificent, but to follow intelligently means that you must understand what the leader has seen, what the Master wants. If you can do

that, it becomes quite easy to follow and to be also constructive.

We are a very civilised people; we are very sensitive; we have certain standards. But those, instead of being real, instead of being vital, have become superstitions. There is no real thought behind our standards. We are following them because our forefathers, our grandfathers followed them. It is only when there is thought behind our actions that we can do something great, that we can create something new, and that is where those of us who have studied a little more, who are a little more intelligent, can and must understand and create.

With the help of greater knowledge, we should create a new world, a new form that shall have in it greater meaning, greater reality and greater strength.

That is the rôle of the Bharata Samaj * that is the duty of those who belong to it, of those who feel real enthusiasm about it. They must become themselves examples and see that certain changes are brought about in India.

I shall go as far as I can into details concerning these changes, but let me say at the outset that it would be very unfortunate if you get hurt by any plain speaking. I have had many open talks, many plain words from many people; I have always welcomed them because they showed that there were still little crooked things that I must take away from my character. I am always glad when somebody tells me "You are making a mistake in that direction",

* An association of Hindus for social and religious reform in India.

I always pay attention when I think they are right, but their criticism does not disturb me if what they say is not true. I want all of you to look at it in the same way.

We must produce wonders in India, but in order to do this you must not let your superstitions stand in the way and feel that those people who speak here are not real Hindus, that they are Europeanised, because they eat with spoons, for instance. We must have an open mind. Surely I am as much of a Hindu as any of you here. I cannot become a non-Hindu because I eat with a spoon, or put on European dress when I go abroad. Those things are superficial things and one must not judge merely by the outward conditions of life.

That is just what we have been doing; we think we are real Brahmins because we have the plantain leaf, out of which we eat, turned in a particular direction. We think we are real Brahmins because we perform our Puja and do not eat onions. By eating an onion you do not become less of a Brahmin or less noble, but that is what we have come to believe. We consider ourselves so deeply spiritual, that we see no need for change.

The religion of Hinduism is very old — many, many centuries old — and during that time it has gathered many accretions; many superstitions have grown up; many useless customs have developed. We have to discard, to eliminate, to destroy, if necessary, those superstitions, changing our beliefs into living flowers.

I am very proud and happy in being an Indian, because the advantages are tremendous, and supreme, if you can understand the word in the

right sense. But if I should want a new body, I often wonder if I would be born here again, because the reality which we once had in our worship, in our surroundings, in our trees, in our beauty, has become superstition; and, although we consider ourselves a very religious people, we are irreligious and superstitious in our hearts.

Even though we attend the Temple practically every day, our religion has in fact become unreal, something to which we have to submit. One can see that with us religion, instead of being a driving force, a creative and living force, has become a superstition which subjugates and kills. And if we keep it a mere matter of form, we shall not build India, we shall not bring her back to what she used to be, the glory of the world.

That is why it is so important for all of us, whatever we are, whether Hindus or Christians, always to look behind the outward form, behind the gorgeous robes or the simple cloth. We must find the reality behind the outward show. In other words, we must find the God we are all worshipping; we must all tread the Path we talk about. We must have a great realisation of the God we worship. Then all forms will take a secondary place because we then shall have seen the Reality, the Beauty, and the Glory of the One Perfect Being.

Our principal duty is to feel the new life stirring in India, and to bring about new ideals of reform in religion, in social customs, in politics. Only we must do it with true dignity, in the real spirit of India and of Hinduism, always remembering that we must make religion our Light, our Guide, our potential Power.

The greatest and most difficult problem that confronts us at the present stage is the idea that in translating religion into ordinary physical things we shall materialise it too much. We think religion can only act on the spiritual plane. We think that religion has its sway on the ideas of the spiritual planes only. But it seems to me that if we cannot translate religion into practical use we shall not become spiritual, for if we are not perfect on the physical plane, having the full understanding of it, we are not really spiritual.

We are on the physical plane for a definite purpose, not merely to subjugate matter but to create and produce material beauty, to realise spirituality on the physical plane; hence there must be a constant effort, a constant urge to change and mould our surroundings according to spiritual ideals.

In the West, they begin everything from the lowest rung of the ladder of life which is the physical. We in India have spent our life and our whole imagination on the spiritual plane without attempting to materialise (in the right sense of the word) our spirituality. Our ideals remain ideals; we do not

interpret them concretely, transforming them into true power, real force.

We have had a tremendous privilege in having the Western nations at our door. They have brought us the scientific knowledge of matter, precision, exact observation, together with tidiness on the physical plane, cleanliness, sanitation. They have forced our doors open, in an attempt to introduce their ideas. In what way have we profited? How much have we learned from the West? Have we altered? Have our customs of untidiness, our habits of slovenliness, of slothfulness been changed? Have we translated our religion, our beliefs, into practical actions? We have not! We are the same old Hindus living in the old fashion, even though there is a new Dawn coming, even though there are new doors being opened everywhere in the world. We have had, as you can see in everything, a negative idea of reform on the physical plane; we have neglected it and forgotten its importance while we have thrown ourselves heart and soul into the effort to conquer the spiritual world. I think we may say that in India, we have understood the spiritual world and its value. In India you will always find many who are ready to sacrifice everything in order to conquer the spiritual world, but in striving to conquer it, they have forgotten the existence, the importance of the physical world. It is essential that you should understand that to attain to the truly spiritual, you must conquer your material nature first.

In the West they have put the emphasis on the material plane; they have thought first of acquiring physical comfort and the right physical environment; the spiritual development has been put aside. In

India, on the contrary, we have tried to discover and understand spirituality and the rules and requirements of the spiritual world, but we have not applied our knowledge to the physical world. What is the use of having a beautiful tree unless it gives shade to those who sit under it, unless it produces beautiful flowers and luscious fruit? It might as well be dead. The very idea of spirituality is not merely meditation, not merely conquering the spiritual world. It is the application of spiritual principles to the mental, the emotional, the physical worlds.

To me, the first essential for a spiritual person is cleanliness, truly religious cleanliness — cleanliness that is born of religion and religious ideas. Above all, we must realise that unless we are clean, we cannot be really religious; we cannot be spiritual unless we are absolutely and scrupulously clean.

For us Hindus, cleanliness is an aspect of religion and our bath is a religious ceremony. But is it performed with the idea of physical purity? Is it really a cleansing bath?

We should, when we wash, clean our bodies not only magnetically but physically as well — not merely pour water on ourselves.

I think for most people in India, bathing is merely a superstition. How can we be clean when we have not washed every part of the body thoroughly? You cannot be clean if you leave one part of your body dirty. If you wash thoroughly your arms and your hands, and leave the nails dirty, your hands are not perfectly clean.

Nails, hair, ears, feet, the whole body, must be clean before you can call yourself clean.

After the bath we generally put on clean clothes

But it often happens that you put on clean clothes only on top, and below or round the waist you keep a dirty cloth, probably because it does not show. I remember once visiting a temple at Conjeeveram. At one of the tanks a priest was taking his bath. When he came out he put on a clean dhoti, but kept still the dirty cloth which he had around his loins. I knew he was going to function as a priest in the Temple, and I was much surprised to see him perfectly contented to keep that dirty cloth under the clean dhoti. The majority of people do not seem to realise that if they wear any soiled clothes they cannot be really clean, and yet they consider themselves Brahmins and are afraid to come near the pariah. They go to the Temple and feel holy and perfectly clean.

I should like to give still another instance: most of you wash your hair every morning and afterwards oil it, using cocoanut oil which is often rancid. When about a thousand people are gathered together who all use rancid oil on their hair, you can imagine the result.

One other thing has surprised me. We are very careful not to touch anything after we have put our hands to our mouths while eating. But how often have we seen the very highest Brahmin take his angavastram* and blow his nose with it and keep it over his shoulder, or women take a bit of their sari and wipe their nose with it.

It is through sheer lack of interest in life that we have lost all the refinements which really make a

* A decorative loose, upper garment.

nation perfect; yet they are just as important meetings or attending prayers or worship or reading or meditating, because they show the character of the person.

We must change our slovenliness if we want to be really religious and real disciples of the great Rishi. Clothes are of no value in themselves; it is what they represent that matters. Clothes show the mental condition of the individual. If they are untidy or soiled, it means that the individual does not take trouble over himself, over his surroundings, and over the little details of life that are of importance. Look at the difference between a man who dresses in a slovenly fashion and a man who dresses well. We have carried that slovenliness to such a degree in India that it has become appalling — I use the word intentionally! We have no sense of fitness or of proportion and yet — where it has not been spoiled — there is a natural dignity to be found in India. The coolie in India has much more dignity than the working man in Europe. We ought to encourage dignity because beautiful action is the expression of life. If you have not a sense of the beautiful you are not spiritual.

How often have I seen a man come to a meeting with a dhoti and a towel on his shoulder, or else a dhoti and a shirt above. We should be harmonious in our dress. If we are Hindus let us be Hindus thoroughly. If we want to be Swadeshi, let us be Swadeshi thoroughly. Do not put on English clothes one day and Indian clothes the next, nor mix the two. Remember that the whole structure of Indian life is based on simplicity. We are bad copies of the West and now we are neither Hindu nor really Western.

We consider that we should not wear sandals even when we go out in the streets, because we should not touch leather. In a way I agree, but is it not cleaner to touch leather than to walk in the filth of the streets? If you go down to Madras you will see Brahmins and other castes, who would consider that they were defiled if they approached those of a lower caste, walking barefoot those filthy streets without the least hesitation.

Our ideas of caste are so absurd that they have to be broken — not the real ideals, but the superstitions that have grown up around the ideals, the superstitions to which we cling.

If we wish to rebuild India, we can only do it by paying attention to the minutest details. Details do matter, because they make for the refinement of life, for the creation of a civilisation. Yet most of us have not been trained to pay attention to these details and that is why we want the Bharata Samaj to emphasise them.

Go into any Indian house or apartment and you will find general squalor, unsanitary conditions, untidiness, swarms of flies. I often wonder if a Master were to come to one of those houses what He would think.

We all want the Master to come and lift us out of the rut of mediocrity, to show us a different beauty, to give us a new conception of life, and yet we do not make the least effort to alter the circumstances around us. We all want to become pupils, and tread the Path and lead the worship and reform the world. We cannot do it unless we have the earnest desire to reform ourselves first.

In India, hot food — not steam or fire heat, but chilli

heat — seems to be in great favour. Chillies and various other strong spices act as stimulants and enable one to eat more in a hot climate than one would otherwise do.

We find the same taste for highly seasoned dishes in Mexico, South America and some parts of Spain, but I have been told that chillies, as food, were never used in ancient India; red chillies were brought here by the Portuguese, and the word "chilli" comes from Spain. This convinces me that chillies are quite foreign to our nature.

The eating of hot food is bad, medically and spiritually, because it stimulates the body on the one side, and dulls sensitiveness and deadens the nerves on the other. It has the same effect, though perhaps in a less brutal form, as the eating of animal matter. When people eat very hot food, the body ceases to respond to noble ideas and happenings; a general coarsening occurs.

What we want is a body that can respond quickly, that has sufficient nourishment to carry out the will of the true self. It should be a machine that can run perfectly with the dynamo of the spirit behind it, and we must not stimulate it unnecessarily with hot food.

I would strongly urge that you should try cutting down the seasoning of food to a minimum and you will feel, I am sure, a considerable difference both in lightness of body and clearness of brain.

You must have noticed that young children all through India, even in some of the very best families, have enormous stomachs and very, very thin arms and legs. That comes from eating rice in large quantities; it merely bloats them out without giving

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True nourishment to the body. It gives repletion instead of giving stamina and energy.

The sense of repletion that every animal and some humans enjoy is not quite spiritual nor is it refined, and rice especially, gives that sense of repletion instead of the dynamic energy that we ought to have. It would be much better to eat less rice and more vegetables and other energising food. The boys and girls would then grow strong.

In the West they think that vegetarians have not the strength and endurance of meat-eaters, but many experiments have been made and various forms of vegetarianism have been tried on young people, and proved to be very successful. Some of the greatest athletes are vegetarians. It is possible for vegetarians to have very strong, very vigorous bodies, but they must supply the right kind of food to the body. Eggs we do not eat and it is right that we should not, but they do contain proteins and we ought to find a substitute for eggs. It is our duty towards the body to give it a carefully balanced diet. It is the lack of food and right nourishment that produces anaemic thought and emotions, and which leads to the deterioration of the body.

Because we are neglectful, we let our children grow up without giving them the proper food, nor do they, in other ways, receive the care and attention that all children should have.

You will see here, at Adyar, little girls carrying a child on their hip; you will see children made to carry burdens too heavy for them. This should not be tolerated and yet we do nothing to prevent it. We want our children to be healthy and vigorous; instead, we are ruining their bodies by overstraining and underfeeding them.

Do you know that the average length of life in India is between twenty-three and twenty-five years, while in New Zealand it is over sixty?

We want to build a strong race for future generations; but we shall achieve it only by extreme physical care in every home and every school. It is the duty of parents and teachers to watch the well-being of the children in order that they may live without care or worry. They must be happy; we must fight and struggle for them to assure their happiness.

We want to bring about reformation in India along every line. We must become vital flames in order that other lamps may be lighted at our torch. We must energise the world, because we have understood with creative devotion. Because we have felt reality, we must act nobly. We must, as a new body, create new ideas; we must introduce new reforms which shall shatter the old superstitions. We must use intelligence while we destroy, so that there may be a new flow of life.

We must set aside all the old forms, all the old thoughts, and begin a new day. I am sure that a new Day is beginning all over the world if you could only see it; a new Dawn is coming if you could only feel it. The Spring is here and the trees are putting forth fresh buds and blossoms, and tender leaves. The Spring is coming with a new glory that shall ennoble the world.

IV

We must realise that spirituality and religion, as I have said so often, do not consist merely in the adoration of the form, but in the recognition of the fundamental truth that lies behind the form. However much intelligence and devotion we may have, unless we carry out our ceremonies with understanding, we are likely to become mere gramophones repeating words without proper feeling, without proper determination, without proper creation.

Instead, we must see what lies behind the words, find out the inner meaning, through our knowledge of Theosophy, and be fully aware that because we are Theosophists we have a definite work to achieve, a definite responsibility towards India.

I am not myself greatly inclined to ceremony, as you know. I like to go to my goal directly; I like to reach the summit by the quickest path without any intermediary. That is my personal attitude of mind and feeling. But there are naturally many thousands who express themselves by ceremonial, to whom ceremonial is the only path along the mountain. The Bharata Samaj has decided that this particular form of worship and the idea it expresses, shall spread throughout India. It is here in Adyar, in this Temple, that we are creating the form, and we must be diligent and exceedingly careful not to create any unnecessary thoughts which shall lead to superstition, any unnecessary gestures, any unnecessary methods that shall eventually become superstitions. We must be direct and simple. We must not be carried

away by chants, or mere devotional emotionality. We must understand really and not only superficially, the meaning of all the Sanskrit shlokas in order to grasp their real significance.

As you know, the Gayatrī is one of the most powerful Mantras in Sanskrit, and we — both the priest and the congregation — should repeat it together. Only bear in mind what the Mantra means. It says that by meditating on that glorious, wonderful and peaceful subject, the great God, the Essence, the God behind the Sun, He will carry us to the heights where our intuition, our noble side, shall be awakened.

It is very simple, but, if each one of us puts his mind into it and concentrates on it, we shall exert a tremendous influence.

That Mantra has been repeated by thousands, by millions, for so many centuries; by some with understanding, by some with the desire to reach the highest, and by others automatically. Now we have to do it consciously, with mental effort, with full understanding of what it means. You must bear in mind that the essence of this ceremony is perfect peace, perfect harmony, and that we ought to send out on India that perfect peace and beneficence — the peace that comes through knowledge, through virility and through vigor, and not through negative qualities; and we can do so if we concentrate on this when we repeat the Gayatri.

Remember that we are giving a new meaning, a new explanation to an old form. The greater our understanding, the more help we shall be able to give to India. I want to urge especially all Hindus who are Theosophists and who have attended these meetings

regularly to guard against any form, against any superstition, for both of them are unreal. You should not merely worship the lighted cloud but you should worship the sun that lights the cloud.

Before I explain as briefly as I can the general outline of what we do in the Temple, the fundamental purpose of our Puja, I want to make sure that all of you realise that for us Hindus, the priest is only *Primus inter Pares* — first among the equals. In no sense is the priest different from any one of us, he is no more than the leader and there should be no distinction between the congregation and the priest.

We who are Brahmins are all priests, but whether we perform as priests or not, we are all equals and the priest is only a leader for the moment, a conductor who directs the music and nothing else. Hence it is essential, it is desirable, that all the people, all the congregation, every individual should concentrate, should throw himself into the worship and not leave it all to the priest.

There must be a continuous urge from the whole congregation who must not be content merely to listen to the priest. We should all make the same effort in the same direction and not leave it to one or two individuals. We must not remain passive, but must learn to concentrate on the ceremony that is being performed and therefore it is important that we should understand its full meaning.

The first process is the purifying of the priest. The priest purifies himself first, then after purification he distributes to the people ordinary water, not magnetised. With that water in your hand you call on Surya, Manu and the hosts of Manu to come

and purify you, to purify your words, to purify your acts, your deeds, your thoughts, your emotions. You put yourself — your real self — in the crucible of immortality and ask Surya, the Sun, to send His immense power to purify you, and with that you drink the drop of water — merely as a symbol. That is the first point to remember. As you drink the water you purify your body on the three planes and call on Surya to come with His immense power in order that your whole nature may become perfect and beautiful and pure.

As you know, passions of the ordinary animal type consist merely in the enjoyment of the action, whereas in the more evolved human being there is the anticipation, the process itself and the satisfaction afterwards. When you drink this water you are purifying those three aspects of passion: the thought, the emotion and the act.

The next process is the invocation of the Devas. By the ringing of the bell you ask them to drive away, with deliberation and intention, all the evil spirits, all the undesirable nature spirits.

After that, you begin the worship, having first built an invisible wall around the physical temple by repeating the Gayatrī. You worship on the mental plane, on the emotional plane, as well as on the physical plane, so that the power shall act directly on those three planes.

Then you have the incensing, followed by a five-fold call on the Gods. You ask Indra to come and give you the power of right leadership, to enable you to lead people along the right path, to make you a true disciple; a true disciple is a true leader. Then you ask Soma for joyfulness, happiness, delight;

Then you ask Varuna for the power of right perception, the right mental point of view, so that your mentality shall always be pure and unbiassed. Then you ask Yama, the Lord of Karma, to remove all obstacles, to purify you of all your karma; and finally you ask Surya, the Sun, to give you energy and vitality.

By repeating afterwards the Gayatrī you assimilate into the physical plane and physical body those five tremendous qualities: energy, the power to arrest karma, joyfulness, clearness of perception and right leadership.

This ends the first part of the ceremony.

You begin the second part with the worship of Agni. He is the Fire God, and you describe Him as having a definite form, a definite shape. He is the Eternal Being, He is everywhere. He is first to be born in the world, and He is born with every birth, and He will be born in the future. Though He is immanent in all things, you ask Him to come and embody Himself in that fire, and He is in that fire.

When you throw the small twig into the fire you symbolically throw yourself with it. It is a symbol: every particle of you goes with that twig into the fire and you get purified, you become one with Agni, one with the Eternal God. Three times you do it, and then you ask Agni to lead you along the right Path, the Path of spirituality, the Path which leads to enlightenment; you ask Him to disentangle the web of life, to help you to struggle against your evil nature.

Agni — only a symbol again — is unwinking, ever-watching, all-knowing. We must conform to His laws, and thus shall we be full of fresh energy and glory,

and no distress of mind shall touch us far or near. The main point to bear in mind here is the desire to enter the Path, and you ask Agni to come and help you. You must believe what you repeat. He does come and He has concentrated Himself in that fire, and the ashes that are distributed over the various parts of the body should instil into you the desire to enter the Path. You ought to take the ash on the third finger of the right hand (which is supposed to be connected with the heart); you take it with the thought that you desire to tread the Path, to struggle against all evil things. You must first touch the chakram at the top of the head, then the forehead between the eyebrows, then the centre at the throat, then the solar plexus, then the heart, then the left shoulder and finally the right shoulder; you will notice that it forms a perfect cross. Those are centres in the body, chakrams (force-centres) that can be awakened if you do it properly. And in awakening them, you acquire the knowledge of the higher worlds. You should all do it and not only the people on the Mandapam.* Then you take water. Fire is the symbol of the physical, water represents the emotions. You eliminate all impurity from the water by asserting that the water is the source of delight, the source of energy, the source of great visions and inspiration, and finally you say. "Let the water which is there give me Knowledge." Then you assert that the water is immortality, the water is power, the water is the secret harmonies of the world, the water is the essence of all ceremonies, and last you assert that

* Dais in front of the shrine.

the water is everything. Then you call on Varuna, the Lord of the Water Kingdom, the world of emotions. Then you say again, "We break Thy laws every day, we offend the Deva Kingdom." And you say, "Please do not be angry with us. We sin and are ignorant; forgive us, for we desire to be Thy beloved." You send forth those hosts of Varuna into the four corners of the earth; and in doing so you must put will behind it. You must help to clean the whole world.

Next you come to the Light, which represents the mind. Again you worship the Sun. Burning camphor, you say: "By leaving the darkness of the world and by contemplating on the Sun which is represented by the light on the altar, we reach the real Light, the glory behind the veil, the essence of all things." You describe that Light: "He sees the universe, He is the face and the expression of all the gods in the world. He is the eye of Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and He is every being animate and inanimate." Thus you realise that the Sun is the essence, the representative of the Logos, and by contemplating on the physical sun you get in touch with the Spirit behind the sun. After that you assert: "I am the Light, I am Brahman, I am I." This is no negative quality or desire. You have called the Sun through the light, and you go back to the Sun. And you describe the immanent and transcendent God. He characterises the First Ray; He is the Lord of the World, the thousand-headed Purusha without limit. He exists everywhere, above and below; there is no measuring Him. You speak of Him as the Three-Eyed, the greatest of Gods, the Ever-Blessed.

Then comes the offering of the flowers, when we

all should concentrate on the Second Aspect, Second Ray, the Lord Maitreya and the Lord Buddha. You say: "You are everything, You are in all cities of the heart in the world." Then you take water which has been purified and you purify again by repeating the Gāyatrī. You will that the Sun should come and concentrate Himself in the water, after which you break the thought-form; the water is then distributed and what it contains goes right through the world.

Finally the priest gives the blessing. He says: "Since we have approached You through the sacrifice, may we live one hundred years with the Masters and the Eternal Ones. May there be no unhappiness of any kind, whether to the little animals, the big animals or the humans; may there be perfect beauty, perfect happiness, perfect joy all through the world." Here ends the worship.

As you have seen, the essential purpose of all ceremony is to collect the spiritual force existing around us, and distribute it to the world at large. The worshipper, after purification, collects the force and embodies it in one special construction, in a thought-form, breaks that thought-form, and sends it out to the world.

If we sufficiently concentrate on what we are doing and realise what is expected of us, we shall naturally acquire great power. The Sanskrit words themselves have power, and with intelligent cooperation, we can produce the desired effect; that is just what we should all do at our worship.

We must not repeat like parrots, but use our intelligence and emotion as well as the physical form, making a perfect combination of the three; thus we

are able to construct the thought-form on the three
planes, the mental, emotional and physical.

When you realise the symbolism of it, the utter direct-
ness of it, then you see the reality that lies behind
the worship, you see that we are all priests, though
some priests may do it better than others. We are
all gods, though we are all human beings. We are
all the essence of the beautiful and the glory of life.

It is by the constant dwelling in the atmosphere of religion, of godliness, that we create real nobility of character, real nobility of vision, and the greatness of our standards.

We want life to be based on fundamental principles; whatever action we perform or vocation we adopt, we should represent a particular ideal. This has been forgotten and we have wandered from the original path. We must train ourselves and the generations who will follow to return to that path; in order to achieve that, our physical body must be perfect as well as the emotions and the mind.

We must conquer the world, beautify the world and get all the experience of the world, and then we can throw aside all the trivial things of the world. We must perfect every little thing around us, every little thought and feeling and action. We must be constantly on the watch lest slovenliness creep into mind or action. It is the mind chiefly that has to be purified and made clean, the mind that has to be made simple. Then we shall become fit to worship truly, then we shall become of real use to the Masters, to the Devas, to the Lord.

The impression, nowadays, is that you become a Rishi, a Sannyasi, when you have nothing better to do. When you have no capacities, no power to struggle, when you give in physically, emotionally, mentally, then you become a Sannyasi. But we want to establish a new type of spiritual aristocrat, for to me, the true Sannyasi is the true aristocrat. The position in the world, the outside garb, these do not

what does matter is that your mind, your emotions, should have the true instincts of the Sannyasi.

To grasp fully the idea of spiritual aristocracy, we must have well-trained minds — orderly, intelligent minds — and not mere devotion, though it has its value.

For instance, we must have realised by now that in order to perform the Puja rightly, quite definite mental exertion on our part is needed. We must concentrate more and more if we want to produce a definite form.

In giving our devotion, in pouring ourselves out in worship, it is not only necessary to give ourselves entirely, but we must also give intelligently. It is no good giving devotion without thought behind it; any person may give impulsively, but the person who gives intelligently — who has suffered, who has striven, and then gives — is of greater value.

Our devotion should be tinged and guided by our intellect so that we, in giving, can create and not only receive.

We all want the Truth, but we must struggle to find it and not merely sit and wait for authoritative statements. Unless we can think for ourselves we shall never create, we shall never be independent, we shall never become the leaders that we ought to be in India. Neither shall we find the Truth. I know this has been said over and over and over again; every sacred book, every teacher has said it — that Truth must be found for oneself, that the creation of perfection in thought and feeling must be born in ourselves.

We, who have learned to read and to meditate, have

not yet realised that the Truth is within ourselves and not outside ourselves. We shall certainly fail although we have all felt the inner authority, if we wait for superficial authority. Let us always remember that all authority is superficial unless it is the inner authority.

We must develop initiative. We must not wait to be spoon-fed day after day, for that is the greatest fault in India. We must develop will-power and then strike out on a line of our own; we must be independent in creation, and find beauty for ourselves. And the Bharata Samaj, or any other spiritual organisation exists only for that purpose and for no other.

If the Bharata Samaj wants to fulfil a new rôle in Indian life, it must fulfil that new rôle in every department of life. It must be vital, enthusiastic, forceful in its activity throughout India. It must be a new vessel into which the new life can flow — you must be aware that new life is coming all over the world — for if it cannot provide the new vehicle, some other organisation will spring up and succeed where it failed.

I have not yet joined the Bharata Samaj myself, although they kindly let me conduct the ceremony here. I am waiting to join till I am sure that there is no likelihood of its narrowing down my ideas of life. I do not want to belong to it, if it means that I must just conform, if it means just going back to the old ideas of life, to the old superstitions.

It is the duty of a new body to produce, to instil into Hinduism new reforms along religious lines.

I believe that this Bharata Samaj has a wonderful future. I do not say this because someone else has told me, because some great understanding has

whispered it to me; I say it because the Bharata Samaj has a natural beauty, a possibility of becoming like the lotus, the flower of India. But to realise this, we have to create new developments, to renovate the spiritual life.

Conservatism cannot lead to progress. Progress comes only when you have the constant desire to change your ideas, your life, and to a certain extent even your beliefs. And that is where we have failed, that is where our religion has failed. We all believe that ours is the greatest religion, the greatest philosophy in the world. How have we used it, in what way have we brought about changes in India? Those of you who are Theosophists, who are supposed to know better, what good have you done to your community or to India?

And that is the question which each one of us has to ask of himself.

It is not mere study, not mere meditation, but the action that follows the meditation and the study that matters. That is what we have to learn quickly, even though some of us be old and some of us be young — the quick reformation, the quick alteration of ideas and habits. If we can do it we shall see the glory of being really powerful individuals in the building up of India.

That is the duty of the Bharata Samaj: to create this new, this immense power to build, not to stagnate in the old superstitions and old ideas. That is the duty of the Star, of the Theosophical Society and of any other similar organisation: really to create the true discontentment out of which shall be born the true contentment and the true happiness.

Believe me, if India does not open her doors to the

real sunlight, the greatness of India will slip out of those closed doors and go to other countries, and we shall become a nation of unevolved, uncivilised people, a people without standards, a people whose culture shall be limited, a people without a sense of proportion or a sense of greatness.

It is the duty of the Bharata Samaj to deal with all problems. If it does not do so, something else will accomplish its work.

We have begun well, with a greater blessing than most of you realise. If we do not live up to that blessing, it will pass on to others and we shall have lost the greatest of all opportunities in the world. If we do not reform and change, if we do not bring sunlight into our religion, if we do not open all the windows to let in the light, then, woe to every Indian and to India!

How rapidly we let the days go by! How little effort we make to change and to create!

I want to put before you, very earnestly, the inevitable turn that events are taking.

We have had Dr. Besant with us now for over thirty-five years; she has given us her teaching, her energy, her whole life. What is the result? How many real workers, real followers, real initiators, real devotees are there upon whom she can rely? About two dozen at the most. Now we have come to a stage where those two dozen are not sufficient. We need three hundred dozen, nay more, and we do not wait for them in thirty years' time but today.

Perhaps you do not see the urgency or understand the imperative necessity of immediate action.

The responsibility for our work, for the fulfilment of our ideals, is being placed on the shoulders

Can one or even two dozen of us guide, protect three hundred millions of people? How many are there ready to come forward and offer themselves and all their capacities, and say: "I have acquired knowledge and I want to help others to live differently"?

Those of us who have received so much should go out into the world with our arms full, ready to distribute our bounty to the suffering and starving. It is the life that matters, not the form however perfect, the life to live and make other people live and be happy, not merely coming here to worship, to receive and distribute blessings. That is good and should be in its place, but we must go out and appeal, not to our own small circle but to the vast, immense crowds.

All over the world life is moving swiftly forward, but here in India we are just slipping back. We must improve present-day conditions instead of continuing in the old ways. There is a new Dawn coming, a new Sunrise and a new Sunset, but it will not come as we expect it.

We are looking for some miracle to happen, but it will appear as a thief in the night when we are not watching, when we are asleep, not when we are expecting miracles and thunderstorms. It will come by paths of which we know nothing.

He is coming, not to preach to us who already know, not to help us who are already helped in abundance, but to those who are still longing, still searching, still starving. And we in India do not realise this. We are still the same people with the old ideas unchanged, immovable either emotionally or mentally.

India is supposed to be the most spiritual nation in the world and I believe it is the most spiritual, but if we do not distribute the flowers which are in the basket, we shall fall, we shall be trodden down, and other nations, other races, will come along and bring new flowers, and new baskets to carry the fresh flowers. We shall become mere savages, mere relics of the past, and our civilisation will be destroyed. India is like a beautiful vase, and if we are not careful it will be broken.

Now is the time to live, to understand the meaning of life, and no longer to wait, wait, wait.

We know our land and all that we have been. We know to what extent our vision stretches. We know where our weakness and our strength and our capacities lie, and yet we are waiting for something to turn us into men. We are waiting for somebody or some unknown power to throw us into the stream of life so that we can swim to the other shore.

Do you think that such a power can ever come to our aid? If we do not help ourselves, do you think that someone else is going to help us? If we want to satisfy our hunger and thirst, do you imagine that someone else is going to feed us?

Do you realise what we have to do? Do you realise how every thing, living and non-living, is crying out for help, is searching, is stretching out its arms to be fed, to be comforted, to be raised to the level where it can see the same glorious sunrise and sunset that we have seen?

We have to be not mere followers, but leaders, and to lead we must have strength and vision and capacity. And this Temple, which is the symbol of the inner attitude, should supply us with the inspiration,

...desire, the longing, but we must not be content
to sit here and worship and see the sunrise, or the
day will pass into the sunset and vanish from our
sight. It will vanish if we do not go outside and
help others, help them to see the new sunrise, the
new day, the new sunset.
And that is our duty.



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